



**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at  
a Ghanaian university**

**by**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree of PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD) in Education Management, Law and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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**August, 2023**

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PhD

Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university

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Education Management and Policy Studies

26 February 2021

09 June 2023



Mr Simon Jiane  
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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to my late mother, Ex S/SGT Lucy Obiri Peseo, who raised me, for which I am forever be grateful.



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I express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to God, the provider of life, for guiding and protecting me throughout the journey of completing this thesis and transforming the daunting challenges I encountered into conquerable obstacles. I am truly thankful for the kindness and blessings bestowed upon me.

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## Editorial Service

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April 14 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Confirmation of language and technical editing of Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah's doctoral thesis**

This letter confirms that I edited the thesis of the above doctoral candidate, titled 'Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian University.'

I thoroughly read each of the chapters of the thesis, noting issues relating to language and style in scholarly writing, and adherence to technical requirements. Based on these, I provided feedback, including recommendations to improve its quality as a scholarly work. With regard to language and style, the thesis reflected a reasonably good level of scholarly writing with sporadic lapses. It is a well-researched thesis, logically organised and with sound argumentation, as expected of work at the doctoral level. With corrections and revisions effected, the thesis will take a prominent place in the stock of knowledge on preservice and mentor teachers mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

In line with my mandate to edit and improve the quality of the thesis, I did not, in any way change or attempt to change the substance of the thesis, except recommending changes to enhance clarity. Should there be a need to verify the authenticity of this letter, please contact me by email: [dassabie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dassabie@yahoo.co.uk).

Yours sincerely



Professor Maurice Oscar Dassah



## **Abstract**

This study explores mentorship of preservice teachers at a Ghanaian University to identify capabilities and constrain factors for management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The study adopted qualitative multiple-case study, informed by the interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling was used for twenty (20) preservice teachers, and convenience sampling was used for ten (10) mentor teachers to seek answers to the primary question: what are the capabilities and conversion factors for the management of mentorship during teaching practice at a Ghanaian University? The data were analysed thematically from the verbatim description of the participants' own words collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The results of the study are that most participants consider respect, recognition, dignity, and having a voice as key capabilities that contribute to achieving well-being in the management of mentoring relationships. Secondly, the findings indicate participants value open communication as an enabler for management of mentoring relationship. Thirdly, the results suggest unavailability of mentor teachers in mentoring relationship is one of the major constraints in management of mentoring relationship. The results further showed that the unavailability of mentor teachers and inadequate mentorship training for mentor teachers are major constraints in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The study recommends a mandatory mentorship training for mentor teachers who participate in mentoring preservice teachers. Additionally, orientation should be organized for all preservice teachers at the inception of their teaching practice to help them understand the culture and philosophy of the school for teaching practice.

**Keywords:** Capability framework, Management, Mentorship, Initial Teacher Education, Higher Education Institution



## Abbreviations

CA	Capabilities Approach
UDS	University for Development Studies
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MOE	Ministry of Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EFA	Education for All
GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The capability approach (CA) was employed in this study to explore the management of mentoring relationships in a Ghanaian higher education institution during teaching practice. The chapter provides background and conceptualization for this study. Additionally, the chapter contains the problem statement, the research objectives and questions that guided the study, the significance of the research, which highlights its contributions to teacher education in higher education (HE) and my positionality in the study. The chapter concludes with the definition of terms and a summary of the thesis chapters.

### **1.1 Background**

Education plays an important role in the development of human resources on a globally, making it a vital aspect of any country's progress. Asare (2011) highlights the importance of a quality education system for society, and economic and social transformation. Teachers are a crucial element in education for development as they are the pivot of classroom interactions that occur during instruction between students and academic content that influence student learning. As Asare (2011) reiterates, an efficient education system leads to quality human resource development and an enlightened society, which leads to better economic progress and social transformation. Therefore, teachers' role in the education enterprise is significant, and they must be at the centre for a country to achieve the potential of education to facilitate growth and development. Despite the importance of teachers in quality education for national development, Ghana faces the challenge of inadequate number of trained teachers at the basic level, especially at Early Childhood Education (ECE), which is fundamental to the success of education in any country with the quest for societal advancement and development.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a prudent investment that a country can promote in its future workforce and for social transformation (Reckhow, 2013). As such, there has been an increase in international attention to it, resulting in the formulation of policies aimed at enhancing the quality and access to Early Childhood Care and Education worldwide (Ayisibea, 2015). An example is the growing recognition of the need to improve the quality of training for ECE teachers in order to ensure delivery of quality education. This highlights the fact that though quality teachers are essential at all levels, it is widely recognised that ECE teachers play a crucial role in establishing a

solid foundation for academic progress in learners (Geo-Jaja & Zajda, 2005). It is obvious, therefore, that the true essence of education is found in the direct interaction between the teacher and the learner in a personal and face-to-face setting (Dewey, 1902, p. 23). Edward (2019) for example, emphasises face-to-face contact and personal interaction among teachers and learners in the instructional process. This is particularly relevant for young children. In line with the United Nations global development agenda, ECE has become an important aspect of the development agenda for member countries (UNESCO, 2013). Ghana has taken significant steps to meet the global mandates for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

In 2004, Ghana implemented a policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), which aimed to provide comprehensive childcare services for children aged between 0 and 8 years in the country. This policy has been a significant effort towards offering holistic care to young children in rural-urban residents in Ghana (Djarbeng, 2019). Agbenyega (2018) and Wolf et al. (2019) have reported that the implementation of the ECCD policy in Ghana has led to an increase in access to high-quality care and educational services for many young children. In fact, Ghana had one of the highest pre-primary enrollment rates in Africa in 2015-2016, with a net enrollment rate of 75% (Ministry of Education, 2016). There has also been a substantial increase in the enrollment rate of children with disabilities in kindergarten settings, which now ranges from 0.2% to 0.4% of the total enrollment (Ministry of Education, 2018). The policy, consequently, led to significant resources being invested in policy development, curriculum reforms, and teacher education aimed at enhancing teacher-pupil interactions in the classroom (Altinyelken, 2010; Schweinfurt, 2013). However, in Ghana, only 31% of teachers in Early Childhood Care and Education are trained, with approximately 51% of teachers trained at the primary level and 66% of teachers trained at the junior high school level (Aheto-Tsegah, 2011), but Early Childhood Care and Education is of utmost importance to the academic progress of learners.

The quality of young children's lives is a national and international concern. Children's intellectual and developmental potential reaches a critical stage of development by the age of four, emphasising the significance of quality care and training in the early years for their future wellbeing (Barnett, 2011; Phillips & Lowenstein, 2011). UNESCO (2019) highlights that early childhood education provides opportunities for children to gain skills and knowledge that would benefit them throughout

their lives. To this end, UNESCO (2019) emphasises the importance of investing in early childhood education and calls for, at least, one year of free, quality early childhood education delivered by well-trained teachers for all children aged 3-5. This suggests UNESCO recognises that early childhood education is a crucial foundation for lifelong learning and development, and that access to quality early childhood education can help address inequalities and promote sustainable development. UNESCO, therefore, prioritises and seeks that all children get equal access to quality ECCE, irrespective of gender, creed, religion or background. As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations, the Goal 4.2 mandates member nations to provide quality early childhood development to ensure that all children are adequately prepared for primary education to achieve Universal Primary Education for All (EFA). Even though the Ghanaian government has implemented various policies and programmes to promote quality ECCE, many children from poor households still lack access to quality education (World Bank, 2018).

The government has made efforts to address this issue by removing all barriers to enrollment for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds by implementing legal instruments to ensure children's rights, including access to ECCE (Abdulai, 2014). However, research suggests that the lack of trained teachers who can adapt their teaching approaches to the specific needs of young children limits the developmental benefits of ECCE (McCoy & Wolf, 2018; Acheampong, 2017). To overcome this challenge, quality training of ECCE teachers is essential to develop the necessary knowledge and skills of young children for them to have solid foundation for academic progress. (World Bank, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). Given the importance of ECCE in laying a solid foundation for high academic achievement among learners, there have been increasing calls for the improvement of quality of training for ECCE teachers. One way to develop the quality of ECCE teachers is to prioritize the training of teachers through quality mentorship of preservice teachers during teaching practice. This can help improve their professional identities and best practices in the teaching profession (Hudson, 2016; Izadinia, 2018).

Mentoring relationship is considered an integral part of preservice teachers' training in initial teacher education (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017). It has been recognised globally as a vital component in preparing preservice teachers for the teaching profession (World Bank, 2010), particularly during their teaching practice when they need guidance to integrate educational theory

with practice. Mentoring provides preservice teachers with an opportunity to learn from experienced teachers to develop knowledge and skills necessary to become successful teachers. Therefore, through collaborative mentoring relationship, preservice teachers can gain insight into practical aspects of teaching to enhance their classroom management and communication and methods of teaching among others. Furthermore, mentoring relationship helps preservice teachers to have a sense of professional self and commitment for improvement and continuous learning in the teaching profession (Izadinia, 2016). Thus, a mentoring relationship, which is an essential component of preservice teacher training, enables preservice teachers to acquire the skills, aptitude dispositions, and knowledge needed to become competent and confident professional teachers in the field of education (Akyeampong et al., 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2010).

The mentoring relationship exists during Work Integrated Learning (WIL), also known in Ghana as internship, practicum or supported teaching in schools. WIL is an educational activity that provides a platform to combine academic learning with practical application in the workplace. Therefore, WIL is designed to develop preservice teachers' capacity to integrate academic and work-related activities through mentoring relationship that is integral to teacher education training (Du Plessis, 2019; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009; Reis, 2012). Several studies (Frick, Carl & Beets, 2010; Van Wyk & Daniels, 2004; Maynard & Furlong, 1993; Martinez, 2004) emphasise the value of mentoring in enhancing quality teacher training in higher education institutions. A mentoring relationship provides preservice teachers with guidance and support to adequately prepare them to become professionals in the field of teacher education. Therefore, it is vital to prioritise mentoring programme in the training of preservice teachers to enhance the quality of teachers. Preservice teachers benefit from mentoring relationship as it provides an opportunity to learn about teaching strategies from mentor teachers and how to apply them in real-classroom situations. Mentor teachers are crucial in this process as they help bridge the gap between academic concepts and real-world application.

The term 'mentoring' has been defined in various ways such as induction, supervision, staff retention, personal and professional development, and inculcation of organisational culture (World Bank, 2010). However, for the purposes of this study, mentoring could be defined as a nurturing process of which an experienced individual serves as a encourager, sponsor, friend, role model and counselor to promote the professional and personal development of a less experienced person in a

profession (Asare, 2011). This nurturing process plays critical role in the growth and development of a novice teacher through guidance and support needed to integrate theory with practice in the teaching profession.

The quality of mentoring process is vital to the success of preservice teachers' initial training and ongoing professional development, particularly in the area of their professional identities (Hobson, 2010). Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) stress that the effectiveness of teachers' performance in a full-time teaching position depends on the way mentoring was conducted during the preservice training. As such, mentoring has been identified as a critical component of novice and preservice teacher development and retention (Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Preservice teachers' mentoring experience during their teaching practice is a significant contributor to the acquisition of necessary competencies for the teaching profession (Nzilano, 2013; Abudu & Donkor, 2014). According to Du Plessis (2019), there is a need for a strong link between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and classroom realities in cooperating schools to prepare high-quality, classroom-ready graduate teachers. Studies by Anane (2013) and Abudu and Donkor (2014) have also shown that mentoring programmes facilitate professional development of preservice teachers in the teaching profession. This expectation is a global phenomenon and has been extensively documented in the literature. However, there is still a need for further research on the management of the mentoring relationship to identify the associated enabling and constraints factors on preservice teachers' professional development during the mentoring process. Therefore, this study examines the capabilities of mentor teachers and preservice teachers, as well as the enabling and constraints factors in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice in preschools in the Ghanaian context.

### **1.1.0 Contextualisation of the Study**

Teaching, either formal or informal, has been a part of the human resource development since the beginning of time. For several years, teaching has increasingly been recognised as a distinct and unique discipline. Efforts have gone into determining what makes a teacher to be great. Of concern to countries, especially developing ones, is the need to improve the educational outcomes of students, which needs adequate educational resources. Of all the resources needed to achieve that, teachers are considered most critical for improving education success (Hartshorne, Heafner, & Petty, 2013; Hattie, 2012). This suggest that how good teachers are trained has a direct bearing on



the quality of education in a country. Aboagye (2002) and Asuo-Baffour, Daayeng, and Agyemang (2019) reiterate that quality teachers depend on, among other things, the quality of initial teacher education received by preservice teachers. Consequently, quality initial teacher training is important for effective educational outcomes in moving any nation forward globally. Thus, the desire to strengthen teacher preparation as a priority for improving teachers' professional development has garnered special attention in a number of countries worldwide, including Ghana.

Research has consistently demonstrated that teachers' professional development is a crucial factor in improving students' achievements. This is because high-quality professional development of teachers can lead to better teaching in the classrooms and, ultimately, results in improved academic outcomes for students (Asuo-Baffour, Daayeng, & Agyemang, 2019). Teacher education has undergone significant reforms in recent times due to its crucial role in enabling quality education in a country (Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh & Brew-Hammond, 2015). It plays a critical role in preparing preservice teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. As Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Baundoh and Brew-Hammond (2015) note, the teaching profession is the primary determinant of learners' performance within educational institutions. Thus, what teachers know and do is critical in students' achievements in the education enterprise. Accordingly, teacher education in Ghana has undergone significant policy modifications over the years to meet the changing needs of the education sector (Akyeampong et al., 2014). Modifications that had been made to teacher education in Ghana were in response to the critical role it plays in enabling quality education in the country (Anamuah-Mensah, 2006). The teaching profession is the primary determinant of how learners perform within educational institutions. This makes the quality of initial teacher education a crucial factor in preparing preservice teachers to facilitate effective teaching and learning processes in classrooms. However, several challenges to teacher education in Ghana must be addressed to improve the quality of education in the country, as emphasised by Acheampong (2010). These challenges include inadequate resources and facilities, a shortage of qualified and experienced teacher in the education system in Ghana.

To address these challenges, modifications have been made to initial teacher education in Ghana to produce capable and well-trained teachers who can facilitate effective teaching and learning in the classroom. These modifications have resulted in the production of distinct cohorts of teachers with different types of credentials based on their programmes of choice or specialisms to improve the



quality of teacher education in the country. Ghana offers various types of initial teacher education programmes, such as traditional residential, distance, and sandwich programmes, allowing teachers and prospective teachers to choose the mode that best suits their needs to upgrade their skills (Akyeampong et al., 2014).

Teacher education in Ghana has undergone significant changes since the 1960s. The Ghana government mandated the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) to offer a two-year Post-Middle Certificate "B" programme, followed by a top-up training and two-year Post-Middle Certificate "A" for those who completed middle schools. Additionally, a two-year Post-Secondary Certificate "A" programme was introduced for those who completed secondary schools (Newman, n.d.). Furthermore, the University of Cape Coast, established in the late 1960s, was mandated to offer degree programs in education and moderate curricula, as well as award certificates and diplomas to training and specialist colleges in Ghana. The specialist colleges were amalgamated into one institution known as the University of Education to award degrees, diplomas, and postgraduate diplomas in education (Newman, n.d.).

Teacher education in Ghana is divided into three categories based on qualifications: Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, and Bachelor's degree in teacher education. Preservice teachers at the diploma level are trained in universities and the preservice teachers at the Bachelor's degree level are trained at the recognised public and private universities and non-university training institutions known as Colleges of Education while the Postgraduate Diploma preservice teachers are trained at recognised universities (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2019).

In Ghana, the postgraduate diploma course runs for one year, and the diploma course runs for three years, while the degree teacher education course runs for four years. The programmes, namely: diploma, postgraduate diploma, and degree courses, have college/university-based academic courses (the subject of specialisation), professional, and method courses and teaching practice components. The teaching practice component involves a period of supervised teaching practice in a classroom setting to provide preservice teachers with practical experience in the classroom. According to Ministry of Education policy, graduates of Basic/Early Childhood education are expected to teach at pre-primary and primary school levels, while graduates with a postgraduate diploma in education and degree, depending on their specialisation, are required to teach at the Secondary education level (Ministry of Education, 2018).



Over the years, Ghana's education system has undergone significant changes aimed at improving the quality of teacher education through legislation and teacher education reforms (Amoah, 2017). These changes have included several major education Acts, such as the Education Act 778 (2008) and the 1987 Education Reform. All these Acts had the aim of transforming the country's education system. Recent efforts have been focused on improving the quality of teacher education preparation in response to the need for quality teachers to deliver quality education in the country (Ministry of Education, 2012). Further, Buabeng, Ntow, and Otami (2020) argue that the quality of a country's educational system is crucial to its educational outcomes and shapes its future, as the workforce of the nation is obtained from the school systems. As such, Anamuah-Mensah (2006) and Buabeng et al (2020) states that training and development of teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. This supports the notion that the quality of teacher education is directly proportional to the quality of education in a country. The quality of teachers in a country is paramount in determining the success of its education system because teachers serve as the linchpin, playing a central and indispensable role in shaping the learning experiences and outcomes of students in a country. Their knowledge, dedication, and effectiveness are fundamental factors that directly impact the overall quality of education in a country. Therefore, investing in the preparation and ongoing professional development of teachers is essential to ensure quality education for all. Despite previous and current Ghana governments' efforts to improve the quality of teachers, the quality of teaching and learning remains inadequate due to factors such as lack of policy coherence and mismatch between official policy expectations and what is practiced in the school system. These issues have raised concerns about the quality of teachers in the Ghanaian classrooms, as evidenced by the persistent underachievement of pupils in basic education system (Ministry of Education, 2017). This is because when learners fail to acquire adequate skills and knowledge, the educational system is often blamed for providing inadequate education. This is typically attributed to the quality of education delivered by teachers, which is believed to be a reflection of the education that the teachers received themselves. As a results, the most efficient way to enhance the quality of education is improving education of teachers, as well as implementing strategies to enhance the knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers (Musset, 2010).

To address these challenges, UKAid collaborated with the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education to implement the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL)



project in 2014. The project aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by supporting all the public Colleges of Education, including the five public teacher education universities. Thus, University of Cape Coast, University for Development Studies, University of Education, University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology were assisted to transform training of preservice teacher education in Ghana (Buabeng, Ntow & Otami, 2020) and upgrade the previous 3-year diploma in Colleges of Education to a 4-year degree programme. The project also supported development of a National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) to guides the development of teacher education programmes and to establish minimum professional competencies for all initial teacher institutions to train the professional teachers.

This suggests that the T-TEL project, in collaboration with the Ghanaian government, is a significant step towards improving quality of teacher education to address challenges faced by the Ghanaian education system (Buabeng, Ntow & Otami, 2020). Ghana's commitment to quality teacher education and the development of quality and equitable education has been demonstrated through various policies and initiatives by governments over the years (Asare & Nti, 2014), but improvements in the quality of education -where quality is interpreted as enhanced pupil attainment - are still disappointing (UNESCO, 2014) in the country. This calls for the need to improve initial teacher education quality to ensure that preservice teachers receive well-resourced and appropriate opportunities through a mentoring relationship that would benefit them throughout their future teaching careers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Kardos & Johnson, 2007). The mentoring programmes promote teacher effectiveness and influence their retention in the teaching for a longer period of time. (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Rodie, 2011).

Despite the growing recognition of mentoring programmes for the training of preservice teachers, not many countries, particularly Ghana, have made concrete efforts to investigate experiences in the management of the mentoring relationship for mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring programme within their school systems (Langdon, 2007). However, as noted by Hardy (2019), the CA can be used to gain an understanding of the mentorship programme used for the training of quality teachers by focusing on the reasons mentors and preservice teachers have to be and do what they value within the context of their daily work in the mentoring relationship. This notwithstanding, there is paucity of research on the experiences of mentor teachers and preservice

teachers in the management of mentoring relationships during teaching in the Ghanaian context. Therefore, it is essential to explore actual experiences of those involved in mentoring relationships for effective mentoring practices in teacher education (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). Thus, Sen's (1999) CA provides a framework to understand both what is valued and conversion factors in the management of the mentoring relationship.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Mentoring programmes are crucial in supporting preservice teachers to enhance their quality of training in teacher education. Despite benefits of mentoring programmes, the literature suggests that effective management of mentoring relationships is challenging due to various factors such as communication difficulties, unrealistic expectations, and lack of support from mentor teachers (Strydom & Walker, 2015). Aderibigbe (2013) further argues that mentor teachers do not actively involve preservice teachers in classroom activities, but rather expect them to replicate their teaching style in the future. The lack of clear guidelines on how to manage preservice teachers in mentoring relationships is a yet another problem in the Ghanaian teacher education (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Mawoyo & Robinson, 2005; Resis, 2012). This is because it is not enough to have mentor teachers guide preservice teachers without clear guidelines for successful management of mentoring relationship (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009). Additionally, Buabeng, Ntow, and Otami (2020) observe that there is no official mentoring policy in Ghanaian teacher education to address challenges and concerns in the mentoring relationship. This means that every training institution has different approaches to mentoring preservice teachers, resulting in mentors relying on their personal experience to mentor preservice teachers, which may not lead to the expected outcomes of the mentoring relationship (Buabeng, Ntow, & Otami, 2020). Studies conducted in most Sub-Saharan African countries support the need for clear guidelines on mentoring relationships as unguided mentoring leaves preservice teachers to "sink or swim" with their mentor teachers (Schweisfurth, 2015). Hence, there is a need for further research on the management of mentoring relationships to promote effective mentoring practices in teacher education, highlighting the factors that promote or hinder their effective management of the mentoring relationship.

The current debate on management of mentoring relationships for preservice teachers is centre on the goals of mentoring programmes, which support professional development of preservice teachers

to be productive and socially responsible in their future teaching profession. However, there is a paucity of literature on how mentoring relationship is managed during teaching practice. This investigation is aimed at bridging the knowledge gap in empirical studies on the experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in management of mentoring relationships to achieve wellbeing during teaching practice in Ghana. It is against this backdrop that this study is rooted in the concept of the capabilities approach (CA), and seeks to explore the extent to which individuals can pursue broad capabilities that they have reason to value in the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The use of the capability approach as an analytical framework can help identify capabilities and conversion factors needed to enhance the management of mentoring relationships between preservice teachers and mentor teachers. Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain clearly capability and conversion factors for the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice (Hardy, 2019; Sen, 1999). The study explores what capabilities and conversion factors enable the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice in the Ghanaian context, using the capabilities approach.

### **1.3 Main Objective**

The main objective of the study is to explore capabilities and conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice at a university in Ghana.

#### **1.3.1 The specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore capabilities required in the management of the mentoring relationship from the mentor teachers' and the preservice teachers' perspectives.
2. Examine enabling factors in the management of the mentoring relationship from the preservice teachers and the mentor teachers' perspectives.
3. To identify disabling factors in the management of the mentoring relationship from the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perspectives.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was designed to provide answers to the main research question and its corresponding sub-questions as follows:

### **1.4.1 Main question**

What are the capabilities and conversion factors for the management of mentorship during teaching practice at a Ghanaian University?

#### **1.4.1.1 Sub-questions**

The study was guided by the following sub-questions derived from the primary research question:

1. What are the capabilities for management of the mentoring relationship of preservice teachers during teaching practice?
2. What are the factors enabling management of the mentoring relationship from the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perspective?
3. What are the disabling factors that affect management of the mentoring relationship from the preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' perspectives?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The demand for quality teacher education has increased globally, and mentoring programmes play a key role in supporting preservice teachers to improve professional knowledge at different levels. However, Aderibigbe (2013) argues that many mentor teachers do not actively involve preservice teachers in the classrooms activities but expect them to replicate their teaching style in the future. This study addresses the dearth of literature on the management of the mentoring relationship of Early Childhood Care and Education preservice teachers in a Ghanaian university context by investigating personal, pedagogical, and systemic factors that promote or hinder the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The study involved mentor teachers and preservice teachers sharing their experiences and discussing capabilities that enabled their success in the management of the mentoring relationship. The findings from this research contribute to understanding the conversion factors for the management of the mentoring relationship in the context of teaching practice.

This study makes several significant contributions to the field of education in Ghana by creating a space for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to express their perspectives and share their experiences. Firstly, the findings of the study inform teacher education universities about what preservice teachers perceive as contributing to successful management of mentoring relationship. Secondly, findings of the study contribute to the capabilities approach, specifically in the Ghanaian

teacher education mentoring programme by identifying capabilities and conversion factors needed in the management of the mentoring relationships between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. Thirdly, the findings provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of mentoring relationship from the perspectives of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the Ghanaian context.

Further, the study identifies factors that constrain and enable the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing and capabilities in the management of mentoring relationships. It highlights importance of considering the views of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in understanding the management of the mentoring relationship. Cochran-Smith (2010), and Barrera, Braley and Slate (2010) hold the view that the perspectives of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers are crucial in the management of mentoring relationships to achieve the goal of the mentoring programme in teacher training. This is particularly important in Ghana, where there is a need to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher preparation. The study provides relevant information that can enhance existing practice and performance, as well as contribute to the global body of knowledge on mentoring relationships. Furthermore, the findings of the study inform future policies and strategies on mentoring and school placement in teacher educational institutions. Additionally, the study provides empirical evidence on the experiences of both preservice teachers and mentor teachers and their understanding of the mentoring relationship in a Ghanaian university context. This is valuable in shaping the policies and strategies for mentoring programme during teaching practice.

Furthermore, the study also serves as a reference for heads of cooperating schools to aid them in the process of selecting and pairing mentors and mentees during teaching practice. Previous research conducted by Bouquillon et al. (2005) indicates that a mismatch between mentor and mentee can hinder the success of the mentoring programme. Consequently, the findings of this study could assist in ensuring that the most suitable mentors are selected and matched with preservice teachers for effective mentoring. Additionally, the study provides recommendations to the University on the nature of mentor training required to improve mentor-mentee interactions during preservice teacher training. This is because it is undeniable fact that mentor training is crucial to ensure that mentor teachers have the necessary knowledge in the management of the mentoring relationship.

Finally, this study has the potential to make significant contributions to the existing mentoring literature, which will ultimately improve the understanding of mentoring relationships in teacher education in Ghanaian context. This is essential because, according to Musset (2010) educational policies, no matter how well-intentioned and well-crafted, cannot succeed without trained teachers who professionally manage the teaching-learning process to ensure that education has genuinely taken place in a country.

### **1.6 Analytical Framework of the Study**

In the context of Ghanaian teacher education, this study used the CA as a framework to explore the management of the mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The CA was chosen as it focuses on evaluating whether individuals have substantive opportunities and freedom to achieve wellbeing. It allows the researcher to assess conversion factors (pedagogical, social and systemic arrangements) that influence preservice teachers and mentor teachers' capability sets to choose and lead valued lives as competent professional teachers beyond the teaching practice.

The study emphasised the wellbeing of preservice and mentor teachers, analysing the opportunities and freedom that need to be provided, as well as the challenges that need to be navigated, to achieve their wellbeing by considering their diversity and contextual conditions. The CA framework provides a powerful and multidimensional lens for evaluating the success managing of mentoring relationships during teaching practice, taking into account how individual preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' capability to achieve wellbeing is either enhanced or constrained in the mentoring relationship.

### **1.7 Methodology**

The interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach were adopted to explore the management of the mentoring relationships during teaching practice in the Ghanaian context. The study involved 30 participants from a public teacher education institution of higher education (University N) in Ghana and five public preschools in the Sagnarigu Municipality in the Northern region of Ghana. The preservice teachers came from diverse backgrounds and were enrolled in the same discipline within the same faculty. The qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study as it enabled exploration of the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants in their own contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study employed an in-depth narrative case study approach, allowing preservice teachers and mentor teachers to describe their experiences within the mentoring relationship, strategies and capabilities that enabled successful management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This approach provided the researcher with rich data on how participants grew up and made decisions to pursue the lives they have reason to value (Creswell, 2014). Through this method, the study aimed gained insight into the complexities of the mentoring relationship and how it affects the well-being of preservice and mentor teachers.

### **1.8 Researcher's Positionality**

The positionality of the researcher is one of the most critical variables that can influence research outcomes. It is important to note that all research is prone to bias as researchers bring their own experiences, values, beliefs and prejudices to the research process, which can influence the way they frame their research questions, collect and analyse data, and interpret findings (Saunders et al., 2018). Bryman (2016) argues that all research contains an element of bias, regardless of the methodology used. This suggests researchers' subjectivity and their own beliefs and values can influence their choice of research design, sampling strategy, and interpretation of data. Smith (2015) concurs that researchers' biases and perspectives play a critical role in shaping the research questions, methods, and interpretations of the findings. Creswell (2014) emphasises that researchers should be aware of their positionality and biases and take steps to mitigate them, such as reflexivity and triangulation. Researchers are expected to be transparent about their positions and assumptions to mitigate the impact of their biases on research outcomes. Triangulation and positionality can help improve the rigour and validity of research, but they do not guarantee it. Valid research requires systematic and accurate data collection and interpretation (Yin, 2011). Therefore, the researcher plays a crucial role in the research process, especially in qualitative research where they are responsible for collecting primary data and data analysis.

In this study, the researcher, a Ghanaian lecturer at the University for Development Studies, brings his background and experience as an educational leader and teacher-educator to the study. His prior experience as a teaching practice coordinator, involvement in teacher preparation, education reforms, and interest in professional learning and development of teachers motivated him to conduct



this study on management of preservice teachers' mentorship using CA framework in a Ghanaian university context.

The researcher recognises the potential for his work in higher education to impact the educational experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. However, he also acknowledges the potential for his preconceptions and biases to impact the research outcomes. To lessen this, the researcher employed the method of "bracketing," where he set aside his assumptions, prejudices, and preconceptions throughout the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The aim was to minimise bias in data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Hatch, 2002; Fifolt, 2006; Tufford & Newman, 2010). The goal of this study was to contribute to the knowledge base on mentoring processes in initial teacher education in Ghana, specifically in the context of preschool education.

The study was positioned in the Ghanaian Early Grade school context because of the crucial role preschool teachers play and their limited supply in Ghana. Although teacher education in Ghana has undergone structural and organisational changes (MoE, 2012), there has been limited research on the experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship. However, studies in other countries have shown that preservice teachers have diverse experiences in the management of mentoring relationships, and these experiences are influenced by their previous learning environments (Rodie, 2011; Flores, 2006). Researchers have confirmed that teachers from different backgrounds and contexts face unique challenges, and their training must be taken seriously to ensure quality education (Kane & Fontaine, 2008; Rodie, 2011). Preservice teachers' experiences can have a significant influence on their preparedness to teach, their motivation, their perceptions of their role as preservice teachers and pedagogical approaches they choose to employ in their teaching in the classroom (Seker et al ,2015). Therefore, exploring the experiences of preservice teachers in Ghanaian preschools through research is crucial to obtain reliable information about capabilities in the management of mentoring relationships and conversion factors that may enable or impede the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This study aimed to fill the gap in research on the experiences of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the management of mentoring relationships in Ghanaian teacher education.

## 1.9. Definition of Key Terms

To ensure consistency and clarity in this study, definitions of all terms that require explanation are provided and operationally defined. Marshall (2015) notes that in the context of global education, educators often debate the definitions of various educational terms as they may reflect changes in policy, curricula, or school structure. Thus, providing clear and consistent definitions is essential to ensure that the intended meaning of terms is understood throughout the work (Marshall, 2015; Meakim et al., 2013). Meakim et al. (2013) highlights the importance of providing clear definitions to facilitate communication between practitioners and researchers as key terms may require clarification.

Capabilities: the real freedom one has to lead the kind of life one has reasons to value (Sen, 1999).

Conversion factors: are factors that can allow individuals to convert resources to new functioning (Walker, 2005: 103).

Capability approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual well-being and social arrangements and the design of policies and proposals about social change in society (Robeyns, 2005).

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): refers to the approaches deliberately intended to effect developmental changes for those below the age of 8 years and the foundation stage where children develop their potentialities and capabilities for the future (Ampadu, & Ofosu, 2007).

Early Childhood Education Programmes: refers to programmes designed for those who are within the age group of 0-8 years where the formal teaching and caring of young children is undertaken by people other than their families or in settings outside their homes (Lemaire et al, 2013)

Initial teacher education (ITE): the training and preparation that individuals undergo to become professional teachers. ITE involves a combination of coursework, supervised teaching practice, and assessments designed to ensure that prospective teachers meet the required standards and competencies for teaching in school. It also refers to the first stage in teacher preparation to train professional teachers (Choistealbha & Colum 2022).

Kindergarten refers to a preschool educational approach traditionally based on playing, singing, practical activities such as drawing, and social interaction as part of the transition from home to school (Šmelová & Rýdl, 2019).

Teacher education: refers to a formal curriculum that equips preservice teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, skills, and experiences needed to successfully teach in classrooms (Woo et al., 2023)

Mentoring process: refers to an intentional and nurturing relationship between a mentor and a mentee which fosters the development of the mentee towards the goal of achieving their full potential (Wong & Premkumar, 2007).

Mentoring relationship: a professional relationship that is agreed upon by two individuals with a specific goal or objective outlined to affect the person in gaining knowledge and skills in the world of work or other areas (Conway et al, 2016). It also refers to as the affiliation between the mentee and the mentor, comprising communication, rapport, shared interests, and differing experiences (Papson & Dehmlow, 2022).

Mentor teacher: refers to an experienced teacher who provides support for a beginning teacher as he or she is learning to teach (Davis & Cearley-Key, 2016). It could also be referred to as an experienced teacher who supports Preservice Teachers by coaching, providing feedback, and allowing them to reflect on their practices during their field experience (Obonyo, 2019).

Management of mentoring relationship: the process of overseeing, directing, and guiding the interactions and dynamics between the mentor teachers and preservice teachers in a mentoring relationship.

Preservice teacher: refers to students who are enrolled in a teacher education programme working toward teacher certification (Wachira, 2020). It could also be referred to as a student enrolled in a teacher preparation programme who must successfully complete the programme requirements including course work and field experience before being awarded a teaching license (Ryan et al., 2017).

### **1.10 Organisation of the Study**

This purpose of the study was to investigate the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice, focusing on the capabilities and associated conversion factors of Early Grade mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the Ghanaian context. The study was informed by the CA framework and aimed to contribute to the knowledge base in the mentoring process in initial

teacher education in Ghana. The study is organised into seven chapters in which an overview regarding each chapter is given (Smith, 2019; Brown, 2017).

Chapter 1 introduces the study. It presents background and contextual information as well as the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. The chapter briefly discusses the methodology and the theoretical lens used for analysis. Finally, it provides operational definitions of key terms used throughout the thesis and outlines how the thesis is organised.

A review of relevant literature on the mentoring process and the mentoring relationship is undertaken in Chapter 2, and used to refine and frame the research problem for the study. The chapter delves into global and sub-Saharan African literature on mentoring programmes, and narrows it down to the Ghanaian context. It discusses in detail the historical perspectives of mentoring, the foundations of the mentoring concept and the mentoring relationship. Additionally, the chapter reviews the dynamics of the mentoring relationship, the management of the mentoring relationship, and benefits of mentoring relationships. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key points discussed.

Chapter 3 explains the rationale behind using CA as the theoretical framework for exploring the management of the mentoring relationship. The argument presented in the previous chapter is built on and an overview of the core concepts of the CA is provided as well as its strengths and limitations. Additionally, a historical overview of the capability approach is provided, the challenges of using the approach discussed, and its relevance to education explored, as capabilities form the foundation of the study.

The research methodology and design employed in the study are outlined in Chapter 4. The chapter justifies the choice of a qualitative interpretive theoretical framework and explains the theoretical assumptions underpinning the study. It also discusses the selection criteria for the cases, methods of data collection, and the rationale for these methods. As the study is a case study, the chapter outlines procedures for data analysis and measures taken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. Additionally, it provides a summary of ethical considerations to which the study adhered.

In Chapter 5, analysis of the case study is presented, focusing on personal, pedagogical, and systemic capabilities and conversion factors in the management of the mentoring relationship. The

study is anchored in the capability approach. The analysis is guided by the research questions formulated to incorporate capability approach concepts. The chapter includes verbatim quotations from the participants data was collected, reflecting their perspectives on management of the mentoring relationship. The analysis is based on the data collected and sometimes extends beyond to take into account of relevant issues raised in the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and application of capability approach concepts in Chapter 3. This approach helps to sharpen the discussion and highlights the significance of issues that emerge from the research analysis. It is worth noting that the chapter also ensures adherence to the traditions of reporting the data of qualitative case study.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to discussing the findings of the study, specifically examining the connection between the theoretical framework and the literature to identify capability and conversion factors involved in managing the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This is significant as the capability approach has not been previously used as a lens to study preservice teachers in the Ghanaian context of higher teacher education. The chapter concludes with a summary of the contribution made by the study.

Conclusions and recommendations based on findings of the study are provided in Chapter 7. Enabling and constraining factors identified by participants in management of the mentoring relationship are highlighted. The chapter also identifies potential areas for future research, and reflects on the research process, discussing both the strengths and limitations of the study and challenges faced while conducting qualitative research.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

The critical role of teachers in ensuring quality education and achieving the ultimate goal of student success is widely recognised worldwide (Hattie, 2008; McArdle, 2010). This suggests that of all of the educational resources, the teacher is one of the key components for students' success. However, in Ghana, concerns have been raised regarding the quality of teachers at all pre-tertiary levels of the educational system (Ministry of Education, 2014; Abudu, 2018). In this study, I explored management of the mentoring relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers at a Ghanaian university. Specifically, the study investigated how preservice teachers and mentor teachers manage their mentoring relationship during teaching practice.



The next chapter reviews the literature on teacher education mentoring programmes globally. The chapter began with the historical perspective of mentoring, an overview of mentoring programmes in teacher education globally and narrows down to teacher education mentoring programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the chapter explores mentoring programmes in Ghanaian teacher education and, finally, focuses on the mentoring phenomenon under investigation. in this study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature relevant to this study, which is a compulsory component of any research process (Sajeevanie, 2021). According to Sajeevanie (2021) and Cronin et al. (2008), a literature review involves an evidence-based in-depth analysis of relevant studies and knowledge related to the research work under consideration. Thus, Mackie (2016) and Locke, Silverman and Spirduso (2004) establish the importance of literature review to research work when they posit that the review aims to ascertain how the study fits into a body of knowledge and to identify existing gaps, thereby contextualising research questions, analysis and discussion of the study's findings. Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2012) are of the view that a systematic review provides a transparent, painstaking, and accountable method of gathering information from the literature for research.

Despite the growing body of literature on preservice teachers' mentoring process, there is rarity of relevant literature on experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This review would enable readers to understand the complexities and dynamic nature of the concept of mentoring relationship linked to three research questions of this study. The literature starts with mentoring development and traces the origin of the mentor from Greek mythology to modern mentoring practice. A substantial part of this section is devoted to the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of mentoring with emphasis on the concept of mentoring in initial teacher education, and mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' roles in the mentoring relationship. The section finally looks at mentoring as a dyadic relationship and a reciprocal relationship, and examines mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' participation in the mentoring relationship, which bridges practice and theory gaps in teacher training in Ghanaian universities. The literature review helped the researcher get familiar with relevant knowledge related to the problem that aims to be solved (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

### **2.2 Development of Mentoring**

The roots of mentoring can be traced back to Greek mythology, around 122 BCE, about 3,000 years back in Homer's *Odyssey*. In *The Odyssey*, written by the Greek poet Homer, Odysseus asks his most trusted and loyal friend, Mentor, to cater for his home and take full responsibility of raising Telemachus, his son, from adolescence to manhood while he sets off for the Trojan Wars (Hays, Gerber, & Minichiello, 1999; Asante, 2011). Thus, the at-will and personal relationship that exists

between Odysseus's friend, called Mentor, and Odysseus's son, Telemachus, provides the origin of the mentor-mentee relationship. 'Mentoring' is a term used to describe an activity where an experienced person with respect and mental prowess within an area of specialisation guides and encourages a novice person (known as a mentee) to ensure success of the less experienced person in his or her area of specialisation (Asante, 2011). Thus, the opportunity for preservice teachers to participate in a mentoring relationship is important for their survival to become professional teachers in the future. This suggests that mentoring relationship is critical in training of preservice teachers and for initial training institutions to maximise the opportunities and benefits for their preservice teachers, hence, the necessity to understand the concept of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Mentoring may be defined as person-to-person support that mentor teachers provide to preservice teachers to assist professional growth and development of preservice teachers. Mentoring may also be defined as the relationship between a mentor, who is an experienced person, and a mentee, who is less experienced, to lay the groundwork for the less experienced person's professional development (Ambrosetti, 2014). According to Kemmis et al. (2014), mentoring as a form of support is a process of professional guidance and support for novice teachers in which an experienced teacher assists a less experienced teacher in developing their professional practice. This implies mentoring is mostly used to establish preservice teachers' professional identities and to be familiar with demands of the teaching profession. Preservice teachers are assisted to achieve the necessary competencies in the teaching profession (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011) during teaching practice. Therefore, through adequate mentoring process, preservice teachers learn the dynamics of the teaching and expand their knowledge base (Hudson, 2013) in the teaching profession. Similarly, mentoring is traditionally the process of an experienced person helping a less experienced person by giving advice and supporting the novice to develop professionally in their work or at a school. Emphasising this point, Gyimah (2010) concurs with Eby, Butts, Lockwood and Simon (2004) that mentoring involves a more experienced person (the mentor) in an intense relationship with a junior person (the protégé) to provide two major functions. First, modelling about career development behaviours and, secondly, personal support given to the junior person, especially in the form of psycho-social support. Researchers have suggested that it is essential for novice teachers to be supported by mentor teachers to develop professional skills needed to be self-reliant and able to



handle demands in the classroom (Gilbert, 2005; Hicks, Glasgow, & McNary, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

The concept of mentoring has been there for many years, but the traditional conceptualisation of mentoring in the literature has been shelved in favour of reciprocal conceptualisation of mentoring relationship. In contrast to the traditional definitions, mentoring is collaborative at-will relationship that often exists between experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers for the purpose of growth and career development of the novice person and experienced person as well. What this implies is that although mentoring relationship supports preservice teachers to learn and appreciate the duties and responsibilities associated with the teaching profession (Hudson, 2013), the preservice and mentor teachers benefit from the mentoring journey together (Ambrosetti, 2014). This supports Barrett's (2000) claim that mentoring relationships provide opportunities for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to learn for the development of professional knowledge in the classroom. Besides, mentor teachers gain respect and recognition for their support provided to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. McCollum (2014) concurs that mentors benefit when they assist and facilitate mentees' learning during mentoring relationship. Thus, this reciprocal relationship provides opportunity for mentor teachers to use their expertise in teaching to support preservice teachers and expand their personal learning. This suggests that mentor teachers benefit from mentoring relationship as well (Pitton, 2006; Asuo-Baffour, Daayeng & Agyemang, 2019).

McIntyre (1993), cited by Asante (2011), are of the view that that mentoring originated from other professions, such as management and was imported into education, making the definition of the term in education problematic. Thus, it needs to be made clear that the different definitions of the term 'mentoring' from the historic view to the various professions in the literature deny the term of any water-tight definition. To highlight the lack of a single definition of 'mentoring', Armitage and Burnard (1991) cited in Asante (2011), claim the term has 'definitional quagmire'. The question has been asked: if there is no definitional agreement for the concept of mentoring, how would we know the roles of mentoring? The nonexistence of a single definition has resulted in mentoring roles varying according to the orientation of the profession with different roles for mentors and mentees. This is the reason it has several explanations of the roles of mentors and mentees in the literature. Examples include mentoring relationship in teacher education (Carruthers, 1993; Little, 1992; Roberts, 2000; Anderson & Shannon, 1988); guiding (O'Shea, 2014; Stephens, 1996); role

modelling, (Furlong & Maynard, 1993; Carruthers, 1993; Little, 1990); counselling (Carruthers, 1993; Anderson & Shannon, 1995), among others. In line with this, Minadzi et.al (2019) claims that most of the conceptualisations of mentoring are vague, which has created problems for people who desire to design and implement mentoring programmes for teacher education.

Despite problems in conceptualisation, mentoring is generally accepted to support teachers' efficacy, reduce teachers' attrition, build teachers' resilience, and provide positive professional identity of teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; He, 2009). As a result, conceptualisation of mentoring should be developed first before any teacher education mentoring programme is developed to avoid the risk of developing incomplete mentoring programmes that might have been tried already. This study focused on management of mentoring relationship of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the teaching profession. +-

### **2.3 Initial Teacher Education and the Concept of Mentorship**

Teaching professions require trained individuals to take immediate responsibility of the learning that occurs in classrooms and be accountable to students' learning. In this light, all preservice teachers must be given the opportunity to teach in the classroom under mentor teachers' guidance because teaching in abstract, without learners during the training of preservice teachers, cannot provide them with the necessary context needed to develop and hone professional skills for future teaching. That is why, before preservice teachers complete their education, initial teacher education institutions in Ghana have enacted teaching practice for mentor teachers to support preservice teachers to grow professionally to facilitates pupils' learning in the classroom (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Odell & Huling, 2004; Hobson, 2002; Moir, Gless, & Baron, 1999; Cobb, Stephens, & Watson, 2001; Kuyini et al., 2022). One of the important methods that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) uses for teacher preparation is through mentoring where mentor teachers support preservice teachers to be effective in the interactions with pupils in the classroom (Sundli, 2011).

The ITE use of mentoring as one of the components to train teachers is influenced by the new way of thinking about quality training of teachers and related policies on teacher training. As such, mentoring in ITE is a critical method for quality teacher training globally (Bukari & Kuyini, 2015). As a result, many countries, including Ghana, have placed importance on mentoring programme in the training of teachers in their initial teacher training programmes. The quality training of teachers

has promoted the need for preservice teachers' mentoring relationship during teaching practice in Ghana, which is the aim of this research. The need for mentor teachers supports for preservice teachers during teaching practice has received significant attention in international and national literature and has provided solid foundation for higher education institutions to implement effective mentoring process for preservice teachers (Agoke, 2018; Kardos & Johnson, 2008; Moyo & Robinson, 2001; Martinez, 2004; Scholtz, 2006). This helps them adjust their teaching to support their pupils' learning and become problem-solvers who can monitor pupils' progress (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Gilbert, 2005). Preservice teachers' success depends on mentor teachers' support to preservice teachers through mentoring relationship during their teaching in the classroom.

Mentoring is seen as one of the most highly valued elements in initial teacher training programmes (Ambrosetti, 2010; Parkison, 2007; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Beck & Kosnik, 2002) globally because preservice teachers are offered the opportunity to bridge theory with practice gap and progress professionally in the teaching profession (Abudu, 2018; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2008; Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005). Touching on learning the dynamics of the teaching profession, Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) state that mentoring is an important opportunity for preservice teachers to acquire knowledge on how to impart in the classroom and learn the strategies of encouraging pupils' participation in lesson, and meeting of pupils' parents, among others.

The mentoring programme in teacher education has a long-term influence on teacher quality (Kelley, 2004; Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2017). Consequently, mentor teachers' support is valuable to develop a repertoire of skills of preservice teachers in dealing with diverse learning situations (Wojnowski et al., 2003; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Serpell, 2000; Gujarati, 2012). Thus, mentoring programme has become a priority in teacher education reforms in many Sub-Saharan countries (Ingersoll & Strong, 2013; Britton, Paine, Raizen, & Pimm, 2003; Strong, 2009; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009) which have made the work of mentors more relevant and demanding since the time spent by preservice teachers with mentors is very significant for the training institutions. Consequently, the inclusion of mentoring in teacher education programmes in some Sub-Saharan countries has led to restructuring of educational policies in most African countries to meet the current global trend of teacher training.

Mentoring roles are important in enhancing preservice teachers' opportunities to learn within the teaching contexts (Lai, 2005). The best ways to acquire professional skills, competence and knowledge within the teaching profession by preservice teachers is through mentor teachers' support in the mentoring process (Leshem, 2012), which has become an essential part for the training of preservice teachers by initial teacher education institutions. Globally, it has been acknowledged that the effective strategy for the training of quality teachers in the teaching profession is the mentoring process for preservice teachers during teaching (Sundli, 2007; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Furlong, Chitty, Barrett, Barto & Miles, 1994). However, several studies have placed primacy on mentoring for training of teachers, but the mentoring process for preservice teachers' training differ in different countries (Graves, 2010; Lynch & Smith, 2012; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh & Wilss, 2008; Sundli, 2007; Edwards, 1997). This suggests that a country's mentoring programme for training of teachers may not necessarily work in another country, which makes it prudent for this study to understand the lived experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in mentoring relationship in a Ghanaian university.

#### **2.4 Management of Mentoring Relationship**

The management of mentoring relationships is a critical aspect of professional development for preservice teachers, which requires careful planning, organising and controlling to establish harmonious working mentoring. As noted by Le Cornu (2009), effective mentoring relationships are critical for professional learning and development of preservice teachers during teaching practice. The author notes that mentoring relationship should focus on providing preservice teachers with opportunities to develop practical skills and knowledge relevant in preparing them for the realities of teaching in their future teaching careers. Mentor teachers should be approachable, open, and responsive to the needs and concerns of preservice teachers. Mentor teachers should also be available to provide feedback and support to preservice teachers, while also encouraging preservice to take responsibility for their own learning and development (ibid). This suggests that harmonious relationship is required for the professional development in initial teacher education programmes. According to Pfund et al., (2021), management of mentoring relationships involves ongoing communication, regular check-ins, and clear goal setting. It is essential for mentor teachers to establish clear expectations and goals with preservice teachers and regularly assess progress towards these goals.

Mentor teachers' support influences the professional learning experience of preservice teachers in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. In studies by Harrison et al. (2006) and Kutsyuruba et al., (2019) preservice teachers identified the following forms of supports as essential elements of good management of mentoring relationships: mentor having enough time to plan together with mentees, being encouraging and supportive, being positive, and having mentor teachers always available to help in the classroom. Le Cornu (2009) and Fajet et al. (2005) lament that in some situations where preservice teachers place a premium on interpersonal aspects of relationships during teaching practice, there is a tendency to give less attention to pedagogical aspects of teaching. However, Le Cornu (2009 citing O'Connor, 2008) submits that interpersonal aspects of mentoring relationships could promote learner-centred practices in the mentoring relationship. Perhaps, this is why Hobson, Malderez, Tracey, Giannakaki, Pell, and Tomlinson (2008) stress the significant influence mentoring relationships have on mentees' professional growth because their emotional responses to teachers, pupils, and other staff members in the school could be a result of their relationships with their mentor teachers.

Hoigaard and Mathisen (2009) argue that effective communication has a significant influence on management of mentoring relationships. He (2009) also explains that effective communication enhances the management of mentoring relationship between mentors and preservice teachers for professional growth and development, whereas the opposite could adversely affect their personal and professional development. Although positive mentoring relationships mostly exist among mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice, sometimes the relationships show a dysfunctional role (Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010; Johnson, 2008). Some studies on mentoring process have suffered from what Duck (1994 cited in Patrick, 2013) has designated as "maniacal cheeriness" (p. 11), that is, the negative consequences of mentoring relationship during teaching practice that are yet to be incorporated into the mentoring relationship literature.

This next section provides insights into management of mentoring relationship between preservice and mentor teachers during teaching practice. Mentoring relationship is crucial for the success of teachers in the classroom in their early career stages. Mentor teachers offer support, guidance, and feedback to beginning or preservice teachers to help them improve their teaching practices and adjust to the demands of the teaching profession. However, effective management of mentoring

relationships is not always easy, and research has explored different strategies to enhance the quality of the mentoring relationship.

## **2.5 Qualities of an Effective Mentoring Relationship**

An effective mentoring relationship requires a combination of qualities that foster a positive and supportive environment for preservice teachers. In this literature review, qualities of an effective mentoring relationship are explored. Mentor teachers have experience to support preservice teachers' learning to perfect their teaching in the classroom and also help them have different perspectives in viewing things in the profession (Moir & Gless, 2001; Wood & Stanulis, 2010; Asante, 2011). This suggests that preservice teachers are supported by experienced teachers who are successful in teaching in the classroom (Abugre & Kpinpuo, 2017; Allen, Cobb, & Danger, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005 cited in Addo, 2013). It should be noted the goal of mentor teachers is to support preservice teachers to become best teachers in the classroom, but not to create clones of themselves in the teaching profession.

The number of years of teaching experience is considered vital for teachers to be mentor teachers, but there is no standard number of years stipulated in the literature for teachers to be considered as mentor teachers or experienced teachers. However, in many countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria, among others, three to five years of teaching experience is considered as the required minimum for one to become a mentor teacher or an experienced teacher (Wood & Stanulis, 2010; Cobbold, 2014). The teaching experience of mentor teachers should be current knowledge and newest instructional strategies relevant to preservice teachers' needs (Trubowitz, 2004; Allen, 2007; Gyimah, 2010). This suggests that mentor teachers must be well-versed in instructional strategies and have solid pedagogical content knowledge (Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Wood & Stanulis, 2010) in their specialisation. This is because mentor teachers may not be able to help preservice teachers learn the requisite pedagogical knowledge when they are not abreast with recent instructional practices (Trubowitz, 2004; Wood & Stanulis, 2010; Maskit & Orland-Barak, 2015). An effective mentoring relationship is a critical component of teacher education as it provides preservice teachers with opportunities to link theoretical concepts with the practical aspects of teaching. According to Zeichner (2010), mentoring relationship facilitates integration of theoretical knowledge with content and pedagogical knowledge to help preservice teachers develop a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching profession. Hashweh (2013) and Wilson (2013)

suggest that effective mentoring relationship can support in addressing challenges preservice teachers face in managing classroom dynamics, designing effective lesson plans, and assessing student learning through providing constructive feedback, guidance and resources during teaching practice. Mentor teachers provide constructive feedback on preservice teachers' teaching practices, share their own experiences and insights and offer suggestions for improvement.

According to Pfund et al., (2014), the qualities of effective mentoring are the behaviours of mentor teachers and preservice teachers that yield successful management of the mentoring relationship, regardless of whether the relationships are created formally or informally. Effective mentoring relationships require a range of complex skills that may not come naturally to all teachers. As noted by Law et al., (2020) effective mentoring is not only offering feedback but includes various type of support such as role modeling, commitment, assisting in professional and career development and psychological support. This supports that mentor teachers must possess a range of knowledge and skills to establish a supportive and productive relationship with preservice teachers. Some of the qualities of effective mentoring relationship include communication and active listening, honesty, mutual respect and freedom of voice, pedagogical skills, feedback, and emotional support, among others.

One essential skill for effective mentoring is the ability of mentor teachers to provide constructive feedback to preservice teachers. According to Hennissen (2011), mentor teachers who are skilled at providing feedback can help preservice teachers to develop new skills and refine their teaching practices. The author note that effective feedback should be specific, timely, and focused on actions that can be taken to improve performance. As noted by Ahmed (2022), mentoring relationships evolve over time, and it is essential for mentors and mentees to regularly assess and adjust their goals and strategies. This requires a willingness to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances.

Another critical skill for effective management of mentoring relationship is the ability of mentor teachers to cultivate a safe environment for preservice teachers. As pointed out by Ahmed (2022), mentor teachers who can establish trust and rapport with preservice teachers are more likely to foster a positive and productive mentoring relationship. According to Ahmed (2022), trust is essential in the mentoring relationship because it allows preservice teachers to be open and honest about their struggles and concerns in the mentoring relationship. Trust is developed through mutual respect, open communication, and a willingness to listen to each other's perspectives. Mentor



teachers must be able to actively listen to preservice teachers, provide emotional support when needed, and offer constructive feedback in a non-judgmental manner.

A positive attitude is also critical in an effective mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers need to be supportive and encouraging, and preservice teachers need to be receptive to feedback and willing to learn. A study by Pfund et al., (2021) found that a positive attitude was essential in effective mentoring relationship, as it created a positive and supportive learning environment. Effective mentor teachers should also possess strong interpersonal skills, such as empathy, communication, and cultural competence. According to Lambeth and Smith (2016) mentor teachers who can understand and appreciate the unique cultural backgrounds and perspectives of preservice teachers are likely to establish a productive mentoring relationship. Similarly, mentor teachers who are skilled at communicating effectively can help preservice teachers to feel heard and valued in the mentoring relationship. Effective mentoring requires mentor teachers who are committed to ongoing learning and professional development. As noted by Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2011), mentor teachers who are up-to-date on best practices in teaching and learning are better equipped to provide relevant and meaningful support to their preservice teachers in mentoring.

Effective management of mentoring relationship requires flexibility from both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the relationship. The mentor teachers need to be flexible and responsive in their approach to mentoring and be willing to adapt to the preservice teachers' needs. A study by Hobson and Malderez (2013) found that flexibility was essential in the mentoring relationship as it allowed for a collaborative and dynamic learning environment. A responsive mentor teacher is one who adapts to the mentee's needs and provide feedback in a timely manner. Responsiveness includes providing feedback on lesson plans, responding to emails promptly, and being available for meetings. A study by Pfund et al., (2021) pointed out that responsiveness was crucial in the mentoring relationship as it helped the mentee to feel heard and valued. Preservice teachers also need to be flexible in their approach to learning and be open to feedback and new ideas. Effective mentoring requires a willingness to adapt to the needs of preservice teachers. As noted by Hobson and Malderez (2013), mentoring relationships are dynamic, and mentor teachers must be willing to adjust their approach based on the preservice teachers' changing needs and circumstances. This flexibility allows mentors to provide tailored support and guidance to mentees, which could be critical in helping them to succeed.



Furthermore, effective mentoring relationship requires supportiveness from mentor teachers, who need to provide emotional and instructional support to preservice teachers. Instructional support includes providing feedback on teaching practices, sharing resources, and helping preservice teachers to develop new skills. Emotional support includes listening to preservice teachers' concerns and offering encouragement and motivation. A study by Tolan et al., (2020) found that supportiveness was critical in the mentoring relationship as it helped the mentee to feel valued and supported in the mentoring relationship. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), mentor teachers should work with preservice teachers to establish specific goals related to teaching practice and regularly assess progress towards those goals. This allows for a more focused and targeted approach to mentoring, with specific areas of improvement identified and addressed.

According to White et al. (2010), preservice teachers have acknowledged some aspects of effective mentoring as a reciprocal relationship with planned mentoring activities, open communication, support in role transition and guidance.

### **2.5.1 Communication**

Effective communication is critical aspect of successful mentoring relationship in the management of a mentee's career growth and development. It is through communication that mentor teachers and preservice teachers can build rapport, establish trust, and identify goals and expectations. As noted by Cho and Lee (2021) effective communication helps to establish a trusting, honest and supportive relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. Thus, communication is essential factor that affects effectiveness of the mentoring process (Cho & Lee, 2021). A study by Garza and Ovando (2012) indicate that mentor teachers' effective communication skills improved preservice teachers' self-efficacy and positively influenced their teaching practices. The impact of mentor teachers' effective communication skills on preservice teachers' self-efficacy and teaching practices has been supported by previous studies. For example, Schunk and Pajares (2002) argue that self-efficacy plays a critical role in determining individuals' motivation and performance, and that mentor teachers play crucial role to improve preservice teachers' self-efficacy through effective communication and feedback.

Similarly, a study by Hart (2018) found that mentor teachers' effective communication skills, such as providing constructive feedback, building rapport, and active listening, positively influenced preservice teachers' professional development and teaching practices. The study highlights the

importance of mentor teachers' communication skills in establishing a positive mentoring relationship and creating an environment that fosters the mentee's professional growth and development.

Furthermore, research suggests that effective communication skills are essential for mentors in various professional contexts. For example, a study by Orsini et al., (2016) found that effective communication skills, such as active listening and empathy, were critical for mentoring relationships in the medical profession. The study emphasises the importance of communication in mentoring relationships and the need for mentor teachers training programmes to incorporate communication skills to improve the effectiveness of mentoring relationships.

Moreover, communication in management of mentoring relationship should be clear and concise to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. Hoffman et al., (2015) state that clear communication between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is essential to establish shared expectations, goals, and objectives. Effective communication between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is necessary for providing constructive feedback and promoting reflective practice (Garza & Ovando, 2012). However, effective communication in mentoring relationship could be hindered by challenges such as cultural differences or language barriers. A study by Lynn et al., (2020) found that mentor teachers and preservice teachers from different cultural backgrounds faced communication barriers that hindered the mentoring process. Thus, mentor teachers need to be aware of these challenges and adapt their communication strategies to suit individual preservice teachers' needs (Cho & Lee, 2021).

Good mentor teachers communicate effectively with their preservice teachers, are enthusiastic and show empathy towards preservice teachers' needs in mentoring relationship (Wood & Stanulis, 2010) to achieve their goals. Therefore, mentor teachers must understand the habits of preservice teachers for effective management of mentoring relationship and relay information to preservice teachers (Wood & Stanulis, 2010; Brookfield, 1986; Knowles et al., 2011) to motivate them in the teaching profession. In addition, the mentoring process is effective when mentor teachers are committed in the relationship (Feinman-Nemser, 2001; Burn & Mutton, 2015) to effectively support the preservice teachers' needs (Burn & Mutton, 2015). Mentors are less likely to reach full potential of the mentoring relationship if they are unclear about the processes of mentoring or their roles to support preservice teachers to develop professional skills in the mentoring relationship

(Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Therefore, it is important that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in mentoring relationship understand their specific roles because unclear mentoring roles can lead to confusion and ineffective support for preservice teachers (Chapel, 2003; Brooks; 2000; Abugre & Kpinpuo, 2017).

Preservice teachers value mentoring relationship that they are able to freely discuss issues with mentors who are approachable, listening and are ready to help them to develop professionally (Izadinia, 2015). Several studies have highlighted the importance of open communication and critical feedback to preservice teachers as a result of mentors' communication skills, capacity for care, and ability to build a good mentoring relationship (Hudson, Skamp, & Brooks, 2005; Bradfield & Hudson, 2012; Hudson, 2010). Preservice teachers are mostly supported by mentor teachers in providing constructive criticism when both perceive the mentoring relationship as positive (Lee & Vasquez, 2011). Therefore, trust between mentor and preservice teachers based on effective feedback and communication (Stanulis & Russell, 2000; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008) is important in mentoring relationship. However, how much trust that is developed remains to be determined by mentor and preservice teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship. To conclude, a study by Garza and Ovando (2012) highlight the crucial role of mentor teachers' effective communication skills in improving preservice teachers' self-efficacy and teaching practices. The study underscores the importance of mentor teachers' communication skills in establishing positive mentoring relationships and promoting preservice teachers' professional growth and development. Effective communication skills are critical for mentors in various professional contexts, and mentorship training programmes should incorporate communication skills training to improve the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Effective communication helps to establish an honest, trusting and supportive mentoring relationship, which improves on preservice teachers' self-efficacy, promotes reflective practice and shared expectations and goals. However, mentor teachers must be aware of the challenges and adapt their communication strategies to suit preservice teachers' needs in the mentoring relationship.

### **2.5.2 Mutual Respect**

Respect is critical component of successful management of mentoring relationships. Respect involves demonstrating a positive regard for preservice teachers as individuals and for their contribution to the mentoring relationship. When mentor teachers show respect for preservice

teachers, it creates a positive and supportive environment that fosters learning and growth. Therefore, respect is a necessary determinant for preservice teachers' confidence in the mentoring relationship. According to Beck and Kosnick (2002), preservice teachers like to be treated with dignity and respect, and be considered as teachers in the presence of pupils by the mentor teachers. This is because it could make pupils respect them and provide them with some responsibility similar to what they would be doing in their future career as teachers. Similar to this conception, researchers have indicated that collegiality increases preservice teachers' effectiveness and efficiency in mentoring relationship which, in turn, increases pupils' performances in classroom (Hseih & Nguyen, 2020; Allen, Cobb, & Danger, 2003; Johnson, 2008; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005 as cited in Addo, 2013; Pitton, 2006). It is also reported that preservice teachers value working with mentor teachers who treat them with respect in the mentoring relationship (Hseih & Nguyen, 2020). Thus, preservice teachers tend to learn more when they see mentor teachers are being respectful in the course of their mentoring relationship as much as the mentor teachers display expertise in the relationship (Stein & D' Amico, 2002; Margolis, 2007). Respect is essential for building trust in mentoring relationships. When mentor teachers demonstrate respect for preservice teachers, it establishes a sense of mutual trust and understanding. As stated by Kram (1985), "Mentors who demonstrate respect for their mentees establish a relationship of trust and mutual understanding, which is critical for effective mentoring" (p. 65). When preservice teachers feel respected, they are more likely to feel comfortable and confident in the mentoring relationship, which, in turn, positively influences their professional growth and development.

Furthermore, a study by Eby et al. (2008) found that perceived respect from the mentor was positively associated with mentees' job satisfaction and intent to stay in their current job. The study, thus, highlights the critical role of respect in mentoring relationships and its potential to positively influence mentees' career outcomes. This suggests, respect is crucial for creating a positive and supportive mentoring environment. When mentors demonstrate respect for mentees' ideas and opinions, it creates a safe space for mentees to express themselves freely. This establishes the importance of mentors listening actively to mentees' ideas and providing constructive feedback that acknowledges their contributions. According to Ragins and Kram (2007), "Respectful mentoring relationships are characterized by open communication, active listening, and the provision of

constructive feedback" (p. 69). This approach creates a positive and supportive mentoring environment that fosters the mentee's learning and growth.

Researchers have observed that preservice teachers' desire to have some freedom to take control of the classroom (Jackson 2001; Patrick, 2013) during teaching practice, but in traditional mentoring relationship, mentor teachers restrict the freedom of preservice teachers to act in ways that they believe is right (Axford, 2005), cited in Patrick (2013). However, Patrick (2013) believes that preservice teachers should be allowed to experiment and push boundaries of what is possible in modern schools' system. Commenting on preservice teachers' freedom, Izadinia (2015) emphasises that although preservice teachers need to accept their mentor teachers' support and feedback during teaching practice, preservice teachers must be provided opportunities to learn by teaching in the classroom without restriction in order to form their own opinions on teaching.

According to Patrick (2013), preservice teachers believe that there should be freedom to experiment with new teaching ideas in their professional learning process. Freedom of voice is essential for mentees to express their ideas and opinions without fear of judgment or retribution. When mentees feel free to express themselves, they are more likely to contribute to the mentoring relationship actively. Mentors should create safe spaces for the mentees to express their ideas and opinions and actively listen to them. According to Kram (1985, 64), "mentors who listen actively and encourage their mentees to express their ideas and opinions create an environment that fosters learning and growth". Research suggests that the presence of respect and freedom of voice positively influences the mentees' professional growth and development. A study by Bozionelos (2004) found that respect, trust, and freedom of voice were positively associated with mentees' job satisfaction and perceived career success. Mentor teachers should establish trust with their mentees by being open, honest, and reliable in their interactions (Foltos, 2013) for the mentees' professional growth and development.

However, some researchers have observed the perceived unwillingness of some mentor teachers to allow preservice teachers freedom to practice the things learnt at their university and to find out what works in the real classrooms to be an issue of concern (Keogh et al., 2006; Phelan et al., 2008; Patrick, 2013) for the preservice teachers. Liliane and Colette (2010) argue that preservice teachers gain confidence in expressing their own ideas in the classroom if mentor teachers allowed diversity of ideas and encourage reflection on practice.

### **2.5.3 Pedagogical Skills**

Pedagogical skills are considered as a crucial element for successful mentoring relationships during teaching practice. According to Hobson (2002), qualities that preservice teachers appreciate in their mentor teachers as being instrumental to their learning include ability to use variety of teaching methods, assistance to develop knowledge of subject matter, availability and time conscious, being supportive and reassuring.

According to Stanuli and Floden (2009), mentor teachers are expected to facilitate professional development by engaging preservice teachers in activities that are focused on pedagogical skills. Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) argue that mentor teachers' ability to bridge practice and theory gap to facilitate preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills during teaching practice is vital in mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers in teacher education programmes. Research has shown that pedagogical skills provide constructive feedback, and facilitate the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills for effective teaching and learning (Kram, 1983; Darling-Hammond, 2006). As such, these skills are also critical for effective mentoring relationships, which are aimed at providing support, guidance, and feedback to preservice teachers. According to Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002), mentor teachers' pedagogical skills are an essential factor in ensuring that preservice teachers gain the necessary knowledge and experience to become competent teachers.

Moreover, mentor teachers' pedagogical skills are critical in promoting preservice teachers' reflection and self-evaluation (Bullough & Draper, 2004). This reflective process enables preservice teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness, set goals for professional growth, and develop strategies for improving their teaching practices (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002). Pedagogical skills are a vital component of mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. These skills facilitate the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills, promote reflective practices, and contribute to the overall effectiveness of teacher education programmes. Therefore, mentor teachers' pedagogical skills should be a priority area for training and development programmes to enhance the quality of mentoring relationships in teacher education programmes.

#### **2.5.4 Emotional Support and Encouragement**

Emotional support is important to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. Therefore, preservice teachers stress that emotional support is an important form of support for them during teaching practice because lack of emotional support could have negative effects on their professional learning (Beck & Kosnick, 2002). According to Aderibigbe (2012, 40), cited in Beck and Kosnick (2002), "A student teacher was reported to have said it would have been nice of her support teacher to acknowledge her effort at school despite her mum's bad health situation (after being informed)." According to Kaasila and Lauriala (2010), teaching practice experience can make preservice teachers to be in anxiety. As such, emotional support needs to be considered as a key component to enhance preservice teacher learning (Kaasila & Lauriala, 2010; Reio, 2005). From this standpoint, mentor teachers' friendliness and emotional support are important features in mentoring relationship. Bradbury and Koballa(2008) argue that emotional support is important for the personal and professional development of preservice teachers and mentor teachers to be bonded together (Bullough, 2005 in Bradbury & Koballa, 2008) for effective mentoring relationships.

Emotional support and encouragement are one of the most important factors in the management of mentoring relationships for preservice teachers' during teaching practice. Studies have indicated emotional and academic support as primary components of mentoring relationships (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011; Ferrier-Kerr 2009; Beck & Kosnik 2002). The position of preservice teachers is that mentor teachers offer emotional support and encouragement in the mentoring relationship (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011). Izadinia (2015) believes that fears and uncertainties preservice teachers have could be significantly alleviated and transformed into increased confidence if they receive emotional support and encouragement from mentor teachers. Similarly, Beck and Kosnik (2012) argue that friendliness and emotional support are critical components of preservice teachers' mentoring relationships during teaching practice because encouragement and supportive relationship from mentor teachers are essential to develop confidence necessary for preservice teachers to take the risks of experimenting in the classroom (Beijaard, Rajuan, & Verloop, 2010). The emotional and professional support that mentor teachers provide play an essential role in developing preservice teachers (Clarke, Triggs & Nielsen, 2012) during teaching practice. In line with this, Izadinia, in his study (2015), suggests that preservice teachers need emotional and academic encouragement from mentor teachers to build their confidence in the teaching profession. However, some



preservice teachers attach more importance to emotional support, instead of academic support from mentor teachers, because research has shown that emotional support from mentors can positively impact on mentees' motivation, well-being, and overall career success (Tong & Kram, 2012; Ragins & Verbos, 2017).

Mentor teachers who provide emotional support and encouragement can positively impact preservice teachers' confidence, self-efficacy, and resilience (Nikoceviq-Kurti & Saqipi, 2022; Colson et al., 2017). However, it is important to note that emotional support and encouragement should not be the only focus of the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers also need to provide constructive feedback, and challenge preservice teachers to provide them with opportunities for growth and development (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). This suggests that mentors should strive to provide a balance of emotional support and constructive feedback to help preservice teachers achieve their wellbeing and reach their full potential in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

## **2.6 Mentor Teacher Participation in the Mentoring Relationship**

Active participation in the mentoring relationship involves building a strong relationship with preservice teachers. Mentor teachers should be reflective practitioners who engage in self-assessment and self-improvement (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). According to Asención Delaney 2012), reflective practice involves critically examining one's actions, beliefs, and values to identify areas for growth and improvement in the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers who engage in reflective practice are better able to model this behaviour for their mentees and provide guidance on how to engage in self-reflective practice by preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that positive relationships between mentors and mentees were essential for both professional and personal development. Some scholars have explained that mentor teachers believe preservice teachers should be given the freedom to teach pupils without interference, except where learners are at risk in the learning process (Fieman-Nemsar & Beasley, 1997). The authors further aver that some mentors choose to be out of the classroom to prevent the temptation of interfering with preservice teachers' work in the classroom. This is because mentees sometimes need to learn on their own to progressively develop professional skills. However, some researchers have suggested that mentors' involvement in preservice teachers' teaching in the classroom could be seen as mere assistance and not invasion (Fieman-Nemsar & Beasley, 1997).



This suggests that although mentor teachers' collaboration with preservice teachers is necessary at any time, mentor teachers also need to be aware of when and how to collaborate without undermining preservice teachers in the classroom. The power dimension mentor in the mentoring relationship is very important for management of the mentoring relationship (Sachs, 2005; Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010). This implies a mentor teacher must give constructive criticism and make specific approaches for the development and improvement of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge through mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **2.7 Preservice Teachers' Involvement in the Mentoring Relationship**

Preservice teachers' participation in classroom activities along with mentor teachers is considered necessary for the successful management of the mentoring relationship. Margolis (2007) opines that the opportunity given to preservice teachers to actively participate in classroom activities is significant to enable them develop professional knowledge and skills. From the literature, co-planning, co-teaching and active participation of preservice teachers in classroom activity is necessary for development of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge and improvement of mentor teachers' professional skills (Shank, 2005; Larson, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Du Plessis, 2019). However, preservice teachers sometimes may want to handle classroom activities alone without mentor teachers' involvement, but as observers in the classroom. This supports O'Shea's (2014) view that preservice teachers doing things in their own way seems to be critical to them, instead of doing things compulsorily in the mentor teachers' way, which may suggest preservice teachers are not competent to solely handle activities in the classroom with support from mentor teachers. However, mentor teachers' modelling of good practice and provision of support to preservice teachers is important to encourage independent teaching of preservice teachers in the classroom, which is a component of successful management of mentoring relationship. Consequently, it is essential for preservice teachers to listen to advice and support from the mentor teachers to prevent personality clashes in mentoring relationship. The understanding of preservice teachers and mentor teachers' roles ensure successful management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **2.8 Preservice teachers' and Mentor teachers' Roles in the mentoring relationship**

The quality of teachers has improved because of the mentoring programme integrated into teacher preparation (Kelley, 2004; Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2017). As a result, mentoring

preservice teachers has been widely recognised over the past decades as an effective strategy for easing the transition from student-teacher into the profession and mitigating common challenges in early years of teaching (Gilles, Wilson, & Elias, 2010; Gujarati, 2012; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Wojnowski et al., 2003; Serpell, 2000). Researchers on mentoring relationships have shown that mentors and preservice teachers perform a variety of roles depending on the type of relationship and the intended outcomes to be achieved in the mentoring process. However, the roles of mentor teachers and preservice teachers are unclear in the mentoring process because the roles are intrinsically linked. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the nature of the interaction and reaction that exists between mentors and preservice teachers to establish the specific roles in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Mentor teachers and preservice teachers' roles should have a positive influence in the management of the mentoring relationship. As such, it is important for preservice teachers and mentor teachers to understand their respective roles in the mentoring relationship and how they could work together in the relationship. However, the roles performed by mentor teachers become more complex when one considers the variety of terminologies used to characterise them (Hall et al., 2008; Bray & Nettleton, 2006; Hopper, 2001; Sundli, 2007). According to Ambrosetti (2010), mentor teachers are to foster preservice teachers' professional development through role modeling behaviour in the relationship. In addition, Carver-Thomas (2019) argues that in most comprehensive mentoring programmes, a formally assigned mentor teacher has many responsibilities, including but not limited to: orienting the preservice teacher to school procedures, norms, and assisting the preservice teacher in integrating and designing a response to the learning needs standards-based curriculum for students in the classroom. To carry out these duties, mentors require regular and continuous chances to observe, co-teach and co-plan with preservice teachers in the classroom (Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith, 2012).

When it comes to the mentor-mentee relationship, both parties play crucial roles (Kamvounias et al., 2006; Ambrosetti, 2010) in achieving the goals in the mentoring relationship. Although, mentor teachers and preservice teacher play vital roles in the mentoring relationship, there is an overlap of roles in the relationship (Ambrosetti, 2010). Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) support this idea, and argue that preservice teachers and mentor teachers' role are intertwined depending on each other's activities in the mentoring relationship. Although Freeman's (2010) describes preservice teachers

as passive learners, Walkington (2015) sees the preservice teacher as an active learner in the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers and mentor teachers strengthen their mentoring relationship by working together to gain a deeper understanding of each other and communicating effectively to develop their professional skills.

Several studies (Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw, 2010; Caires & Almeida, 2012) suggest that the mentoring relationship has a positive influence on professional growth and development of preservice teachers and mentor teachers. However, preservice teachers' levels of competence and dedication may be influenced by the school environment. On this, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) argue that a school's environment plays a role in the mentoring process. Mentoring relationships have been shown to have favourable impact in schools with a more collaborative atmosphere (Gyimah, 2013; Acheampong, 2012) while having detrimental effects in schools with an authoritarian climate (Gyimah, 2013; Acheampong, 2012). This lends credence to the argument that the atmosphere at a school has a bearing on both the practice of teaching and the process of becoming a teacher (Zuljan & Pozarnik, 2014). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) have concluded that there is a favourable correlation between a school environment and preservice teachers' dedication in the classroom, leading to students' academic progress in the mentoring relationship.

Livingston (2016) claims that the debate around mentoring relationship has gained attention recently due to significant contributions to preservice teachers' training and development to become competent teachers. Mentoring relationship helps preservice teachers and mentor teachers to improve their professional knowledge. Also, sharing of the craft of teaching is one of the benefits of the mentoring relationship for mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Walkington 2005a, 2005b; Ambrosetti, 2010; Kostovich & Thurn, 2006; Heirdsfield et al., 2008; Jewell, 2007). This is consistent with a study by Kagoda and Sentongo (2015) which found that preservice teachers benefit from working with mentor teachers in schools because they gain practical experience in pedagogy. Therefore, it can be concluded that preservice teachers require support from mentor teachers to develop pedagogical skills and become competent teachers in the profession with mentor teachers benefiting as well.

There is a positive mentoring relationship when mentors use their unique qualities to encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their own actions to achieve their goals (Sempowicz & Hudson,

2012). According to Hudson (2013a), a positive mentoring relationship is one that has been socially constructed through factors such as communication, mutual support and friendship, mutual respect and trust in a non-judgmental environment. According to Hudson and Hudson (2017), mentor teachers who are able to instill good attitude and confidence in their preservice teachers demonstrate qualities such as active listening, honesty, encouragement, and effective communication skills. Russell and Russell (2011:34) have concluded that "trust and share values" are crucial for the management of the mentoring relationship. Similarly, trust, mutual respect, honesty and sharing of strengths and weaknesses are hallmarks of a successful mentoring between a preservice teacher and a mentor teacher (Blake-Beard, Bayne, Crosby & Muller, 2011). In line with this, Kim and Schallert (2011) opine that success of a mentoring relationship depends on the contributions of mentor teachers and preservice teachers.

Preservice teachers can benefit from mentoring relationship if they have a favourable impression of their mentor teachers and they are likely to remain in the teaching after graduation (Balthazar, 2010). Therefore, a positive mentor-mentee relationship is important for attracting and retaining teachers in the teaching profession (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012). According to Abudu & Donkor (2014), the nature of the mentoring relationship is important because of the following benefits: improvement of the professional qualities and personal attributes of preservice teachers and mentor teachers (Rippon & Martin, 2006), development of pedagogical knowledge of mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Mukeredzi & Manwa, 2019).

The goal of mentoring relationship is to socialise mentor teachers and preservice teachers into the teaching profession (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Smedley et al., 2001; Eller, Lev & Feurer, 2015). Researchers have identified a number of benefits of mentoring relationship from the perspectives of mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Waters et al. 2002; Abudu & Donkor, 2014; Wilson et al., 2010; Gray & Smith, 2000; White et al., 2010; Eby et al., 2010). The benefits from preservice teachers' perspectives are pedagogical skills, self-confidence and communication skills (Waters et al. 2002; Abudu & Donkor, 2014).

Mentor teachers support the professional growth of preservice teachers through emotional and intellectual support in the mentoring relationship. Additionally, mentor teachers support to ease transition of preservice teachers into the classroom and assessing the potential of preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship (Ozgen & Baron 2007; Anane, 2013). Sayeski and Paulsen (2012)

reiterate that support to preservice teachers by mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship is not limited to, but includes, (a) curriculum and planning guides, (b) lesson resources, (c) verbal and written comments to students in the classroom, and (d) modeling of teaching practices. Further, researchers have found that mentoring programmes have a positive effect on novice teachers by lowering their feelings of isolation, increasing their work satisfaction and self-efficacy, and improving their pedagogical topic understanding (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Schleicher, 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999 cited in Anane, 2013). Additionally, equally important benefits of mentoring relationship for preservice teachers are constructive feedback by mentor teachers for professional skills and to develop reflective practices in teaching (Ambrosetti, 2010; Rajuan, Beijaard & Verloop, 2008; Lai, 2005).

Mentor teachers also stand to gain professionally from their time spent with preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship (Abudu & Donkor, 2014; White et al., 2010; Eby et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2010; Gray & Smith, 2000). According to Gyimah (2014), mentor teachers obtain both extrinsic (financial) and intrinsic (cooperation and greater competence) advantages by participating in mentoring relationship. The benefits of mentor teachers' participation in mentoring relationship include: mentors' sense of accomplishment from sharing what they have learnt with preservice teachers, support to enhance productivity and job satisfaction, higher professional status, and a stronger sense of identity (Poronsky, 2012; Haggard & Turban, 2012). Huybrecht (2011) indicates that mentor teachers' sense of accomplishment is boosted when they see the positive effects their guidance has on preservice teachers. The mentorship relationship is beneficial for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to learn professionally (Hudson, 2013). Thus, if there is any intervention for the professional training of preservice teachers, then mentoring intervention is the single most powerful process (Du Plessis, Marais, Van Schalkwyk & Weeks, 2010).

The mentoring relationship is undoubtedly beneficial to mentor teachers and preservice teachers, but it is not without drawbacks. Mentor teachers' lack of time and non-availability to preservice teacher makes it difficult for the latter to benefit from the mentoring process and mismatch in terms of personality clashes between mentor teachers and preservice teachers are cited as challenges in mentoring relationship (Huybrecht, 2011). Eby et al. (2008) reiterate that a simple mismatch in personality between mentor and protégé mentee? often leads to a bad mentoring experience. Qualitative research by Allen, Poteet, and Burroughs (1997) cited by Hawthorne (2016), found that

the most common reason cited for not wanting to be a mentor was the time commitment in the mentoring relationship.

## **2.9. Preservice Teachers' Perception of the Mentoring Relationship**

Mentoring relationship is a widely acknowledged practice that takes place for a variety of reasons in a wide range of industries, evident in the profusion of literature on the topic. In this light, the mentoring process has become increasingly important in initial teacher education programmes in an effort to support preservice teachers with a wide range of skills and knowledge (Walkington, 2014) to grow professionally and be guided to practice the theory learnt in the real classroom (Kelly, 2013; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2008; Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005). Therefore, the fundamental process of improving the educational system globally is production of quality teachers. The establishment of Teacher Universities and the Colleges of Education in Ghana to train quality teachers for the education system has become a priority to enhance the educational fortunes of the youth. The presence of quality teachers in classrooms underpins quality education systems. According to Anane (2013) the teaching staff of a school is the single most important factor in determining the success of a school's overall educational system. Therefore, when thinking about how to effectively train quality teachers for the classroom, it is important to take into account the many different ways to train teachers to acquire the experience, knowledge, professional and pedagogical skills necessary in the teaching profession. The incorporation of mentoring programme in the training of teachers fosters preservice teachers' personal and professional development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Sinsicalco, 2002; Long, 2009; Anane, 2013; Chi-Kin Lee & Feng, 2007). There is widespread agreement among researchers that preservice teachers having access to mentor teachers during teaching practice is crucial for quality training of teachers (Standal 2011; Mena et al., 2017). Therefore, mentoring process is a multiplier that can boost the training of teachers by stimulating their desire to learn for quality engagement with learners in the classroom.

Mentoring process enables mentor teachers to learn and support preservice teachers to close the practice and theory gap in the training (Anane, 2013; Abudu, 2018). Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) note that mentorship is importance for expanding preservice teachers during teaching practice in schools. Mentoring relationships is believed to influence preservice teachers' decisions to leave or stay in the teaching profession (Kelly, 2013; De Angelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). Mentor teachers provide preservice teachers with professional experience, as they are expected to offer emotional

support to their mentees (Bergen, Crasborn, Korthagen, Brouwer, & Hennissen, 2011). Moreover, preservice teachers are more inclined to stay in their field if they perceive the mentoring relationship positively (Izadinia, 2016).

The establishment of a positive relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is essential for the success of any mentoring process (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012; Russell & Russell, 2011; Burris et al., 2006). Mentor teachers provide preservice with advice and guidance (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012), which motivate mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Accordingly, preservice teachers and mentor teachers believe that mentoring relationship is successful when they work together to achieve their respective goals (Young & Perrewé, 2004; Donkor, 2019). Recent research on the mentorship process has had an impact on classroom practice. The mentoring relationship helps preservice teachers to make easier transition to future teachers in the classroom (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2007; Colbold, 2015).

Opportunity for professional development is important to mentoring relationships. The core of mentoring relationship is the professional benefits for mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Graves, 2010). The perspectives of preservice teachers on mentor teachers have a significant impact on mentoring relationship and their conceptions of their own teaching competencies. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), preservice teachers' views of the mentor-mentee relationship are also shaped by the school's climate. For example, research has shown that mentorship programmes may have negative consequences in authoritarian school settings, while a mentoring relationship in a democratic school setting would be beneficial for both mentor teachers and preservice teacher. This lends credence to the argument that the atmosphere in a classroom has an effect on students' ability to learn (Zuljan & Pozarnik, 2014). Furthermore, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) argue that the mentoring relationship has a favorable effect on the instructional practices of preservice teachers and their dedication to the school environment. Preservice teachers, according to Izadinia (2016), view mentor teachers as having invaluable expertise from which they can learn a professional attitude that cannot be found in books, which means preservice teachers are believed to benefit greatly from mentor teachers' insightful comments, novel suggestions, and practical counsel in the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers perceive that their mentor teachers model the qualities they hope to develop in themselves as teachers such as friendliness, empathy, and a willingness to provide guidance. This is consistent with the findings of Kagoda and Sentongo



(2015) that student teachers benefit from working with mentor teachers at their schools because of knowledge and practice they gain in classroom settings. The purpose of this study was to investigate preservice teachers and their mentors' capabilities and conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this review has examined areas pertinent on the mentoring process and gaps in the literature on mentoring relationship during teaching practice in the school environment. Although preservice teachers generally perceive mentor teachers as role models, some mentoring relationships are conflict-ridden (Marais & Meier, 2014). These include teachers who are unwilling to devote enough time or attention to preservice teachers, but want preservice teachers to take control of the classroom when they are not in the classroom. Although, there are preservice teachers who lack the competence to enhance students' learning experiences or are guilty of unethical behaviour in the mentoring relationship (De Vries, 2011; Bradbury & Koballa, 2008; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009), the mentoring process is an integral part of teacher education in supporting the professional learning of mentees and mentors.

The demands on teachers of the twenty-first century are increasingly complex and bring to the fore the mentoring relationship as a dominant discourse in the training of preservice teachers. The mentoring relationship is characterised by collaboration in the form of reciprocity, friendliness, collegiality, mutual respect, availability of mentor teachers, and rapport, among others. Collaboration is recognised as a critical concept in mentoring practices appropriate for fostering preservice teachers' professional learning in this twenty-first century context. Also, the mentoring relationship is characterised with reflection of practice, preservice teachers' self-directed learning, and through mentor teachers' support, constructive feedback, joint planning, guidance, team and co-teaching.

The mentoring process is a complex area that requires a detailed exploration for understanding of the concept in the initial teacher education context. In this respect, definitions of mentoring, mentoring roles and qualities of effective mentoring are investigated alongside benefits of the mentoring process to mentees in initial teacher education programme. There are many studies on mentoring process in the literature of initial teacher education, but there are no studies on mentoring relationship in Ghana within the context of the capability approach. Consequently, most of the



mentoring issues discussed and reported in the literature are generic, which are more concerned with general mentoring relationship situations, rather than preservice teachers' mentoring relationship using capability approach framework. This suggests preservice teachers' mentoring relationship through capability lens is a prime area for research. Much is not known about what capability enables or constrains management of the mentoring relationship of preservice teachers during teaching practice. As such, the study aims to contribute to the literature by investigating capability and conversion factors of management mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Also, there is a need to stimulate preservice teachers' perspectives on practical issues that are believed to be obscure, but remain somehow problematic in the mentoring relationship literature. The researcher believes such discussions are important because they may help in refining and framing the mentoring process for preservice teachers in the Ghanaian context. The study adds to the existing literature through the communication opportunities that mentor teachers and preservice teachers have reasons to value in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice by the application of the capability approach.

Chapter 3 critically reviews the capability approach used as the framework to examine the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

## **Chapter 3: The Capability Approach**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The context, both local and international, on mentoring relationship of preservice teachers in teacher education was presented in Chapter 2. The chapter discussed the literature on development of mentoring, management of the mentoring relationship and qualities of effective mentoring relationship.

### **3.2 Theoretical Perspective underpinning the Study**

Though many scholars have used different theories to explore mentoring (Hudson, 2004; Kram, 1985, Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Lai, 2010), there has not been any literature in the Ghanaian context on the management of mentoring relationship using CA as a framework. This study used the CA to discuss the management of mentorship in the context of a Ghanaian higher education institution. Following the review in Chapter 2 of this study, Chapter 3 presents the basis for the analysis of the lived experiences of mentor and preservice teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. In short, the chapter provides a theoretical lens for exploring the experiences of mentor and preservice teachers with a specific focus on capabilities and conversion factors in management of the mentoring relationship in a Ghanaian higher teacher education context.

Sen (2009), author of the CA, suggests that the concept of well-being should change from monetary value to having a life that an individual has reason to value. The emphasis of this study is to understand mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' freedoms (capabilities) and conversion factors in the management of the mentoring relationship. According to Walker and Unterhalter (2007: 5), the CA mandates assessment of not just the results, but also the actual freedoms and opportunities accessible to each preservice and mentor teacher to pursue and attain their valued wellbeing. The importance of the opportunities and freedoms available to preservice teachers and mentor teachers to choose from are what makes CA different from other methods that assess wellbeing by only academic achievements and monetary returns. Therefore, the CA used as theoretical framework for this study is the most suitable for analysing the experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. At the heart of the CA is a robust argument for equal freedoms and opportunities that surpass other educational approaches that isolate individual experiences from larger issues of institutional arrangements

(Calitz, 2016; Vaughan & Walker 2012; Wilson-Strydom, 2015; Walker, 2006; Boni & Walker, 2013). The CA framework prioritises wellbeing functioning for individuals, which is different from other theories in education (Walker, 2005b; Sen, 1992a) such as Hudson's (2004) five-factor theory and Kram's (1980) conceptualisation of mentoring theory, among others. The CA was also attractive because it takes into account internal and external conversion factors of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentorship relationship.

The chapter draws mainly on the writing of Amartya Sen and others who provide an overview of the CA. Thus, CA provides a theoretical foundation to support the study's research questions. The CA provides a multi-dimensional analytical tool that broadens the focus on observable professional skills and explicitly describes the different opportunities and freedoms that preservice teachers and mentor teachers have in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice in schools. The CA prioritises the dignity of an individual so that every individual has intrinsic value as a human being and not simply as producer of economic activity (Calitz, 2016). The CA examines the context in which mentoring relationships take place and investigates whether the circumstances in which preservice teachers and mentor teachers choose their freedoms and opportunity sets are enabling and constraining their capability in the management of the mentoring relationship. This is different from asking only whether a preservice teacher has access to a mentor in the relationship as a bundle of resources (Robeyns 2005: 99; see also Deneulin 2014).

This chapter starts by first defining the CA, including its core concepts, followed by looking at the brief history of the CA and the concept itself. Thereafter, the CA is looked at in the context of education and its operationalisation. Ultimately, the challenges of operationalising the CA as a framework for this study are discussed.

### **3.3. The Concept of Capability Approach**

The capability approach, which can also be called capabilitarianism (Robeyns, 2016), was first introduced by Amartya Sen, an economist and philosopher (Buckler, 2012; Sen, 2009, 1998, 1992a, 1985a, 1985b), as an alternative approach to neoliberal and welfare economics. The approach has been used for many years as a framework for analysis and measurement in various fields, including education, mental health, employment activation, and equal opportunities and human rights (Simon

et al., 2013; Egdell & Graham, 2016; Kelly, 2012; Reynaert & Roose, 2014; Norwich, 2014; Burchardt & Vizard, 2011; Otto et al., 2015; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Downs & Swailes, 2013).

To understand wellbeing in CA, consideration must be on opportunities available to a person and the freedom to choose what the person has reason to value (Sen, 2009; 1998; 1992; 1985a; 1985b). The approach puts individuals as the pivot for development discourse and views individuals as the ends and means of development. According to Sen (1999), the process of development is defined as the expansion of the options and capabilities available to individuals, enabling them to achieve what they have reason to value.

The capabilities are not only on incomes and basic needs available to the individual, but the choices and opportunities that are available to individuals to lead the lives they value. One reason why income should not be considered the most critical factor is that it is just one of the ways to attain the life we desire. There are other methods that can help us achieve the type of life we want to live (Sen, 1992c). For example, imagine two people who have the same income. One person spends all of their money on material possessions, while the other spends their money on experiences like traveling, trying new foods, and attending cultural events. Despite having the same income, the second person is likely to have a more fulfilling and satisfying life because they are using their money to create memorable experiences and broaden their horizons. This illustrates the point that income is just one factor among many that contribute to the kind of life we want to live. Therefore, though, having a mentor teacher is valuable, it is essential to consider other factors that contribute to a preservice teacher's wellbeing. This may include addressing personal, offering professional development opportunities, and fostering a sense of community and connection in the school environment.

A capability set reflects the freedoms and opportunities available to individuals to choose from various functionings that they have reason to value to achieve in their life (Sen, 1992a, 1987). The availability of the capabilities is not determined by only the resources of the individual, but also on the personal, social, political and economic conversion factors that might have influence on development policies. Functionings are the achieved choices represented by what the individual has succeeded in doing or being (Sen, 1987), but the various opportunities and freedoms available to the individuals that they have reasons to value are the capabilities. The CA was used to provide the perspective for this study because it lays emphasis on the freedom individuals have to follow and

achieve what that they value in the management of the mentoring relationship. This chapter is purposely to understand CA as the basis for this study and to trigger discussion about its value and implications for preservice teachers' mentoring relationships during teaching practice.

### **3.4. Brief History of the Capability Approach**

The CA is a normative framework for assessing and evaluating human development and well-being (Crocker & Robeyns, 2010; Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2005). The history of capability approach (CA) dates back to Karl Marx's dissertation on the functioning and capability for wellbeing, Aristotle's work on human success, and Adam Smith's study of relative poverty in wealthy nations. Their works explore how the wealth of a country and cultural norms affect material goods (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003). The Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, considered as the major contributor to the capability approach (Sen 2009; 1999a; 1992b; 1987; 1985a; 1993) and an advocate against all types of global inequalities. The CA was developed in the 1980s by Sen, a development economist, choice theorist, and socialist philosopher, to challenge the conception of equality as the goal of development by asking, "equality of what?" (Sen, 1985b). He argued that "the powerful rhetoric of the 'equality of man' tends to deflect attention from their differences" (p.1).

The notion of capability approach was first introduced in the Tanner Lectures by Sen on the theme 'Equality of What' in 1979 (Wells, 2013). The ideas of Sen were used by Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher, for the development of a partial theory of justice. Nussbaum (2000; 2003) criticised utilitarian theories of well-being akin to Sen. Although Nussbaum and Sen significantly differ in some aspects of capability approach such that criticism of one would not necessarily be applied to the other, they share similar views on some aspects of the capability approach (Robeyns, 2003).

The main incongruity between the two personalities is that the work of Nussbaum is positioned in moral-legal political philosophies perspectives in which she mentions the need for a general list of human capabilities that should be integrated in all government constitutions (Robeyns, 2003). Sen, however, argues for capability, instead of resources utility in the 'equality for what question' lectures (Tshiningayamwe, 2016). Sen (1992b) criticised the traditional wellbeing approaches such as welfare economics, utilitarian and income-based theories (Tshiningayamwe, 2016). Although the CA recognises the importance of income as a means of development (Anand & Ravallion, 1993), it is not an end in itself. Sen rejects the conceptualisation of development as availability of commodities or resources. The CA places special consideration on development and its processes

(Tshiningayamwe, 2016). According to Tshiningayamwe (2016), Sen never supported welfarist theorists. Instead, he believed in utility and excluded the evaluation of non-utility. According to Alkire (2005), though Sen argued that not all components of wellbeing are necessarily acquired with the use of income, he still acknowledged income as an important resource for wellbeing (for example, being confident, being part of a community and being able to make choices are not directly linked with the income of the individual). Sen argued that evaluation of welfare failed to take into account the fact that different individuals may achieve varying levels of wellbeing though they may be given the same income or bundle of goods. This suggests that Sen focuses on what people have reason to achieve and the types of lives they want to lead to achieve their functioning. The central argument in the CA is that wellbeing be defined as the opportunities and freedom of choice available to individuals, considering external factors and personal characteristics, rather than focusing solely on the outcomes. The CA's primary contention is that the notion of wellbeing should encompass the opportunities and freedom of choice accessible to individuals, taking into account external factors and personal traits, instead of solely focusing on the outcomes they achieve and what they do and being (Sen, 2009; 1985a, 1985b; Robeyns, 2006, 2005b). This implies the capabilities approach placed prime on people's well-being as defined by Sen as "the quality ('wellness') of a person's state of being" (Sen, 1992: 39). As such:

*The root of the capability approach is an insistence on referring to a wide range of information, notably about how people actually live, what they do, and their freedom of what they do and be. (Gasper, 2007, p. 340).*

A person's wellbeing can be determined by evaluating the essential aspects of his or her being, as seen from the perspective of that person's wellbeing (Sen, 1993: 36). These elements are defined by the CA as beings or actions that are valuable to individuals based on the lifestyles they wish to pursue. Therefore, the CA differs from quality-of-life interventions that emphasise outcomes such as wealth creation or milestones, but say nothing about personal wellbeing or human flourishing, which includes factors such as having a positive mental state, feeling safe, and being educated, among others. From this perspective, a 'good life' is where the individual decides what he or she wishes to achieve and is not forced to accept values imposed by state institutions and other actors (Sen, 1985a, 1985b; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Kotan, 2010; Binder, 2013; Deneulin, 2011). It

is important to acknowledge that a person's incapacity reflects not only their internal skills or abilities, but also failure of the society to provide them with real freedoms and capabilities (Burchardt & Vizard, 2007). This viewpoint on human well-being influenced Sen's conceptions of functioning and capabilities (Hardy, 2019).

The section that follows discusses the concepts of capability and conversion factors as central concepts adopted for this study in using the capability approach.

### **3.5 Central Concepts of Capability Approach**

#### **3.5.1 Capabilities**

Freedoms, in a positive sense, are capabilities, that is, genuine opportunities available to individuals to lead the lives they value (Sen, 1987:36). According to Sen (1993, p. 271) "the capability of a person reflects the different combinations of functionings that the person can achieve and from which he or she can choose". The CA is a framework used primarily to assess and evaluate wellbeing of individuals regarding social arrangements that enable or constrain the individual's well-being, as well as to design social change policies within communities (Robeyns, 2006a; Alkire & Deneulin, 2009; Alkire, 2005). Individual freedom and opportunities to provide a conducive environment to human flourishing are of concern to CA (Walker, 2005). For example, capabilities could be the ability to learn to swim or read (Sen, 1999). Capabilities are opportunities and freedoms available to individuals that enable them to attain their valued functions. According to Walker (2005: 103), "Capabilities also provide individuals with the chance to select who they want to be and what they want to do (opportunity freedom), rather than being limited solely by the resources available to them." Some real freedoms and opportunities in the context of this study include recognition and respect, listening and open communication, among others. Nevertheless, realisation of the achieved outcomes in the mentoring relationship is influenced by conversion factors that enable or impede the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. To apply the approach to this study, what mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship are able to do (activities) and the kinds of teachers they can be (being) are the capabilities. These are the activities people, for example, preservice teachers or mentor teachers are allowed to perform to lead the kind of lives they have reason to value. This suggests that two preservice teachers with the same mentor teachers may not necessarily result in the same level of capabilities during their teaching practice. The Capability Approach focuses on an individual's

ability to achieve their desired outcomes and capabilities, such as achieving a sense of fulfillment, developing new skills, or building meaningful relationships. For instance, one preservice teacher may have personal or systemic issues that affect their ability to engage fully with their mentor teacher or teaching practice, resulting in lower levels of capabilities. On the other hand, the other preservice teacher may not face similar challenges, enabling them to develop higher levels of capabilities in the mentoring relationship. Therefore, CA highlights the importance of considering individual factors that can influence a preservice teacher's capabilities and outcomes, rather than just focusing on external factors such as having the same mentor teacher. This approach emphasizes the need to provide preservice teachers with the necessary resources and support to enhance their capabilities and achieve their desired outcomes in the mentoring relationship.

The CA focuses on what preservice teachers are capable of doing or being and the kind of lives they value (Walker, 2005) in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The concept of "reason to value" is important because it denotes deliberate and well-informed decisions (ibid.) of individuals. The importance of the "reason to value" emphasises the need to investigate why individuals value what they have reason to value in the case of management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. As a result, the issue of choice exists for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to have a set of capabilities or to select from available options (Walker, 2005).

### **3.5.2 Conversion factors**

According to Robeyns (2005a), the CA framework emphasises the significance of conversion factors. It has a broad interpretation of resources, which encompasses not only material resources, but also human capital, skills, and social resources (Kabeer, 1999). Further, it emphasises the importance of recognising and addressing various aspects of deprivation that limit the capabilities of individuals to function effectively and meaningfully in society (Robeyns, 2005b). Thus, the CA recognises the multifaceted nature of resources and acknowledges the need to focus on converting these resources into valuable capabilities that promote individual wellbeing and development.

The CA emphasises that while access to resources is crucial for individual wellbeing, the quality of one's wellbeing depends on one's ability to convert the resources one has to into valuable achievements that align with one's values and goals (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003). In this regard, the CA highlights the importance of recognising and addressing the various aspects of deprivation that



limit an individual's capabilities to function effectively and meaningfully in society. By focusing on conversion of resources into capabilities, the CA promotes a holistic and individual-centred approach to development (Robeyns, 2005a). It recognises the need to go beyond basic material needs and to address a wide range of factors that impact an individual's wellbeing and ability to lead a fulfilling life. In addition to one's capacity to convert resources into functionings, various other factors, such as the social interactions, environment and individual differences also play a significant role in determining an individual's success. According to Robeyns (2005b), conversion factors can be categorised into three distinct types based on their conditions, namely: environmental, social, and personal factors. These factors enable or constrain individual capability achievement.

The standard example used by Sen to explain conversion factors is the bicycle analogy in which he claims that a bicycle would be useful when there is an appropriate infrastructure like the bikeway for use (Sen, 1999) in an urban centre. Sen further explains that some acquired skills can only be considered as commodities if there is a labour market available that facilitates the conversion of these skills into valuable outcomes (*ibid.*). In the current study, the concept of conversion factors is used to examine factors that facilitate or hinder the effective management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The application of this framework in the current study allows for a comprehensive examination of the different types of conversion factors, including pedagogical, social, and systemic factors that influence the success of mentoring relationships in the teaching practice context. By focusing on conversion of resources into capabilities, the CA provides a valuable framework for understanding factors that influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships and achievement of valued outcomes (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003). Robeyns (2005a) distinguishes the three types of conversion factors of individuals' capabilities as follows:

**(a) Personal conversion factors**

Conversion factors determined by individual physical and mental features are the personal conversion factors (Robeyns, 2005a). These factors include thinking, physical condition, reading skills, and intelligence of individuals. Robeyns (2005a) explains that if a person has never learnt how to ride a bicycle because of physical disability, then a bicycle will be of limited assistance in enabling the mobility functioning of the person. Sen (1992a) uses the bicycle example to demonstrate the difference in the conversion of

resources from person to person. People may be interested in a bicycle not because of its color or design, but because it will save them time compared to walking to their destinations. For instance, a bicycle has different uses for two persons who do not have or have the ability to use the bicycle because they have not learnt or have learnt to ride it. As a result, the bicycle does not play the same role in the agility of the two individuals. The bicycle may be productive for the individual who can ride it, but may be counterproductive for the individual who cannot ride because s/he has not been taught how to ride or has physical disability (Sen, 1992a). In this study, personal conversion factors in mentoring relationship include open communication, feedback, dressing and respect, which could enable or constrain the beings and doings in management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Apart from that, the other conversion factors in the mentoring relationship that can assist mentors and preservice teachers in achieving their valued doings in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice is the individual's confidence level (Howitt, 2007) as well as the enthusiasm to learn about the teaching profession (Luft, 2007).

Adapting the bicycle example to management of mentoring relationship, two preservice teachers may have the same opportunity to be in the same school for teaching practice. Both may have mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship and both may have achieved the desired outcome of professional development, but they may differ in what and who they want to be in the teaching profession. The CA provides a nuanced assessment that recognises interpersonal differences that impact the conversion of available resources into valuable functionings (Robeyns, 2005a).

The CA emphasises the importance of acknowledging human diversity as an essential component in understanding the complex issues that impact individuals' capabilities and opportunities (Sen, 1992a). Unlike other theories like distributive justice, which focus primarily on the distribution of resources, the CA critiques these approaches for failing to address interpersonal differences that impact the conversion of available resources into valuable functionings (Sen, 1992a). The critique further highlights the importance of understanding the social, personal, and environmental conversion factors that can limit individuals' capabilities to lead fulfilling lives (Robeyns, 2005a).

By acknowledging the impact of human diversity and focusing on conversion of resources into functionings, CA offers a valuable tool for addressing the complex and multifaceted issues that impact individuals' access to valuable functionings. Therefore, through this framework, the researcher can identify barriers and challenges that limit access to valuable functionings and work towards creating more equitable and just societies (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003). As a result, the CA recognises that individuals from similar backgrounds and resources may have different aspirations and achieve different wellbeing.

**(b) Social conversion factors**

Conversion factors are determined by social norms (such as materialism, rules of behaviour), social institutions (for example, political rights, public policies), power relations based on class, race, or gender and discriminatory practices, among others (Robeyns, 2005a). An example given by Robeyns (2005a) is that if a country has a law that prohibits women from riding bicycles without a male family member, then it becomes difficult for a woman to use a bicycle alone to enable her functioning. In this study, a social conversion factor in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice could be Ghana's Ministry of Education (2015) language policy in the early grade classroom. Preservice teachers who are not proficient in the learners' mother language(L1) may struggle to collaborate effectively with mentor teachers and learners in early grade classrooms due to a policy that prohibits the use of English as a medium of instruction in place of L1.

**(c) Environmental factors**

These conversion factors emerge from interactions of individuals with their physical environment (Robeyns, 2005a). These include the geographical location or climate, pollution, natural disaster proneness, the building conditions, modes of transportation, roads, and bridges. Environmental factors may constrain or enable preservice teachers to expand their valued doings and beings in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. For instance, preservice teachers who live far from the school may face challenges in arriving at the school early in the morning. By recognising this

as an environmental factor that impacts preservice teachers' access to valuable functionings, preservice teachers and mentor teachers can work to address this challenge and provide alternative means of transportation to facilitate preservice teachers' participation in mentoring activities. This suggests access to transportation may significantly influence preservice teachers' ability to participate in mentoring activities (Robeyns, 2005a).

Robeyns (2011) stresses the importance of considering social, personal, and environmental conversion factors to enable the conversion of available resources into valuable functionings that are specific to each individual's needs and aspirations. The CA acknowledges diversity of the human experience and highlights the importance of addressing various limitations and scarcities that can hinder an individual's ability to function effectively and meaningfully in society (Robeyns, 2005b). This includes recognising and addressing the unique conversion factors that influence an individual's ability to achieve their valued outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that each individual has a unique form of conversion factor, which makes it important to consider individual differences and experiences in any analysis of the effectiveness of conversion factors (Robeyns, 2011).

The CA emphasises the importance of accounting for a wide range of societal factors that influence an individual's ability to function effectively and meaningfully in society. By applying social and environmental conversion factors, one can take into account the influence of culture on the personal experiences and development of individuals, as well as their aspirations (Robeyns, 2005a). Additionally, Sen (2009) recognises that social arrangements play a significant role in shaping individuals' capabilities.

Robeyns (2005a) highlights that personal, social, and environmental conversion factors are interconnected and mutually influence each other. This underscores the need to consider all three types of conversion factors when examining the management of mentoring relationships in the teaching practice context. The effectiveness of mentoring relationships may be influenced by a variety of pedagogical, social and systemic factors that affect the ability of mentor teachers and preservice teachers to convert available resources into valuable functionings that they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2005a).

In this study, the focus is on exploring the ability of preservice teachers and mentor teachers to convert the personal, social, and institutional resources available to them into functionings that align with their values and goals in the management of the mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The use of the CA framework in the study recognises the importance of addressing the various conversion factors that influence the success of mentoring relationships and the achievement of valued outcomes (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003).

The mentoring relationship is a component of initial teacher professional development programme in Ghanaian teacher education. Conversion factors have potential to enable or constrain mentors' and preservice teachers' capabilities in mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Accordingly, it is not enough to understand what functions mentor teachers and preservice teachers can and cannot achieve in the mentoring relationship; it is also necessary to understand the conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The CA takes into account individual differences and conversion factors that enable or constrain the conversion of resources to valued functionings (Crocker, 2008; Robeyns, 2005a). Due to the complexity of human, this approach focuses on the why, for instance, two preservice teachers or mentor teachers have different achieved outcomes with the same capability sets in the mentoring relationship (Robeyns, 2005a).

The CA has been applied in a variety of disciplinary areas for its sensitivity to the conversion factors, but scholars have different opinions on its application. The next section focuses on a discussion of perspectives of two prominent scholars, Nussbaum and Sen, to set the tone for the application of CA in this study.

### **3.6 Differences in Sen's and Nussbaum's Perspectives on the Capability Approach**

The capability approach is based on the core concepts of functionings and capabilities, which are distinctive features of all capability theories. Different capability theorists, such as Nussbaum and Sen, the two prominent scholars to develop capability approach have used these notions differently, but their main idea is the same (Robeyns, 2016). Despite sharing similar ideas, these scholars have different opinions on the approach due to their diverse intellectual backgrounds and aspirations. Capabilities mean what people can do and be, and functionings refer to what people actually achieve. Capabilities are not just about having access to resources or satisfying basic needs, but about what someone is capable of achieving and the different states of being they can

experience. These are real opportunities that go beyond just having access to resources or meeting basic needs. Functionings, on the other hand, refer to the actual achievements of a person. They point to what a person has achieved or experienced.

Nussbaum's work focuses on individuals' goals, opportunities, reasons, and decisions (Robeyns, 2005). The author's capability approach emphasises the importance of individual agency and the development of personal characteristics and skills as a set of capabilities (Robeyns, 2005: 104). Nussbaum's background as a moral-legal and political philosopher shapes her perspective on the CA, and she emphasises the importance of creating a list of fundamental capabilities that all humans should have (Nussbaum, 2000). Nussbaum's list includes ten categories such as life, emotions, bodily health, senses, bodily integrity, practical reason, control over the environment, other species, play, and affiliation. She believes that these capabilities should be included in government constitutions to ensure that all individuals have the necessary resources to lead a fulfilling life.

In contrast, Sen's background as an economist shapes his focus on issues of inequality and poverty (Robeyns, 2003). While he opposes the use of financial evaluations to measure welfare, he is in favour of promoting individuals' genuine freedoms to live lives that they value (Robeyns, 2003). This aligns with CA's emphasis on promoting individual agency and choice, as well as the importance of addressing social and economic inequalities that limit individuals' opportunities and freedoms. Further, Sen's background in the field of social choice has led him to focus on the importance of fairness and democratic procedures in creating a list of valuable capabilities (Robeyns, 2003). Sen argues that CA must emphasise the importance of human diversity and recognise interpersonal differences that impact individuals' access to valuable functionings.

According to Sen (2004), unlike Nussbaum's (2000), a fixed list of capabilities is not sufficient for promoting human well-being and justice. Sen argues that the list of capabilities should be context-specific and composed of functionings and capabilities that are important to people within that context. He suggests that the list should be created through a joint participatory process and articulated through national discourse, rather than being pre-formulated.

Moreover, Sen emphasises the importance of individuals having the freedom to choose a life that is essential to them, rather than being forced into a certain way of living (Sen, 2004). This aligns with the CA's central principle of recognising and promoting individual agency and choice. By

allowing individuals to choose their own valued functionings, societies can promote a more just and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Despite these differences, both Nussbaum and Sen recognise the importance of the CA in promoting human wellbeing and justice. Through this framework, scholars can identify barriers and challenges that limit individuals' access to valuable functionings and work towards creating more equitable and just societies (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000). For instance, through this capability approach, mentor teachers and preservice teachers identify trust, mutual respect, and empathy, which are essential for effective mentoring relationship to work collaboratively and make informed decisions (Nussbaum, 2000).

In this study, the CA, as articulated by Sen (1999;1992a; 1992b; 1993) was applied. This is primarily because Sen advocates for a participatory approach to creating a list of capabilities that considers what is important to the population under study, taking into account their unique context. By adopting Sen's approach, the study recognises the importance of individuals' choice in defining what constitutes a valuable life, as well as the need to consider contextual factors that shape individuals' capabilities and opportunities. This aligns with the central tenets of the CA, which emphasises the importance of promoting individuals' freedoms and capabilities to lead lives that they value.

### **3.7 The Capability Approach and Education**

Education is considered a fundamental capability essential for boosting other abilities and well-being. However, education scholars have for years revealed that education does not necessarily promote individual well-being; instead, it frequently reproduces inequalities evident in society (DeJaeghere & Lee, 2011; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Saito, 2003). Scholars in the Capability Approach (CA) maintain that the education space is a crucial area for evaluating how inequalities can be addressed and greater justice can be achieved. The CA emphasises the need to recognise and address various aspects that hinder the capabilities of individuals to function effectively in society (Robeyns, 2005b). It focuses on conversion of resources into capabilities, which provides a valuable framework for understanding the complexity of human diversity and the need to address the various conversion factors that influence an individual's ability to lead a fulfilling life (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2003).



The education space is an important site for the application of the CA because it plays a significant role in shaping individuals' capabilities and opportunities (Mtawa & Mtawa, 2019). Education can either reinforce or alleviate existing inequalities, depending on how it is structured and implemented. The CA provides a useful framework for evaluating the effectiveness of educational policies and practices in promoting greater justice and reducing inequalities (Wilson-Strydom & Walker, 2015; Walker, 2015; Tikly & Barrett, 2011; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Hart, 2012; Unterhalter, 2009; Peppin Vaughan, 2016; Calitz, 2018). This suggests the effectiveness of mentoring relationships can be influenced by various personal, social, and environmental factors that affect the ability of mentor teachers and preservice teachers to convert available resources into valuable functionings that they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2005a).

Scholars have highlighted the importance of examining how educational opportunities and resources are distributed across different groups in society (Unterhalter et al., 2016). By focusing on conversion factors that impact individuals' capabilities to function effectively in educational settings, the CA provides a useful tool for analysing various barriers and challenges that can limit educational access and success for marginalised groups. This understanding can contribute to the development of more equitable and just mentoring practices in the education space. In this way, the CA can contribute to the development of more equitable and just educational systems.

Sen's previous writing on capability acknowledges education as an essential component in the field necessary for development and the author refers to education as one of the most important things crucial to well-being (Sen, 1992). This interpretation has led to education being broadly equated with "literacy, knowledge, or information" (Walker, 2006) and being synonymous with "schooling" (Unterhalter, 2003, p. 8). The assumption that education is a capability that is delivered uniformly is problematic (*ibid*). The capability has emerged as an assertive, alternative discourse to dominant human capital ideas in education, allowing us to see beyond education as a means to employment and challenging what education "enables us to do and be" (Walker, 2006, p. 163) with the acknowledgement that educational experiences of individuals influence their functioning. Sen's writing on the capability approach to education has been criticised for needing to be more adequately theoretical (Tao, 2008; Unterhalter, 2003), but the approach is becoming more popular in educational research. Emerging literature has shown that many scholars have applied Sen's CA to education (Tshiningayamwe, 2016; Tao, 2015; 2014; Kronlid & Lotz-Sisitka, 2014; Chikunda,



2013; Tao, 2012; 2013a; 2013b; Saito, 2003; Boni & Walker, 2013; Unterhalter, 2003; Walker, 2005; Bates, 2007; Unterhalter, Vaughan, & Walker, 2007; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007). According to these researchers, the application of CA to education has essential elements, but why Sen did not rigorously apply his ideas in education confounds the researchers. In short, application of the CA in education research is not fully explored and theorised (Saito, 2003).

Nevertheless, some scholars have used the CA ideas of Sen in educational research, which provides the basis of thinking about the instrumental role of teachers in expanding capabilities of learners (Bates, 2007; Unterhalter, 2003; Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007). Watts and Bridges (2006) applied the approach in the British government's White Paper on Higher Education to analyse young people's aspirations. Patel (2003) examined literacy NGOs in India using a capability framework to determine how they empower women to combat gender inequalities. Smith and Barrett (2011) investigated reading abilities among Grade 6 students in Southern and Eastern Africa. Studies on undergraduate access and widening participation have been conducted by various researchers, including Bridges (2006), Hart (2009, 2012), Wilson-Strydom (2015); Calitz, (2018); Calitz, Walker, and Wilson-Strydom (2016); McLean (2009); Crosbie (2013); McLean et al. (2013); Walker (2002, 2006, 2010). Some researchers have conducted studies on curriculum and pedagogy, political science and philosophy (Robeyns, 2005; 2006a; Nussbaum, 2006); social justice, diversity, and institutional reformation (Robeyns 2005; 2006a; Nussbaum 2006) and diversity, social justice, and institutional reforms (Calitz, 2016; Wood & Deprez 2012; Unterhalter 2003a, 2003b, 2009, 2012; Boni & Gasper 2012; Flores-Crespo, 2007; Walker 2005a; Walker & Unterhalter 2007;). Capability scholars, including McLean et al. (2013), Crosbie (2013), McLean (2009), Walker and Unterhalter (2007), and Walker (2006) have applied the CA in pedagogical settings to seek practical answers to educational issues such as what knowledge to teach, using what pedagogy, and to whom. Additionally, they have used this approach to express judgments about the reproduction and transformation of existing forms of social life to ensure that all learners are adequately prepared (Calitz, 2016; Walker, 2006). Therefore, through the application of the CA, scholars can analyse how to promote development of valuable capabilities that align with learners' values and goals. This approach could help to identify barriers and challenges that limit learners' access to education and success in pedagogical settings. By addressing these challenges and providing learners with

opportunities to develop valuable capabilities, educators can work towards more equitable and just educational systems (Walker, 2006; Calitz, 2016).

A lot of literature on research in higher education has also used the CA (Wang, 2013; Walker & Boni, 2013). These scholars drew on the Nussbaum and Sen's ideas on the work of the university in pedagogy, curriculum, social engagements and physical environments (Boni & Walker, 2013) as well as higher education policy (Calitz, 2016). Tao (2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, and 2015) is among the researchers who have applied CA in the context of teacher education. Tao's studies focused on exploring the thinking about the CA in formal schooling of teachers to investigate the capabilities of teachers and discourse surrounding school improvement. Thus, through the application of the CA in teacher education, researchers can better understand how to promote the equitable educational practices. Urenje (2011) investigated how professionals in the Ministry of Education and Training in the Kingdom of Swaziland were empowered by an international professional development programme. In Zimbabwe and South Africa, Chikunda (2013) used the capability approach to investigate and advance gender justice and sustainability in science teacher education. Wahlstrom (2013) used the CA to study teachers' curriculum work, concentrating on the layout of a teacher education programme for foundation phase. Baxen, Nsubuga, and Johanson (2014) researched educational quality perspectives using the CA. Nsubuga (2014) proposed an analytical framework based on the CA to help identify fundamental issues and concerns regarding the quality of education across various teacher education pathways. The CA was used by Kronlid and Lotz-Sisitka (2014) to study individual adaptation and transformative learning. However, the application of CA in management of the mentoring relationship during preservice teachers' teaching practice is largely unexplored, despite the fact that such studies would provide a valuable foundation to understand capabilities in the mentoring relationship and conversion factors that expand or constrain capabilities during teaching practice.

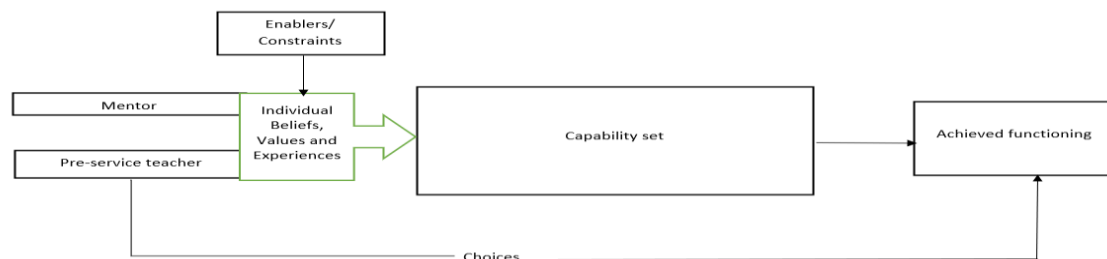
This study adds to the discussion on research in teacher education in higher institutions based on the CA to investigate capabilities and conversion factors that enable or constrain the management of mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. Capability analysis in the provision of education has been construed as a procedure (Boni & Lozano, 2012) that may only benefit some students and may not even be equal because some educational practices and policies constrain the freedom and opportunities of some students

(Unterhalter, 2003b) in the education system. This suggests that though the application of the approach in teaching, pedagogy, learning, curriculum and assessment should ensure equal education for all students (Walker, 2005b; Calitz, 2016), in practice, some students benefit more than others from the same quantity and quality of educational experience provided (Hart, 2009; Calitz, 2016). This study aims to better understand capabilities and conversion factors of mentor and preservice teachers in mentoring relationships during teaching practice to develop their professional aspirations, confidence, and other educational capabilities (Marginson, 2011). The study focuses on freedoms and opportunities that mentor teachers and preservice teachers have reason to value in developing skills that lead to "good and worthwhile lives" (Sen, 2009, p. 226) in mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### 3.8. Operationalising Capability Approach for this Study

This purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship to ascertain capabilities and conversion factors in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The CA was applied to understand the multifaceted perspectives of preservice and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The approach was used to evaluate opportunities and freedoms of preservice teachers to achieve their well-being (Tikly & Barrett, 2011) in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. According to Crocker and Robeyns (2005) and Sen (2009), wellbeing of individuals could be influenced by environmental, social and personal conversion factors that may enable or constrain the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Figure 3.1 The application of capability and conversion factors in this study.



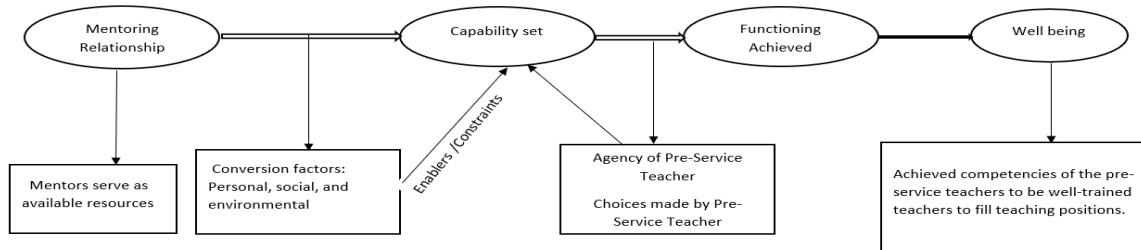
*Source: Author's Construct (2022)*

**Figure 3.1: Concept of Capability Approach**

The CA provides innovative context (Sen, 1993, 1999, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011; Walker & McLean, 2013; Saito, 2003; Otto et al., 2015; Walker, 2005; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007; Robeyns, 2005, 2017) to assess the real capabilities and conversion factors of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship. However, it has been debated how appropriately the approach can be operationalised for empirical research (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009a; Chiappero-Martinetti & Roche, 2009). This study investigates what preservice teachers believe they can become, do, or be in their future career in the teaching profession. As a result, the study explored preservice teachers' actual experiences in mentoring relationship and what they have reason to value as important in their (future) lives. As Figure 3.1 indicates, the mentor teachers and preservice teachers are individuals with different perspectives. This suggests that both mentor and preservice teachers come with their own experiences, values, and beliefs in the management of mentoring relationship for their achieved functioning. However, there are factors that Sen (2009) terms conversion factors, which may act as enablers or constraints for the achieved functioning of preservice teachers and mentors in the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers and mentor teachers have freedoms and opportunities to make choices based on things they have reason to value in mentoring relationship for their achieved functionings. Using Sen's approach (1979), capabilities and conversion factors are not judged based on group outcome, but on real individual freedoms and what each preservice and mentor teacher has reason to value in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This stems from the fact that the initial teacher education in Ghanaian universities aim to train competent professional teachers to work individually in the classrooms for the academic achievement of learners (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Vaughan, 2007) because each preservice teacher develops professional competencies occur under the mentorship of mentor teacher during teaching practice.

The study applied some core concepts of the CA (capabilities and conversion factors) as evaluative space in assessing the lived experiences of mentor and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The fundamental values of capabilities are the wellbeing of individual preservice teachers evaluated in terms of opportunities and freedom available to them to choose what they have reason to value, taking into account external factors and personal attributes. This stands in contrast to concentrating only on what individuals do and outcomes they receive

(Sen, 2009, 1985; Robeyns, 2005b; 2006; 2017). Figure 3.2 illustrates the evaluative framework of the CA applied to the study.



**Figure 3.2: Application of capability approach in this study (Source: Author’s Construct, 2022)**

In the Figure 3.2, the first component is the mentor and preservice teacher mentoring relationship where the mentor serves as a resource available to the preservice teacher in the mentoring relationship. The capability set is the preservice teacher converting resources in the mentoring relationship to move from a novice to a competent professional teacher with the conversion factors either enabling or constraining the capabilities of the preservice teacher to achieve functioning or wellbeing in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

The CA has the potential to account for constraints and opportunities within institutional and social structures (Robeyns, 2017) which may influence the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. It should be noted that freedom is not dependent on the choice itself, but rather on individuals' decisions to choose or not to choose from the opportunities available to them in the mentoring relationship.

According to Alkire (2005), the CA used in this study is particularly effective in assessing the opportunities and freedoms available to preservice teachers to pursue activities and states of being that they find valuable. This approach is based on the concept of capabilities, which are defined as real opportunities individuals have to achieve valuable outcomes (Sen, 1999). In other words, capabilities refer to the range of choices available to individuals in terms of what they can do and be. One of the key strengths of the CA is its ability to capture the multidimensional nature of human wellbeing. As Sen (1999) explains, human well-being cannot be reduced to a single measure such as income or utility. Instead, it is influenced by a range of factors, including health, education, social relations, and personal freedom. The CA takes into account these multiple dimensions of wellbeing

and emphasises the importance of expanding individuals' real opportunities to achieve valuable outcomes.

The CA is particularly relevant for assessing opportunities available to preservice teachers to pursue activities and states of being that they value. This is because the approach focuses on actual opportunities that individuals have, rather than simply their choices or preferences. By evaluating opportunities available to preservice teachers, this study could provide a more accurate picture of their freedom to pursue their goals and aspirations. Therefore, the CA is a powerful tool for evaluating opportunities and freedoms available to individuals to pursue activities and states of being that they value. By taking a multidimensional approach to wellbeing and focusing on actual opportunities, the capability approach could provide a more accurate and nuanced understanding of individuals' freedom and opportunities.

In the case of training preservice teachers, the mentoring relationship plays an essential role in the expansion of the professional skills of preservice teachers, such as confidence, and in-depth knowledge in the teaching profession. The explanation is that a mentoring relationship promotes the expansion of preservice teachers' capabilities to achieve functionings, which are desired outcomes to contribute to their professional development in the teaching career. Several scholars used the capabilities approach within the educational context (Walker 2006; Walker & Unterhalter, 2006; Nussbaum, 2006;). As have previously stated, many researchers have applied the capabilities approach as the theoretical framework in studies related to education research. However, I am unaware of any studies that have applied the capabilities approach to the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice in the Ghanaian context.

### **3.9 Challenges of Operationalising the Capability Approach**

The CA takes an individual's or a group's vantage point and then looks at how institutional frameworks (such as social, cultural, economic, and political systems) may either hinder or facilitate the individual's or group's potential to change their own life. Sen (1987) contends that a lack of resources like shelter, food, and healthcare limits one's freedom. Several studies have been inspired by Sen's CA to better understand and assess individual well-being and development as indicated above. The CA has, however, not been without criticisms. Many scholars have criticised the CA on the grounds that it fails to recognise the interdependence of people and relations between

individuals. The CA is said to put too much emphasis on cognitive actions of the individual (Dean, 2009; Deneulin & McGregor, 2010; Taylor, 2011). This implies value assessments rarely consider the social construction of individuals (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010). There are also concerns that CA fails to consider power relation, political and structural inequality in determining the value of personal freedom (Dean, 2009; Carpenter, 2009; Sandbrook, 2000; Navarro, 2000). The application of CA is often combined with insufficient theories of society, especially those that fail to account for external factors for facilitating or constraining capabilities (Sayer, 2012, p. 580). Some scholars argue that application of the CA may be limited because the approach is difficult to comprehend due to lack of clarity and multi-dimensional nature of the approach (Srinivasan, 1994; Roemer, 1996; Chiappero-Martinetti, Egdell, Hollywood, & McQuaid, 2015).

Scholars and practitioners face a number of obstacles when they attempt to apply the approach to a broad area of policy domains (Hollywood et al., 2012; Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015). There is reservation regarding use of the CA for preservice teachers' management of mentoring relationships due to difficulties in making the CA operational. The main problem is difficulty in pinning down exactly what an individual can do, particularly in terms of the outcome that they have reason to value (Gasper, 2007).

Regarding capabilities, how they should count or how various capabilities should be merged to achieve a human flourishing has not been specified by Sen and, because of that, the CA is considered incomplete and imprecise (Robeyns, 2005a). Sen (2009) argues that "a reasonable solution" may be reached without widespread consensus on the issue. Therefore, in the CA, incompleteness plays a pivotal role (ibid.). The author suggests that everyone in a group should have a say in what gets to be preserved and what gets to be left out (ibid.). Sen's puts the mentoring relationship as a social justice that requires preservice teachers to decide what they have reason to value in such a relationship (Sen, 1999) during teaching practice. Sen argues that there should be public debates and open discussions for all to agree on what is capabilities (Walker, 2005). The author states that individuals who would be influenced by a programme or practice ought to be those to decide the capabilities that are most important (Robeyns, 2005a). The freedom to take part in social choice and public decision-making "also influences" people's opportunities (Sen, 1999:5). Sen's CA considers voice, power theories and participation because he is more interested in decision-makers themselves than in the decisions they make (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Sen



(1999) concurs with John Dewey (1938) and Paulo Freire (1972) in their assertion that the pursuit of freedom and the ability to make choices based on available opportunities are fundamental ideas in the concept of freedom.

Sen (1999) who declined to provide a pre-defined set of capabilities, remarked on the importance of freedom in the context of the subjective experience. The reasoning for the author not listing required capabilities has been criticised because it is unclear how the "processes of public reasoning and democracy are going to exist and how to make sure that basic requirements of fair representation are fulfilled" (Robeyns, 2005b:106). Sen's CA does not always allow for open, democratic debate among everyone who stands to be influenced (ibid.). The author makes it obvious that we would not get to the truth by logic; rather, he believes it would work against us by making us less objective (Sen, 2009). To support his claim that public reasoning is crucial for deciding what to value, Sen refers to Adam Smith's idea of the disinterested spectator (ibid.). This suggests the need for a more well-rounded and balanced perspective in order to make a good judgment. Participants must not just be limited by "local norms of thought"; instead consider "what the accepted conventions might seem like from the viewpoint of a spectator at a distance" (Sen, 2002: 451). This suggests that participants should not restrict themselves to adhering solely to the norms and perspectives prevalent in their local environment. Instead, they are encouraged to broaden their thinking by considering how widely accepted conventions might appear when viewed from a more distant or external standpoint. The idea is to promote a more expansive and open-minded approach, encouraging participants to appreciate different perspectives and challenge their local norms by adopting a more global or detached viewpoint.

Despite CA been more of an individualistic tendency, it is generally agreed that both individual abilities and social factors need to be taken into consideration for a whole perspective to be considered important (Sen, 1999). However, Ibrahim (2006) states that the CA falls short in its attempt to recognise the dynamic capability between people and social institutions and argues that its attempt to understand individual agency in isolation from social relations is a glaring mistake.

Sen (1983) claims that the position of an individual in relation to others does not only result in the person's own distinct viewpoint and set of reasoning, but depends on the conversion factors that enable or constrain certain actions, irrespective of the views of individuals. The author suggests the influence of management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice on professional



development of preservice teachers varies from preservice teacher to preservice teacher, based on personal, social and environmental factors in the mentoring relationship. The criticism of this approach is identified by Sen (2009) as too individualistic and may be unable to take social reasons into account. However, Sen addressed the criticism when he made reference to the idea of relational relationships as a core value in the capabilities (ibid.). Despite its drawbacks, the CA was found to be the most suitable to apply because it conceptualises capabilities and conversion factors, which are the main focus of this study.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to deepen our understanding of the capability approach and to discuss the theoretical justifications of the capability approach, as well as the rationale for selecting CA as the analytical framework for examining preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The capability approach serves as the substantive theory of the study, guiding the analysis and findings in the empirical chapters. This approach is employed to analyse preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' real freedoms or opportunities to achieve functioning in the management of mentoring relationship.

The Capabilities are based on (a) resources and (b) conversion factors – personal, social and pedagogical factors enabling preservice and mentor teachers to convert resources into functioning. Therefore, the capabilities of the preservice teachers and mentor teacher are the opportunity and freedoms to choose who and what they actually want to be and do “rather than what resources they have access to” (Walker, 2005: 103) in the management of mentoring relationship. The approach highlight ‘individual advantage... is judged by a person’s capability to do things he or she has reason to value’ (Sen, 2010, p. 231). Additionally, this chapter included information about the operationalization of the capability approach and its suitability as a model to understand the interplay of capabilities and conversion factors in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice concerning mentor teachers and preservice teachers.

The capability approach will serve as a normative framework for analysis of the values and beliefs of preservice teachers and the level of capability or constraint they experience in enacting those values in the management of the mentoring relationship. The information uncovered in this chapter included differences in Sen's and Nussbaum's Perspectives on capability approach and what mentor



teachers and preservice teachers have reason to value as important in their (future) lives regarding the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The following chapter presents the methodology and design employed in the study.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter discussed the CA used as a framework to investigate the management of mentorship mentor and preservice teachers' relationship during teaching practice. The current chapter deals with methodological issues. It begins by indicating an appropriate methodology for the study and providing the rationale for its selection. Reasons for the selection of the research paradigm within which the study is situated are discussed. Further, the chapter describes the approach and procedures employed in analysing the data. It further provides overview of data collection methods and data interpretation. To achieve the objective of the study, a suitable research design and research instruments were chosen to investigate capabilities and conversion factors in the management of the mentoring relationship in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the capabilities in the management of mentorship relationship during teaching practice?
2. What are the enabling factors in the management of the mentorship relationship during teaching practice?
3. What are the disabling or constraining factors in the management of the mentorship relationship during teaching practice?

The literature suggests that the quality of the mentorship relationship is crucial because mentoring process is essentially a social context for learning (Garvey & Alred, 2000 cited in Gyimah, 2010). Therefore, research on the management of mentoring relationships in teacher training programmes in Ghana is necessary to study for better understanding. To accomplish this, research methodology that can address all aspects of mentorship relationships in the mentoring process is required

According to Mertler (2015), research involves a systematic process of data collection, analysing, and data interpretation to gain deeper understanding of a problem under investigation. Anane (2014) defines research methodology as the path through which researchers conduct their study, including the procedures and approaches used to collect and analyse data. Methodology demonstrates how researchers formulate their research problem, objectives, and present the results from the collected data. Crotty (1998) states that methodology is a strategy or plan of action for selecting and using a

particular method. Therefore, methodology considers the reasons for collecting data, what data is collected, when data is collected, and how it is analysed.

Methodology refers to the plan or framework that researchers use to conduct their study within a specific paradigm (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 72). Paradigms are a fundamental concept in social science research methodology, consisting of a set of beliefs and practices that guide a study (Morgan, 2009). Guba and Lincoln (2013) explain that methodology addresses how researchers discover what they believe can be known. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016), research quality significantly depends on the methodology selected to conduct the research. Methods of research can be traced back through methodology to ontological and epistemological positions. Researchers' differences in ontological and epistemological positions may result in varying approaches to studying the same phenomenon (Grix, 2004; Scotland, 2012). In this chapter, the methodological procedures employed in the study are outlined. The chapter explains considerations made to develop a research methodology suitable for addressing the research questions outlined earlier. It provides justification for selecting the methodological framework, research paradigm, research design, criteria for selection of participants, methods of data collection and qualitative data analysis. The chapter discusses the case study approach as the research design employed for the study. The data collection methods employed for the study were interviews, focus group discussions and documentary review. In conclusion, the chapter details the measures taken in the research process to ensure authenticity of the study and credibility of the data. Additionally, the chapter highlights ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study.

#### **4.2 Research Paradigm**

The philosophical assumptions of a study are often referred to as paradigms of inquiry, which consist of a set of beliefs that inform actions and approaches in research (Creswell, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 2011). The paradigm is a set of assumptions, practices, values, and concepts that shape the researcher's view of reality (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). The term paradigm could also refer to a set of commonly accepted beliefs held by researchers within a particular community about the nature of reality and the appropriate ways to investigate it (Morgan, 2009, cited in Leech, Dellinger, Brannagan, & Tanaka, 2010; Aderibigbe, 2012). Some researchers define research paradigms as basic belief systems that involve values and assumptions on the nature of research (Guba & Lincoln, 2013; De Vos et al., 2011; Clark & Creswell, 2011). Paradigms offer varying perspectives and

interpretations of the world, which are grounded in assumptions related to ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), methodology (how research is conducted), axiology (values and ethics), and rhetoric (how language is used) in Clark and Creswell, (2011).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), understanding paradigm is essential for researchers because it influences the ontological, epistemological, methodological, axiological, and rhetorical assumptions that underpin a study. Mukherji and Albon (2009) emphasise the importance of understanding the philosophical framework of a study to select an appropriate research methodology. Clark and Creswell (2011) also highlight the significance of paradigm in shaping the research approach, methods, and techniques. The angle from which a person views the world depends on their specific worldview and, as such, it is important for researchers to adopt a framework that delineates the nature and form of reality, which is essential to understand the overall perspective from which a study is designed and conducted. There are several paradigms, including positivism, post-positivism, critical, and interpretivism (McGregor & Murnane, 2010).

#### **4.2.1 The Positivist Paradigm**

This paradigm, also known as the scientific paradigm, refers to a belief system that assumes there is one objective reality that can be observed by the inquirer with little to no impact on the object being observed (Maree, 2007, p. 53). According to Mertens (2007), the positivist paradigm involves the idea that phenomena can be studied by objectively measuring and analysing their properties. Positivists contend that reality can be explained and predicted by formulating and testing hypotheses (Myers, 2008). The primary feature of positivist research involves using the scientific method, statistical analysis, and generating generalisable findings (Mack, 2010). Additionally, positivist researchers usually adopt a pre-test and post-test method with an experimental and control groups to collect data (Willis, 2007). As such, the positivist paradigm is typically associated with an objective approach to studying social phenomena, emphasising quantitative analysis, surveys, and experiments (Willis, 2007). Another key feature of the positivist paradigm is the notion of value-free research, which entails the separation of the researcher from the research process to avoid personal bias and subjectivity (Bryman, 2016). Positivist researchers believe that they can attain objective knowledge by applying rigorous and systematic procedures to eliminate personal biases (Myers, 2008). They use empirical data and measurements to generate facts and laws that can be applied universally (Bryman, 2016).

The positivist paradigm is characterised by an emphasis on the objective and empirical study of observable phenomena, with the goal of generating generalisable knowledge (Babbie, 2017). While this paradigm has been effective in advancing scientific understanding, it is subject to certain limitations. Some criticisms have been levelled at the positivist paradigm. For example, the positivist approach has been criticised for being reductionist, as it tends to oversimplify complex social phenomena (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative researchers argue that positivist research does not consider context or the subjectivity of participants and the complexity of social phenomena, which is important in social science research (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, critics have argued that the positivist paradigm is limited in its ability to capture complex social phenomena, such as emotions and values (Maree, 2007). Additionally, the positivist paradigm has been criticised for failing to account for the role of subjective experience and interpretation in the construction of social reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Despite these criticisms, the positivist paradigm remains a useful tool for investigating certain types of research questions. Positivist methods are valuable in providing insights into phenomena that can be measured and quantified, and can help to establish causal relationships (Bryman, 2016). In response to these criticisms, post-positivist paradigms have emerged, emphasising the role of subjectivity and context in research (Crotty, 1998).

#### **4.2.2. The Post-Positivism Paradigm**

The post-positivism paradigm refers to an epistemological stance that emerged as a response to the limitations of the positivist paradigm in capturing the complexity of social phenomena. Post-positivist theorists posit that reality cannot be viewed as objective or fixed, but instead is established through the interactions between the observer and the observed (Lincoln & Guba, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, this paradigm recognises that the social world is not fixed and that knowledge is subject to interpretation (Williams, 2020). Post-positivists stress the importance of context, subjectivity, and the interpretive nature of social phenomena (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The post-positivist viewpoint rejects the concept of a singular, objective reality and acknowledges that knowledge is contextual and influenced by the researcher's values and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The paradigm also acknowledges that all research is subject to bias and that there is always a degree of uncertainty in research findings. Post-positivists stress the significance of reflexivity, recognising the researcher's influence on the research process. (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the post-positivist paradigm stresses the importance of context and the researcher's role in shaping

the research and interpretation of the data. The role of researchers is viewed as that of active participants in the research process, rather than passive observers (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). As such, post-positivists advocate for mixed-methods such as quantitative and qualitative approaches that combine strengths of both (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). They recognise that both types of approaches are valuable to gain deeper understanding of the social phenomenon for investigation. According to this paradigm, researchers can never know the truth, but can only approach it through critical examination and constant questioning of assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The post-positivist paradigm has been criticised for its lack of clear methodological guidelines and focus on deconstruction and criticism, rather than development of positive knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2011). However, it continues to be a valuable paradigm in social science research, particularly in fields where objective truth is difficult to establish, and the role of the researcher is paramount (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

#### **4.2.3 The Critical Paradigm**

The critical paradigm is rooted in critical theory, which is a school of thought that originated from the Frankfurt School in the 1930s and has evolved since then (Dahms, 2017; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017). According to critical theory, social problems are not natural or inevitable but are, instead, created by the unequal distribution of power and resources in society (Dahms, 2017). Critical researchers aim to deconstruct and challenge dominant ideologies and power structures by examining social phenomena through a critical lens (Creswell, 2014; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017).

The critical paradigm is a philosophical approach that seeks to challenge and transform unequal power relations and promote social justice through interpretive analysis and qualitative research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Thus, the critical paradigm is grounded in critical theory and holds the belief that research should aim to emancipate individuals and groups in society by bringing about egalitarianism (Cohen et al., 2013). The researchers often work in collaboration with marginalised and oppressed groups to challenge dominant power structures and promote social justice (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm seeks to understand and critique societal structures and practices that create inequality and oppression, with the goal of bringing about social change (Creswell, 2014). The paradigm recognises that individuals' ability to consciously act to change their economic and social circumstances is limited by societal structures and power

dynamics (Myers, 2008; Maree, 2017). Critical researchers view social reality as constructed through power relations and seek to identify and challenge dominant power structures (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2010; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017). It is an appropriate research approach for studies that seek to challenge and change the epistemological and ontological assumptions of participants (Cohen et al., 2013; Flick, 2018).

The critical paradigm is characterised by an emphasis on interpretive analysis and the use of qualitative methods such as Case study, Phenomenology, Narrative analysis and ethnography to explore lived experiences (Dahms, 2017; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017). Researchers used qualitative research instruments such as interviews, focus groups, and observations to obtain rich and detailed data that can help to reveal the complexities of social phenomena (Flick, 2018; Maree, 2016). According to Cohen et al. (2013), the critical paradigm is not concerned with generalization, but rather with the depth of understanding and providing insights that can lead to social change.

#### **4.2.4 The Interpretivism Paradigm**

The interpretivist paradigm, alternatively referred to as "anti-positivist", emerged as a reaction to positivism and has become an influential paradigm in social science research (Mack, 2010). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), interpretive researchers hold the view that reality is socially constructed and that social constructions such as language, shared meanings and consciousness are used to access reality. This paradigm is also known as constructivism because it recognises the individual's ability to construct meaning based on their perceptions and experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Segre, 2016). In contrast to the positivist paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the influence of participants' perceptions and the social context in which they are situated (Maree, 2007). Thus, researchers who adopt an interpretive paradigm acknowledge that reality is constructed by social actors and their perceptions, and emphasise the importance of understanding these perspectives in the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This suggests researchers using the interpretivist paradigm aim to understand the meanings and experiences of participants and the social processes that underlie them. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm recognises the importance of subjective experiences and the influence of social and cultural contexts on individuals' perceptions of reality. In this way, it provides a valuable perspective for understanding complex social phenomena that cannot be fully captured by positivist approaches.



The interpretivist paradigm is often associated with hermeneutics and phenomenology, which provide methods for understanding and interpreting texts and experiences (Butler, 1998). Researchers using this paradigm focus on exploring the subjective experiences of participants and seek to understand their perspectives and meanings (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Interpretive research often involves qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and observation to gather rich descriptive data that can be analysed through thematic analysis, discourse analysis, or other qualitative methods (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The interpretivist paradigm was used in this study to explore the management of the mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice as it allowed for understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

#### **4.3 Assumptions of the Paradigms**

Paradigms in research are built on a foundation of assumptions, as noted by Cotland (2012) and Healy and Perry (2000). Healy and Perry (2000) describe these assumptions as consisting of three elements: ontological, epistemological, and methodological, which are used by researchers to investigate reality. The use of paradigms and their underlying assumptions is critical to research methodology as they provide a framework for researchers to select appropriate techniques to investigate the reality they seek to understand.

The researcher's approach to this study is grounded in an understanding of how knowledge is acquired and perception of reality. The theoretical perspective of this study embraces both ontology, concerning the essence of existence (the nature of being), and epistemology, which concerns the nature and types of knowledge. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Ormston et al., 2014). Ontology refers to the study of the nature of being or existence, and how entities relate to each other in the world while epistemology is concerned with the study of knowledge - how it is created, acquired, and communicated within and across various disciplines and contexts (Bryman, 2012; Crotty, 1998). According to Guba and Lincoln (2013), epistemology is the nature of a relationship between the knower and the object of knowledge. In line with this, researchers are required to explicitly state their ontological and epistemological assumptions before beginning any research, as these assumptions will shape the nature of the problems identified, the questions posed, and the decisions made throughout the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

The conduct and interpretation of findings can be significantly influenced by the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research. As a result, it is crucial to understand these assumptions to guarantee that research is conducted rigorously and with significance.

#### **4.3.1 Epistemology of the Study**

The concept of epistemology involves the study of knowledge and how it is created, acquired, and communicated. The epistemological differences among research paradigms arise from their varying perspectives. Positivists adhere to the belief in an objective reality that exists independently of consciousness (Jamar, 2012), while post-positivists recognise that knowledge is contextual, constructed, or constrained (Morçöl, 2001). Critical theorists hold a more subjective view of epistemology, rejecting the notion that research can objectively determine what is real (Harding, 1998). The understanding of these different perspectives is crucial to conducting meaningful and rigorous research. According to the interpretivist paradigm, understanding any phenomenon is dependent on its context and situational constraints, (Rowlands, 2005). In this study, the interpretivist/constructivist epistemological position (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Erickson, 2012) is adopted, which views knowledge acquisition as subjective. The constructivist/interpretivist assumption suggests that interaction between the researcher and the researched can lead to the discovery of deeper understanding of a phenomenon under investigation (Ponterotto, 2005). This suggests the research process involves a symbiotic relationship between researchers and participants, where researchers play an active role (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The interpretivist paradigm assumes that knowledge is constructed through interactions in the social context, and that there is much to be learned from analysing people's perceptions of their experiences and the meanings they attribute to them (Glaserfeld, 1989; Pope, 1982; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As a researcher investigating the management of the mentoring relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers, I acknowledged the critical role played by teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship. I sought to understand the nature of the mentoring relationships from the subjective perspectives of the mentor and preservice teachers and interpret their experiences. The interpretive paradigm's epistemological stance is that individuals construct or uncovering knowledge through interactions in the social context that will be investigated (Von Glaserfeld, 1989; Pope, 1982; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Kivunja & Kuyini, (2017)

the paradigm assumes that people use interpretive schemes that need to be comprehended, and the unique features of the local context should be expressed.

#### **4.3.2 Ontology of the Study**

The concept of ontology is a fundamental aspect of research, which focuses on the nature of reality and the constituents of existence. Scotland (2012) posits that ontology, the study of what constitutes reality, is crucial for researchers to take a position regarding perceptions of how things really are and how they work. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), ontology is a crucial aspect of research as it pertains to the nature of reality and what exists. In terms of ontology, researchers must consider whether there is one knowable reality or multiple realities that are constructed based on individual experiences and perceptions (Krauss, 2005).

The positivist paradigm holds the assumption that there is a single objective reality or absolute truth that can be uncovered through research, particularly in the social sciences that deal with human behavior (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). However, Jamar (2012) asserts that post-positivists reject the notion of an absolute truth and recognise that knowledge is influenced by social conditioning and constructed in particular contexts. The author further posits that critical ontology perspective emphasises the need to frame social reality within the context of relevant dynamic social structures that create observable phenomena within the social world. This perspective acknowledges the importance of considering power dynamics, social inequalities, and historical context when studying social phenomena. In the interpretive paradigm, ontological assumptions suggest that social reality is contextually and specifically constructed (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

The interpretive/constructivist ontology assumes that there are multiple realities that emerge from people's experiences, views, and perceptions of a particular situation, indicating that realities are subjective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This ontology rejects the notion of an objective reality and posits that multiple realities are constructed by human beings who experience the phenomenon of interest. The ontology of research is important because it influences the research design, methods, and interpretation of results. In order to conduct valid research, it is important to consider the ontology of the phenomenon being studied and the ontological assumptions of the research paradigm being used. Researchers should also consider the ontological assumptions of participants and how their experiences and perceptions shape the realities they construct (Mertens, 2007). In

this study, each mentor teacher and preservice teacher contextually constructed their own realities of the mentoring relationship, and different research methods of interpretive design were used to establish the reality in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The ontology of this study was concerned with participants' worldview of meanings and interpretations. Ontology is a critical component of research, shaping the way that researchers' approach and understand the phenomena they are studying. It is essential for researchers to be conscious of their own ontological assumptions and to consider the ontological assumptions of the research paradigm being used and the participants being studied in order to conduct valid and meaningful research.

#### **4.4 Research Paradigm of this Study**

In this study, the research paradigm is constructivism/interpretivism, which assumes that reality is multiple and constructed by individuals (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012). Constructivist researchers aim to understand how participants construct their meanings around the phenomenon of interest, and recognize that the researcher's interpretation is also a construction (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012). Constructivism emphasizes the creation of knowledge through interaction and dialogue between the researcher and participants, with reality premised on the social construction of knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The interpretivism also acknowledges that the phenomenon to explore has multiple interpretations and that reality is subjective and dependent on time and context (Creswell, 2014). It seeks to understand a phenomenon in its natural context and accommodate the subjective nature of human beings (Bryman, 2012). Research in the interpretive paradigm tends to be more qualitative, with a focus on understanding the phenomenon rather than seeking explanations and justifications (De Vos et al., 2011).

According to Murangi (2017), the interpretive paradigm utilizes an inductive approach to draw conclusions based on individuals' views and experiences. To collect data on the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in this study, providing participants with a platform to express their perspectives and lived experiences. The use of qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions allow for more freedom during the research process to explore the essence of the participants' experiences (Jacobs & Furgerson, 2012; Miles et al., 2014). The interpretivism is a research paradigm that acknowledges the existence of multiple interpretations of a phenomenon

(Newby, 2010). According to this paradigm, reality is subjective and it varies based on time and context of the problem being studied (Creswell, 2014).

The constructivism/interpretivism paradigm allows for a flexible and participatory research process, where participants are considered co-researchers rather than research subjects (De Vos et al., 2011). The research findings are jointly constructed through interactive dialogue and interpretation between the researcher and participants (Murangi, 2017), emphasising the importance of the participants' perspectives and experiences. This study adopted the interpretive paradigm because its focus on comprehending the phenomenon within a specific context and creating knowledge inductively from the data, with the researcher's choice of research paradigm and methodology being motivated by the desire to uncover the human aspect of the story and comprehend the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

#### **4.5 Research Design**

An important aspect of a study is the research design, which provides a framework for addressing the proposed research questions at hand. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). The selection of the most appropriate qualitative research design should be dependent on the study's purpose to ensure it becomes an excellent qualitative study. The study adopted a case study design to explore the management of the mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. A case study design could be defined as a rigorous research method that explores a group of people, a single individual, or a specific unit with the purpose of generalizing the findings to other similar units or contexts (Yin, 2016). A case study design strategy is recommended for researchers who aim to answer how and why questions and do not have control over behavioural event but focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2016). The case study design is a qualitative research methodology that explores current and intricate problem within its natural setting, particularly when the demarcation between the phenomenon of interest and its surrounding environment is ambiguous (Yin, 2016). The case study design is highly suitable for mentoring relationship research as it allows for the collection of rich and detailed data from a real-world context, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mentoring relationship than other research designs. An embedded single-case design was suitable for this study because the approach allows for an in-depth examination of a single mentoring relationship, with a focus on the specific capabilities that enable effective management of the mentoring relationship during teaching

practice. The embedded single-case design also enables the researcher to investigate the different capabilities required in management of mentoring relationship amid mentor teachers and preservice teachers. The embedded single-case design enabled the researcher to explore unique context of mentoring relationship, including the social, pedagogical, and institutional factors that influence the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

This design provided a nuanced understanding of the specific capabilities required for successful management of the mentoring relationships, as well as the challenges that may arise in different contexts. In the context of mentoring relationship, an embedded single-case study design was appropriate because it allow for the investigation of the mentoring relationship as a whole while also providing the opportunity to study subunits of analysis, such as the mentor teacher and preservice teacher specific behaviours in the management of the mentoring relationship. The design allows for the exploration of various capabilities and conversion factors that influence the mentoring relationship including the background of the preservice teachers, the experience of the mentor teachers and the school environment. According to Creswell (2014), an embedded single-case design provides the ability to study a case in-depth while also allowing for examination of multiple units of analysis. Several studies have used embedded single-case design to investigate the mentoring relationship in education. For example, Musyoka, Ondigi, and Mbaluka (2020) used an embedded single-case study design to examine the mentoring practices of secondary school principals in Kenya. Similarly, Marimuthu and Goh (2019) used an embedded single-case design to investigate the effectiveness of a mentoring programme for trainee teachers in Malaysia. Therefore, embedded single-case study design is appropriate for investigating the capabilities in the management of the mentoring relationship as it allows for a comprehensive examination of multiple units of analysis within a single case.

#### **4.6 Methodological Choice**

Methodology in research is the overall plan of action that underlies the choice and use of a particular research method. It concerns with what data to be collected, from where, when, how, and why it is collected and analysed (Scotland, 2012). Researchers select a particular research method based on the underlying set of beliefs that guide them, which can be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Sarantakos, 2005). Creswell (2014) asserts that quantitative research involves a numerical or statistical approach to research design, generating data that requires statistical summarisation,

description, and analysis. This method is often used for deductive research, hypothesis testing, descriptive information gathering, and examination of relationships between variables. In contrast, qualitative research collects and analyses comprehensive narrative and visual data, such as personal experiences, life stories through interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts, to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2014).

The choice of research approach depends on the context and how the researcher aims to address their research question. Quantitative methods are typically used to quantify results using inferential statistics, while qualitative methods are suitable for research questions that require textual data. Mixed-method research combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to collect, analyze, and present data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Furthermore, mixed-method research offers an alternative approach to address research questions that require both numerical and textual data. Creswell's (2014) delineation of quantitative and qualitative research highlights the importance of selecting the appropriate research method to suit the research question.

Qualitative research is grounded in the belief that reality is constructed and shaped by human experiences and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The use of the qualitative method was also to provide evidence of experience for the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, this research approach focuses on the subjective experiences and meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences. By adopting a qualitative research approach, this study aimed to explore the nuanced experiences and perceptions of participants regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection methods in qualitative research often include interviews, observations, focus group discussion and document analysis (Creswell, 2014). The data collection methods used to obtain detailed information about the experiences of mentor teachers and preservice teachers included interviews and focus group discussions that were characterized by intense and saturated descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Mohajan, 2018). Therefore, through the use of in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis, the study was able to capture the complex and diverse range of experiences and perspectives of participants.

A qualitative research approach was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Mack et al. (2005) opined that qualitative research is characterised by its in-depth exploration of a particular topic, often involving a small, but information-rich



sample. This approach is particularly useful for investigating complex social phenomena and exploring the perspectives and experiences of individuals in their own words (Patton, 2015).

In summary, the decision to employ a qualitative research approach in this study was driven by the need to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative research has been found to be particularly useful for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding the subjective experiences of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015).

#### **4.6.1 Research Approach**

The previous section indicated that the study adopted a qualitative approach, which seeks to comprehensively understand the issue at hand from the participants' perspectives (O'Leary, 2010). This approach focuses on examining people's words, actions, and records, and valuing each person's unique experiences while identifying the deeper structure and common elements in experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Patton, 2002; Berg, 2016). Qualitative research approaches aim to develop theories by describing and understanding various aspects of individuals' cultures, beliefs, values, and experiences (Holloway & Galvin, 2016; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Wuest, 2012; Munhall, 2012). To gain insight into how preservice teachers and mentor teachers manage the mentoring relationships during teaching practice, this study employed a qualitative approach drawing on interpretivism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Hogan et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014). The study used Hermeneutic phenomenology to guide the qualitative strategies for understanding and interpreting the participants' beliefs and experiences in the mentorship during teaching practice (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991; Aderibigbe, 2012). Specifically, the study explored the participants' views on mentoring relationships during teaching practice and how the relationship is managed. The qualitative approach enabled a comprehensive investigation of the beliefs and experiences of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers.

The study used the narrative inquiry as the chosen qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) to explore factors contributing to the management of mentoring relationships, with the goal of understanding the participants' experiences. Qualitative inquiry investigates social problems and uses techniques that create comprehensive views of participants based on their words and reports (Creswell, 2014). Narrative inquiry was deemed suitable as it empowers participants to share their stories and minimizes power relations between the participants and researcher in the study. Narrative inquiry allows for detailed theoretical accounts to be made



through the interpretation of interview transcripts (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Chataika, 2005). The method emphasizes participants' perspectives, values, aspirations, and socio-cultural circumstances (Goodley et al., 2004). In this study, narrative inquiry provided insight into the lives and aspirations of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in mentoring relationships and how these experiences impact their lives. It aligned with the study's theoretical framework by valuing the unique experiences and perspectives of each participant, enabling them to tell their stories from their own point of view.

The researcher directly engaged with participants by visiting their schools and encouraging them to share their stories of specific experiences. This approach is consistent with the tenets of qualitative research, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the context in which participants' experiences occur (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), qualitative research provides an opportunity to reflect on participants' lives, perspectives, socio-cultural circumstances, and aspirations within the context of mentoring relationships.

In this study, the life experiences of each preservice teacher and mentor teacher were valued, and their perspectives were central to the investigation of mentoring relationships. Qualitative research enables researchers to understand the subjective experiences of participants and their unique perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 2009).

The contextual nature of qualitative research enables researchers to examine the nuances and complexities of participants' experiences, rather than reducing them to numerical data points (Creswell, 2014). This approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under investigation and facilitates the development of a richer and more nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants.

In summary, the researcher in this study used a qualitative research approach, which enabled the researcher to understand the context of the mentoring relationships and gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants. The study valued life experiences of each preservice teacher and mentor teacher and sought to understand the complexities and nuances of their experiences during teaching practice.

#### **4.7 Overview of the Country in Context**

The context of a research site plays a critical role in shaping the outcomes of a study. As such, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic, political, and educational context of the country is vital to the success of any research project. This information provides a foundation for interpreting research findings and understanding the impact of the contextual factors on the research outcomes. In the case of this study, an overview of the socio-economic, political, and educational context of the country where the research was conducted is presented to contextualize the research findings.

Ghana is one of the countries located in the West Africa and became independent from British colonial rule in 1957 with a current population of over 30 million people (Ghana Statistical Service 2021; World Atlas, 2021). Ghana covers a total land area of approximately 238,537 square kilometers and shares borders on the north, west, and east with Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Togo, respectively. The country's southern coast stretches over 550 kilometers and is located on the Gulf of Guinea, a large gulf in the eastern tropical Atlantic Ocean off the coast of West Africa. The Gulf of Guinea is known for its rich marine biodiversity and is an important fishing ground. Additionally, the southern coast of Ghana is home to several major ports, including the Port of Tema and the Port of Takoradi, which serve as important gateways for the country's exports of gold, oil, cocoa, and other commodities to the rest of the world. Ghana has 16 administrative regions and 260 districts that facilitate governance and service provision (Ghana Statistical Services, 2019; City Population, 2019).

Swanzy (2015) reports that Ghana's cultural heritage is rich and diverse, with over 100 ethnic groups, each with its language, traditions, and customs. The official language of Ghana is English, inherited from its colonial past. The Ghanaian people are known for their warm hospitality, vibrant music and dance, and colorful festivals.

In terms of the socio-economic context, Ghana's economy is diversified, with the key sectors being agriculture, manufacturing, and services (World Bank, 2020). The country's impressive economic growth over the last decade has been demonstrated by an average growth rate of over 6% (World Bank, 2020). Additionally, Ghana is a significant exporter of gold, timber, oil and the second-largest cocoa producer worldwide (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, Ghana has positioned itself as a leading technology start-up hub in Africa, having made significant progress in developing its



information and communication technology (ICT) sector. The majority of Ghana's labour force is in the informal sector (Baah-Boateng, 2017) with small-scale subsistence farmers facing significant challenges in terms of access to capital, modern farming techniques, and agricultural inputs, resulting in high poverty rates in the country (World Bank, 2015a). Graduates from universities and polytechnics in Ghana also face difficulties securing jobs, with about 50 percent of them unlikely to find employment for more than two years after completing their mandatory one-year national service (Aryeetey, 2001).

Despite significant progress in economic development, Ghana faces several challenges such as high poverty rates, food insecurity, inadequate healthcare services, poor sanitation, and environmental degradation. The poverty rate has significantly decreased from 52.7% in 1991 to 21.4% in 2012, but the international poverty rate in Ghana was estimated to be 11.3% in 2021 (World Bank, 2015a). Poverty incidence has been decreasing in the southern and central regions since 1991, but it has been on the rise in the northern and upper east regions (World Bank, 2015a). These regional disparities have significant consequences for the developmental outcomes of children, with the northern regions exhibiting lower literacy rates and higher levels of infant and child mortality (Ghana Health Service, 2019; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020).

Politically, Ghana's political system has undergone significant changes since independence from democracy to military rule to democracy. The country has made significant progress in building democratic institutions, and its peaceful transitions of power since 1992 are indicative of the maturity of its democratic system. The country operates a presidential system of government with a unicameral parliament. The president serves as head of state and government, and the parliament exercises legislative powers (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). The country has a vibrant civil society with active citizens' participation in the governance process, including periodic elections, which have been peaceful and credible over thirty years. The Ghanaian constitution guarantees several civil liberties, including freedom of speech, religion, and association.

Despite Ghana's political stability, the country still faces some governance challenges, including corruption and weak institutions. According to Transparency International (2021), Ghana ranked 75 out of 180 countries in the 2020 Corruption Perception Index which suggest corruption remains a significant challenge in the country. Notwithstanding the corruption in the country, government of Ghana has significant institutions and laws to combat corruption in the country. These include



the establishment of anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Organised Crime Office, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the Special Prosecutor office as well as the enactment of various anti-corruption laws.

In terms of education, Ghana has made significant progress in reducing illiteracy rates. However, there is still a significant disparity in literacy rates between the southern regions and the northern regions of the country (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020). To address these challenges, Ghana has prioritized investments in education to foster sustainable economic growth and alleviate poverty (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2020).

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2020), Ghana's national adult literacy rate is 79.04 percent. However, in the five northern regions, less than half of the population aged 11 and above are literate because of a lack of access to education for the youth with the Southern regions of Ghana exhibit a higher literacy rate of over 69 percent among the population aged 11 and older, as per the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2020). These regional disparities in access to education and other basic services have contributed to relatively high levels of infant and child mortality and employment opportunities in northern regions of Ghana (Ghana Health Service, 2019).

The Northern Region of Ghana is made up of 14 districts, including the Sagnarigu District, which is the focus of the study (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). It was the largest region in Ghana, covering 70,384 square kilometres, until it was split into three separate regions, including the Northern Region, Savannah Region, and Northeast Region in December 2018 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). Ghana's Northern Region is positioned in the northern section of the country and features a Guinea Savanna vegetation belt characterized by unimodal rainfall patterns. The Guinea Savanna vegetation belt characterizes the Northern Region and situated in the northern part of Ghana. As per the Ghana Statistical Service (2021), the region's coordinates fall between longitudes 0° 93' W and 0° 45' E and latitudes 9° 15' and 9° 32' N. The region shares borders with the Northeast to the north, the Oti Region to the south, the eastern Ghana-Togo international border to the east and the Savannah Region to the west (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Tamale serves as the regional capital, with various ethnic groups inhabiting the region, including the Dagomba, Konkomba among other. The Guinea Savanna vegetation belt characterizes the Northern Region, which experiences a unimodal rainfall pattern, with most precipitation occurring between May and October (Atiah et al., 2021; Boansi et al., 2021). The region faces several challenges, including high

levels of poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure and social amenities (Abdulai et al., 2012). However, it has also made some progress in recent years, particularly in the area of agriculture, with efforts to promote sustainable land use practices and increase crop yields (Atiah et al., 2021).

In conclusion, Ghana's socio-economic, political, and educational context is critical in determining the development of the country's trajectory. Therefore, understanding the various dimensions of this context is essential to the effective implementation of policies and programmes that can foster sustainable development and improve quality life for Ghanaians and education quality. Northern Region of Ghana is a diverse region with a complex socio-economic and political context. The Sagnarigu District, where the study was conducted, is located in this region and is representative of the unique challenges and opportunities that exist in this part of Ghana.

#### **4.7.1 Educational System**

In Ghana, formal education commences with a two-year kindergarten program, which is followed by six years of primary school, three years of junior high school, and finally, three years of senior high school before higher education institution. The basic level of education covers ages 6-14 and is free and compulsory (Gyimah-Brempong, 2017; Ghana Statistical Service, 2010; World Bank, 2015a). The education quality in Ghana remains a challenge because of insufficient public funding, rapid increases in enrollment without commensurate increases in funding, and pedagogical method that placed emphasizes on the reading and reproducing rather than critical thinking and problem-solving (Gyimah-Brempong, 2017; Twum-Danso, 2009).

The Northern Region also has the lowest literacy rate in the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010, 2021). The Sagnarigu District is one of the districts which has lower school attendance rates and the highest out-of-school rates in the Northern region of Ghana due to poverty (World Food Programme, 2011). In the Sagnarigu District, there are a total of 179 schools (110 public and 69 private) ranging from kindergarten to senior high school levels (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). However, like in the rest of the Northern Region, school participation rates are comparatively lower than in other regions of the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008). Poverty is a major factor that hinders parents from sending their children to school due to associated costs such as school uniforms, textbooks, and exercise books (World Food Programme, 2011). There are approximately 60,000 children enrolled in Islamic schools in Ghana, with the majority of them located in the

Northern Region (2015 UNESCO report). According to Boyle et al. (2007), a substantial number of individuals from the Northern part of Ghana enroll in more than 4,418 Islamic schools called Makaranta, out of which only 1,418 have been acknowledged by Ghana Education Service under Islamic Education Unit.

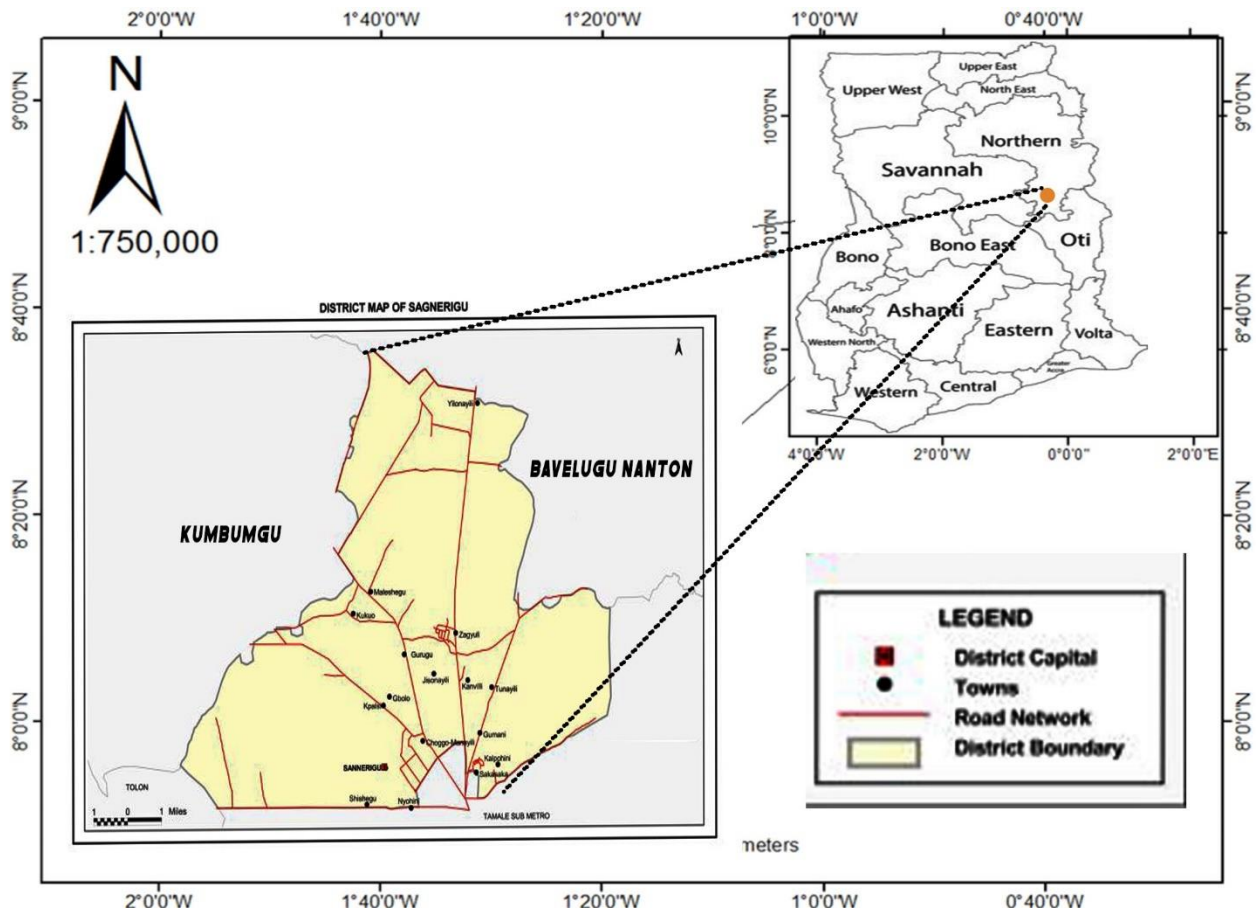
According to Ghana Education Service (2020), there are low percentages of Junior High School (JHS) pupils in the district who sit for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) with only 38.4 percent of pupils in the district wrote the BECE, the percentage increased slightly to 43.2 percent in 2020. - 38.4 percent. This data suggests that a significant proportion of children in the district may not have access to formal education, which can limit their opportunities for personal and economic growth, which highlight the significant challenges faced in ensuring access to quality education in the Northern Region of Ghana. Despite these challenges, efforts are being made to improve the quality of education and provide equitable access to education in the Northern Region including Sagnarigu District.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2010) reported that there had been some improvements in access to education, with an increase in the number of primary schools and teachers in the Northern Region between 2000 and 2010. Furthermore, according to Owusu (2019), the government of Ghana has implemented various initiatives aimed at improving access to education in the Northern Region, such as the construction of new schools and the provision of free basic education to all children in Ghana.

The Northern Region of Ghana faces specific challenges that hinder access to quality education for children. According to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), poverty is widespread in the Northern Region, with 44% of households living below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2020). This has resulted in limited resources for education, including inadequate funding for schools and insufficient learning materials (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, the region's infrastructure is often inadequate, with many schools lacking basic amenities such as clean water and sanitation facilities (UNICEF, 2020). This not only affects the health and well-being of students but also hinders their ability to focus on their studies. Furthermore, teacher training and support in the Northern Region is often inadequate, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers and a lack of consistency in teaching quality across different schools (USAID, 2020). This, in turn, affects the quality of education that children receive and their ability to succeed in school.

To address these challenges, Ghana has implemented various initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education in the Northern Region. For example, the Ghana Education Service, in collaboration with the World Bank and UNICEF, has established a program to improve access to quality education in the region by providing schools with basic infrastructure and learning materials, and by training teachers to improve teaching quality (World Bank, 2019). While these initiatives are commendable, more needs to be done to address the specific challenges facing the Northern Region of Ghana. By prioritizing the needs of this region and implementing targeted interventions, Ghana can work towards providing access to quality education for all its citizens, regardless of their location or socio-economic status.

**Figure 4.1: Map of the Sagnarigu District in the Northern Region of Ghana**



*Source: Author's Construct (2022)*



#### **4.7.2 Brief demographics of the Sagnarigu District**

The Sagnarigu District Assembly is one of the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana, and forms part of the 16 MMDAs in the Northern Region. The district was created out of the Tamale Metropolis in 2012 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 2066 and was elevated to a municipality in 2018 by LI 2272. The municipality is located in the central part of the Northern Region of Ghana and lies between latitudes 9°16' and 9° 34' North and longitudes 0° 36' and 0° 57' West with its Administrative capital Sagnarigu and covers a total land size of 454 km<sup>2</sup>. It shares boundaries to the North with Savelugu Nanton Municipal to the North-East, Tamale Metropolitan to the South and East, to the West with Tolon District, and North-West with Kumbungu Municipal. According to the 2021 Ghana Population and Housing Census, Sagnarigu Municipal has an estimated population of 341,711, comprising 170,199 males (49.8%) and 171,512 females (50.2%), with a Muslims population of 87.3% followed by Christians and Traditionalists.

The district has a household population of 146,291 with a total number of 23,447 households. The average household size in the district is 6.3 persons per household with a growth rate of 3.1%. Children constitute the largest proportion of the household composition accounting for 43.3 percent and spouses form about 9.9 percent. Extended (Heads, spouse(s), children and Head's relatives) households constitute 50.5 percent of the total number of households in the district. According to the Population and Housing Census in 2021, the Sagnarigu District has 79 communities, comprising of 20 urban, 6 peri-urban, and 53 rural areas with majority of the schools in the urban communities serving as teaching practice location for preservice teachers from the University for Development Studies.

#### **4.8 Brief Overview of University for Development Studies**

The University for Development Studies (UDS) is a public university located in Tamale, Ghana. It was established in 1992 with the mandate of providing higher education that is relevant to the development needs of Ghana and the West African sub-region. The University was established by the government of Ghana in response to the perceived uneven distribution of higher education institutions across the country, with most universities located in the southern part of the country. UDS is one of Ghana's five public universities responsible for training teachers for the pre-tertiary education sector.





The University is located in Tamale, the regional capital of Northern region. The University offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional programmes in various areas such as education, agriculture, health sciences, natural resources, engineering and environmental studies. It has a strong commitment to community engagement and runs a number of outreach programmes to promote sustainable development in the surrounding regions. UDS has a unique focus on applied research with a mission to provide solutions to development challenges facing Northern Ghana and other regions of the country.

The university has strong partnerships with several local communities, government agencies, and international organisations to address issues related to poverty, food security, health, education, and environmental sustainability. It is recognised as one of Ghana's leading universities and a model for higher education institutions in Africa and beyond. Its graduates are making significant contributions to Ghana's development and beyond, serving as professionals, policymakers, and community leaders in various sectors of society.

#### **4.8.1 Teaching Practice at the University for Development Studies**

The University has a three-month teaching practice programme for preservice teachers in their first semester of a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) teacher preparation programme. This is an intensive school-based programme supervised by experienced lectures/teachers that exposes preservice teachers to the prospects and challenges of the teaching profession. Although the University's supervisors monitor teaching practice, the responsibility for preservice teachers is primarily handed over to mentor teachers in cooperating schools. The mentor teachers are expected to guide and support preservice teachers for their professional development in the teaching profession (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021).

UDS allows preservice teachers to apply to schools of their choice for teaching practice placement. However, in practice the schools often accept placements based on their needs, especially in subjects with a shortage of teachers. As such, there are cases where a preservice teacher may be the sole teacher in a department, thereby assuming the position of "head of the department." (Agoke, 2018). However, UDS places significant importance on the role of mentor teachers who provide support and guidance to preservice teachers in developing crucial skills such as class control and management, lesson preparation and planning, proficiency in teaching methodology, and reflective practice.

UDS has a standing agreement with the practicing schools and mentor teachers. This model is similar to the inquiry-based model used in the United States, where the mentoring process involves a triad of participants, including the mentor teacher, preservice teacher and university supervisor (Nguyen, 2009). However, in most of the cooperating schools in Ghana, mentor teachers often abandon preservice teachers to fend for themselves in the classroom without guidance or professional support (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021). This approach provides little or no support and supervision to preservice teachers, which can be detrimental to their development. Thus, preservice teachers miss the opportunity to benefit from a mentoring relationship during their teaching practice, leading to a lack of confidence and inadequate preparation for the teaching profession.

#### **4.17 Research Participants**

Gaining access to potential participants can be a crucial aspect of research, particularly when attempting to reach a specific target sample (Creswell, 2012). He emphasizes the need to have a clear plan for accessing and recruiting participants, and suggests using multiple methods to increase the likelihood of reaching a target sample. In this study, the participants consisted of all the mentor teachers in the cooperating schools who were assigned Early Grade Education preservice teachers from the Faculty of Education at the UDS, Tamale, Ghana. The study total population constituted 30 participants, made up of 10 mentor teachers and 20 Early Grade Education Specialism students who completed their teaching practice in the 2021/2022 academic year. Females were dominant among the Early Grade education preservice teachers. All of the Early Grade preservice teachers were selected as the target population for the study in exploring how Early Grade preservice teachers are mentored during teaching practice.

Although it would have been preferable to include all mentor teachers in the cooperating schools and preservice teachers in the Faculty of Education as research participants, Best and Kahn (2014) suggest that studying a large population to arrive at generalization would be impractical, if not impossible. They argue that rather than attempting to generalize findings to a larger population, researchers should focus on understanding the specific context and social phenomena they are studying. As a result, the study focused on the sample of population to make the research more manageable and practicable. Besides in this qualitative research, statistical representativeness is not the primary goal, and a large sample size might compromise the depth and quality of the data

collection. In support of this view, Sandelowski (2010) opine that sample size for qualitative research ought not to be large because it could be challenging to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis. She suggests that sample size should be determined by the research question, the available resources, and the need to achieve theoretical saturation, which is the point at which data collection is no longer generating new insights or information. Therefore, the sample size and selection process represent an active process of the research, and it is essential to select participants in a way that maximizes what could be learnt within available time frame for the research.

#### **4.9 Sampling of Participants**

Sampling is a crucial process in research that involves choosing elements of a population to be included in the research (O’Leary, 2010). In addition, Neuman (2014) explains sampling as a process of choosing a subset of people, behaviors, or elements with the aim of drawing conclusions that can be applied to a larger population. While some scholars argue that sampling is not significant in qualitative research (Schwandt, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2013), others, such as Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2009) suggest that most qualitative studies require an active selection process. Creswell (2014) has provided common sample size guidelines for researchers to use for qualitative research designs. For instance, Creswell (2014) suggests that case study research should use 3-5 participants. However, Sandelowski (2010) cautions against sample sizes that are too small to avoid difficulties in achieving theoretical saturation, data saturation, or informational redundancy. De Jonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggest that sampling strategies should be influenced by research purpose and questions of the research. The commonly applied sampling method in a qualitative case study is non-probability sampling because such research aims to develop an understanding of multifaceted issues experienced in specific situations and contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Therefore, in this study, which seeks to gain understanding of management of mentorship during teaching practice, the researcher used non-probability sampling (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019) which are both purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Polit and Beck (2010) opine that purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select participants based on specific characteristics related to main research question and sub-questions of the study. Creswell (2014) describes purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling method that involves selecting participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research question. Purposive sampling enables researchers to identify and choose individuals who possess valuable information and can provide

detailed insights into the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, the researcher purposively interviewed all 20 Early Childhood preservice teachers in the ten preschools with Early Childhood Care Education preservice teachers from the University for Development Studies. The preservice teachers were chosen because they have characteristics that enabled a detailed exploration of the research objectives.

Convenience sampling is often used when researchers have limited time, resources, or access to the population they are interested in studying (Neuman, 2014). Alvi (2016) adds that researchers may use convenience sampling when time and resources are limited and there is a need to quickly gather data. However, this technique may not be appropriate for research that requires a representative sample for generalizable results. In contrast, Patton (2015) suggests that convenience sampling can be useful for exploratory research or in situations where the goal is to gain insight into a new or emerging phenomenon. Creswell (2014) further highlights that convenience sampling is useful when researchers require a sample quickly and easily, particularly in exploratory or preliminary research. In this study, convenience sampling was used to select one out of two mentor teachers with Early Grade preservice teachers from UDS in each one of the ten preschools. The intention was to interview all 20 mentor teachers in the ten preschools, but because of time and inadequate resources, only 10 mentor teachers participated in this study. Additionally, the use of this technique allowed the researcher to select participants who were easy to reach and willing to respond (Cohen et al., 2007; Gravetter & Forzano, 2016; Daccache, & Ibrahim, 2023). Some of the participants that were contacted and had given their consent were unable to schedule time for interviews due to their busy work schedules.

The total sample size for the study is 30 participants, comprising Early Childhood preservice teachers from the University for Development Studies and mentor teachers from cooperating schools in the Sagnarigu district. The selection of participating institutions and participants is based on their relevance to the research questions (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013). The purposive and convenience sampling techniques were employed to collect relevant data that answers the research questions (Creswell, 2012). This approach, which uses different settings and locations in the data collection, is environmental triangulation (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011), while using several sources to collect the data is data triangulation (Hussein, 2015). These methods enabled the researcher to obtain information-rich data for the study. A sample size of 20 preservice teachers

was selected purposively and convenience sampling was used to choose the 10 mentor teachers from schools relevant to the research (Maree, 2010) to provide rich-information to answer the questions formulated in the study. The sample size is small enough and manageable for the to be trustworthy. The aim of the study is to investigate the management of mentoring relationship by using each preservice teacher and mentor teacher as cases. These participants are information-rich to provide comprehensive understanding in management of mentoring relationship from the participants' perspectives.

#### **4.10 Data Collection Instrument**

For this study, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data from participants. The qualitative research study employed multiple data collection methods aimed to gather rich data to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. A triangulation of multiple data sources and methods were used to ensure complementary of the data and in-depth findings of the study (Mukherji & Albon, 2009; Guion et al., 2011). The instruments used to collect the data were semi-structured interview, review of document and focus group discussions. This approach aligns with Merriam's (2010) suggestion that using a single data source may not provide a comprehensive perspective. The use of multiple methods also supports Patton's (2012) recommendation of combining several instruments in case study research to establish credibility. The combination of data collection methods provided rich and detailed information that illuminated the research focus and objectives.

##### **4.10.1 Semi-Structured Interview**

Semi-structured interviews were used to understand participants' experiences in the management of the mentoring relationships during teaching practice. Semi-structured interviews are primarily used in qualitative research to obtain detailed data that is not easily obtainable through questionnaires (King, & Horrocks, 2010; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Teegavarapu et al., 2008; Patton, 2002). A face-to-face individual interview was applied for the first-hand information by probing deeper into participants' perceptions and opinions concerning the management of the mentoring relationship. This is consistent with Kvale's (2015: 128) claim that 'If you want to know how people understand their lives, why not ask them?' Hence, if a researcher wants to hear, to understand an individual, they must provide a way for the individual to speak in a genuine voice. This assertion mirrors the endeavour and the demands to use semi-structured interviews as a data collection instrument (Gill et al., 2008; Gibson et al., 2013).

The focus of the Semi-structured interview was a pre-determined vital question on the area to investigate. However, provision was made for further probing responses if the need be (Gibson et al., 2013). The semi-structured interview guide contained questions on what mentor teachers' or the preservice teachers' think their role should be in the management of the mentoring relationship. The interview questions were derived from the issues that emerged from the literature and the research questions, which were aided by the literature review (Asante, 2017; McCracken, 1988).

The face-to-face interview were conducted for the thirty (30) respondents sampled for the study consisting of twenty (20) preservice teachers and ten mentor teachers. The interviews were conducted openly and conversationally to allow for free expression on the part of interviewees. This supports that qualitative interviews should be conducted in private and naturalistic settings that are comfortable for the interviewee (Yin, 2013). The key issues that preceded each interview session were permission to audio record interviews, the purpose of the study, duration of the interview process, the format of the interview, need for a follow-up interview, terms of confidentiality, and freedom and rights of the participants to participate in the interview and ask questions. The same questions that participants were asked to make it easy for responses to be tabulated and coded.

The responses to the interview questions provided a better understanding of the mentoring relationship as expressed by the preservice teachers with a diverse view expressed by the mentor teachers. The participants' permission was obtained to audio-record the interviews using an audio recording device to prevent loss of important information from the participants (Bryman, 2015; Creswell, 2014). The interview sessions allowed for further details and clarification to be solicited from the mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' views and perception. The researcher kept a field notebook to record pauses, facial expressions, frustration and/or satisfaction through body language, voice tone and other indicators that pointed to sarcasm, cynicism, emotions, and other nuances of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Asante, 2017). The Field notes were also kept to write the crucial responses of participants interviewed if the equipment used for audio recording failed to function and to cater for participants who may not be comfortable for the recording. The interviews enabled a thorough examination of participants' perspectives, which would have been difficult to capture through the use of questionnaires for data collection.

Each interview lasted for approximately 40–60 minutes and saved on a pen drive as a backup which was later transmitted into a folder with password in the laptop. Verbatim transcription started

immediately after the interviews for the day. To ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. The verbatim transcripts were played after the interview for the interviewees to listen to verify their facts (Asante, 2017). Data collection through interview process posed some challenges, but valuable lessons were learned. Some appointments did not occur as scheduled, but some participants avail themselves to be interviewed for the process was not entirely disrupted (Asante, 2017).

#### **4.10.2. Focus Group Discussions**

For this study, the focus group discussion (FGD) method was employed to acquire thorough understanding of the mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' perception in the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The FGD method provides an opportunity for participants to build on each other's responses and experiences (Aderibigbe, 2012). It is employed to gather information from a set of individuals deliberately chosen instead of a statistically representative sample of entire population. The method was used to explore the feasibility of the study, collect useful information related to mentor teachers and preservice teachers' views, beliefs, and perceptions, and validate their understanding of the phenomena to explore (Aderibigbe, 2012; Creswell, 2014). The FGD is suitable for a research design that employs multiple methods (Gill et al., 2008 in Murangi, 2017).

A typical focus group discussion includes the researcher and a group of 4-8 participants for the discussion (Creswell, 2012). For this study, six different focus group discussions were conducted, each involving five participants, after the interview sessions with all the participants. All preservice teachers and mentor teachers in each school were selected as participants. The FGD sessions were approximately one hour and 30 minutes long, allowing ample time for detailed discussions because the participants were adults. The participants were audio-recorded after obtaining their permission, which was written in the consent letter to participants before FGD sessions (Asante, 2017).

Although FGD method is used commonly in qualitative study, there are currently no established guidelines available for conservation researchers to critically evaluate its application. However, a general rule of thumb for the duration of FGDs is between one to two hours, depending on factors such as the intricacy of the issue being investigated, the questions to be asked, and the number of participants involved (O'Nyumba et al., 2018). The duration of FGDs may need to be adjusted for



groups consisting of age of the participants because school children typically have shorter attention spans (Gibson, 2012; Heary & Hennessy, 2002).

#### **4.10.3. Document Reviews**

In this study, document analysis was used as an additional data collection method to supplement the interviews and focus group discussions methods. Document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves reviewing documents to understand their content and context. According to Patton (2015), documents are essential sources of data triangulation in qualitative research when a set of research methods is employed. The study used documentary analysis to supplement data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions in order to explore the management of mentoring relationships between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. According to Yin (2012), documentary information is a data collection plans which is important for every case study topic. It has been argued that document reviews are an essential source of data triangulation in qualitative research, particularly when multiple research methods are employed (Patton, 2015). The documents reviewed in this study provided information on the conception of mentoring, issues in the mentoring relationship, theories of mentoring, aims of teaching practice program, and initial teacher education in Ghana. The information gathered from document review could be used to complement the collected data through primary sources as interviews and focus group discussions (Wellington, 2013; Creswell, 2013). Content analysis, which was used in this study in conjunction with other data collection methods (Curry et al., 2012), is one method of document review.

Document review is an interpretative research method that describes, interprets, or explains what has already happened (Wellington, 2013). In this study, all the reviewed documents were open to the public. For instance, Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education publications are available online for the public, while the UDS B.Ed. curriculum can also be found on the University for Development Studies website. Some of the documents used in this study include the National Teachers' Standards in Ghana, Headteachers' Handbook for Basic Schools, and UDS-Professional Education Practice Unit Policy (2016). Document analysis was important in this study to verify the data collected from participants with information in the relevant documents.

The identified documents were used to verify participants' views and as an additional source of data. At this moment, the researcher looked for issues relevant to the research study and interpreted



them in terms of emerging themes. This study aimed to understand the management of the mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. Policy documents that emphasize mentorship as crucial to developing the vision of a reflective and proficient teacher in Ghana were used. Additionally, documents that contribute to understanding the kind of support and feedback to be provided to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship were reviewed. For this study, documentary reviews provided ideas from different perspectives that are useful for discussions on mentoring relationships in the Initial Teacher Education context.

Documentary reviews also provide opportunity to understand policies from the Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education, and the Universities with Teacher education programmes. As a result of documentary reviews, it was realized that there could be differences in the views of Initial Teacher Education providers, Universities, and Colleges of Education on some elements of mentoring relationships and field experience. Some mentor teachers in the cooperating schools do not see why they should collaborate with preservice teachers, while ITE providers thought otherwise. Mentoring is understood differently, as some define it consistently with apprenticeship theory, while some see it as a collaborative endeavor with the preservice teachers. Documentary reviews provide a basis for this study and help create the context for analyzing the management of the mentoring relationships between mentor teachers and preservice teachers in this study. The document review was done before and after interviews and focus group discussions, which helped to better understand the contents of the documents. The aim of the document analysis was to explore how the statements presented in the documents support and contribute to mentoring practices for preservice and mentor teachers during teaching practice. The document analysis data aimed to consolidate, corroborate, or validate the data collected from interviews and focus group discussions and to demonstrate whether the policies, statements, and guidelines outlined in the documents align with actual practice.

#### **4.11 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is a crucial part of any research study that adopts a qualitative approach and involves organizing, interpreting, and making sense of the collected data to extract meaningful insights and findings (Cohen et al., 2011). The qualitative analysis is the process of converting data into findings (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research typically produces a large amount of data characterised by what Geertz (2019) terms ‘thick description’ to convey the richness and depth of

evidence. The process of analysing qualitative data involves formal interpretation of the data collected to establish order, elicit meaning and communicate the research findings. The process involves structuring the data by dividing it into manageable units, synthesizing it, identifying trends and essential new information, and determining what to tell readers (Henning, 2004). The approach aims to "understand how participants make meaning of the phenomenon under study" (Maree, 2010: 103).

This study employed thematic analysis, with the researcher transcribing the interviews verbatim and coding the data by dividing it into themes and subthemes, which were illustrated with different colors (Maree, 2010). Coding enables researchers to efficiently retrieve and gather relevant text and data related to a thematic idea for closer examination (Maree, 2010). Thematic analysis is a method that is used to define and summarize themes that arise from the data in a qualitative study, and can be used to analyze qualitative answers to open-ended questions (Maree, 2016). Patton (2015) describes qualitative analysis as a process that involves transforming large amounts of data into findings. This process is achieved by reducing the volume of raw information, identifying key patterns, and constructing a framework that communicates the essence of what the data reveal. Although guideline is available, there is no formula that exist for transforming qualitative data. Ary et al. (2019) emphasized that qualitative analysis involves multiple stages of interpretation and synthesis to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. This process includes identifying key themes and patterns, developing explanatory theories for observed relationships, and connecting the new knowledge to existing knowledge in the field. The ultimate goal is to provide a coherent and compelling explanation of the phenomenon under study. The researcher for the study followed guidelines outlined by Ary et al. (2019) to transform data from interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews into meaningful findings. Ary et al. (2019) proposed a three-stage procedure for qualitative data analysis, which includes: organizing and familiarizing the data, reducing and coding the data and representing and interpreting the data. To begin with, the researcher at least read through the entire data set once before starting the coding process to become familiar with the data to shape ideas, and identify important patterns within the data. (Moser, 2018; Matheson, 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher listened repeatedly to digital recordings of interviews to become familiar with the interview data. The audio recordings were then transcribed into text files. The researcher then reviewed the transcripts while listening to

the audio files to ensure consistency between the two. The researcher thoroughly engaged with the data by repeatedly and actively reading through the entire dataset, which comprised both the interview transcripts and document data. (Nowell et al., 2017; Ary et al., 2019; Creswell, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Verbatim transcription was used in this study to maintain the meaning of participants' words, and no statements or words were omitted from the transcripts. This process of "horizontalization" was used to view each statement as having equal value. It is important to remain true to the participants' words by transcribing verbatim and avoiding any attempts to change the meaning or context of the data. The researcher deliberately refrained from altering words or phrases to achieve grammatical correctness, as such changes may unintentionally modify the intended sense or meaning of research participants' statements. (Okolery, 2012; Ary et al., 2019; McLellan et al., 2003).

After transcribing the interview data, member-checking was conducted to validate the accuracy of the data and ensure that the participants' words and interpretations were represented fairly (Bryman, 2012; McDonnell et al., 2000; Birt et al., 2016). This entailed sending the interview transcripts to the schools for participants to review and ensure that the transcripts were an authentic and impartial record of their interview, with the opportunity to seek clarification, make corrections, or add to their transcripts. To ensure data accuracy, draft transcript reports should be sent to the respective key informants for review and correction (Hartley, 2004). Approximately 50 percent of the participants actively participated in this task to validate the interview transcripts. The collected data were then organised into separate files based on mentor teachers and preservice teachers, with the document data reviewed in a separate file (Ary et al., 2019). The researcher, in the process of familiarising with the collected data, jotted down important ideas and thoughts in the margins of the transcripts to create a reflective log, which helped in the development of the coding scheme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This provided essential information to proceed to next stage of analysis to identify and categorise the data for coding process (Nowell et al., 2017; Ary et al., 2019). The coding process involved applying codes to segments of data based on the codes' interpretation and commonalities observed in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher categorized the data under relevant codes by conducting a step-by-step coding process to identify differences, similarities and patterns in the data set (Creswell, 2013). Codes were reviewed, refined, and reduced, and the researcher

searched for connections and relationships between codes to identify themes (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A crucial step in qualitative data analysis is to code and reduce the data by identifying and refining categories and themes (Nowell et al., 2017; Bryman, 2016; Ary et al., 2019). The coding process enables researchers to effectively manage and organise information by developing concepts from raw data, reducing it, and focusing on its specific features. This process is essential in identifying common themes that emerged from the data and providing a clear understanding of the key concepts present in the data (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes were generated by identifying significant units of meaning in the data, such as words, phrases, statements, and behaviour patterns, that appeared regularly. Some of these codes were directly taken from the participants' words, while others were formed to mirror the various ways of expressing an underlying concept. The researcher organised the data from mentor teachers and preservice teachers into separate tables and generating codes that were then sorted, collated, and refined to form each category. The most interesting quotes supporting each category were included in the respective tables. The codes generated during the initial coding stage were modified and refined based on feedback and suggestions from the researcher's supervisor.

According to Ary et al. (2019, p. 458), the researcher's interpretive judgement is essential in qualitative data analysis to determine the borders of categories and themes. The researcher also combined categories that were connected or similar into an inductive theme. To interpret the data, the study aimed to extract meaningful insights and develop plausible explanations for the successful management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice. The presentation of findings takes the form of a narrative that includes direct quotes from participants to reinforce the interpretation of themes and sub-themes (Nowell et al., 2017). The long and short quotations were used to emphasize specific interpretations and to provide evidence of the validity and merit of the analysis (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The inclusion of study participants' direct quotes in the analytic narrative conveyed their experiences, thoughts, feelings and perceptions, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected the reality of the research phenomenon. The inclusion of data from the document review validates and confirms the data obtained from the participants. This study's findings are presented in cases, in line with Johnson and Christensen's (2014) recommendations.

These findings were then discussed in the context of relevant literature which was to address the research questions.

#### **4.12. Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research has its own set of criteria for establishing trustworthiness, which refers to the level that research findings are trustworthy and credible and can be defended when challenged as suggested by (Bashir et al., 2008). The trustworthiness is a way for qualitative researchers to control potential sources of bias in design, implementation, analysis, and interpretation of a study that parallels the notions of the conventional quantitative study criteria of reliability external validity, internal validity and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Maree (2010), while "validity" is a concept more commonly associated with quantitative studies, qualitative researchers use the terms "credibility" and "trustworthiness" to assess the soundness of their research. However, it is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to use the term "validity" as well. Brynard and Hanekom (2008) describe validity as the potential of a study design or instrument to achieve its intended purpose. In qualitative research, "trustworthiness" is the degree to which research findings are considered trustworthy and can be defended when challenged (Bashir et al., 2008). Lincoln and Guba (2013) introduced the concept of "trustworthiness" as a means of measuring the accuracy of case study findings. Trustworthiness is a way for qualitative researchers to control potential sources of bias in research design, implementation, analysis and interpretation of a study, similar to conventional quantitative study used of assessment criteria such as objectivity, generalizability, external validity, internal validity and reliability (Lincoln et al., 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which are not suitable for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. Therefore, to establish credibility, reliability, truthfulness, and defensibility of the study, the researcher employed a triangulation strategy (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), which involved gathering data from various sources, including interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions. This approach allowed for cross-checking and validation of the data obtained. The researcher accurately reported the data collected from these sources, ensuring descriptive validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013).

The bedrock of high-quality qualitative research, as argued by scholars like Birt et al. (2016), is the trustworthiness of findings. Trustworthiness, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018), poses a

fundamental question of whether research findings can be relied upon. To achieve trustworthiness in qualitative research, there are several strategies that researchers can use to assess the credibility and validity of the research. These include member checking, data triangulation, method triangulation, and member validation (Bryman, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Member checking involves providing research participants with transcripts or narratives of their interviews or focus group discussions and asking them to verify their accuracy. The use of multiple sources of data to corroborate findings is data triangulation while the use of multiple data collection methods refers to method triangulation to cross-check and validate the findings. Member validation involves seeking feedback from participants to ensure that their perspectives have been accurately represented in the study.

According to Lincoln et al., (2011) and (Bryman, 2012) to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, a set of standards, including credibility, transferability, dependability, believability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), as well as the control of bias (Ary et al., 2005), are considered the bedrock of trustworthiness (Bryman, 2012).

**Credibility:** credibility refers to the aspect of truth-value. To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher followed the tenets of good practice in research, as outlined by Korstjens and Moser (2018) and Bryman (2012). These practices ensured that the study's findings were plausible, truthful and represented the unique views of participants. In addition, approaches such as method triangulation, data triangulation and member-checking were employed to enhance the accuracy and credibility of the study findings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The application of multiple data collection methods such as document review, interviews and focus group discussion led to better evidence and cross-checking of findings (Bryman, 2016; Ary et al., 2005). Furthermore, data were gathered from different levels of participants such as mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice in the preschools. These practices ensured the credibility of the research findings.

**Transferability:** Transferability is the extent that findings can be transferred to other contexts. To enhance the transferability of the study, the researcher provided a detailed and comprehensive interpretation and description of the data to indicate underlying understandings and meanings. This approach enabled readers to make informed decisions about the similarities and generalizability of the study findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ary et al., 2005; Bryman, 2016). Also, the researcher presented an accurate and thorough description of the study context and participants, including their

dispositions during the study process, which further enhanced the transferability of the study results. By doing so, readers were able to understand the context and participants of the study, and draw conclusions about the potential applicability of the findings in other contexts or populations.

**Dependability:** Dependability is the consistency and stability of the research findings. To ensure dependability, this study maintained comprehensive records of all research stages and used clearly documented and consistent methods that were reproducible and traceable (Bryman, 2016; Ary et al., 2005;). The data analysis procedure followed the standards acceptable for qualitative research and a single case-embedded design, further strengthening the dependability of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

**Confirmability:** Confirmability relates to the neutrality and objectivity of the research process and findings. This researcher ensured confirmability by taking steps to demonstrate that personal biases or values did not influence the research process or findings (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Data interpretation was based solely on the evidence gathered from the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Additionally, an audit trail was used to ensure confirmability. The raw data was well-organized and stored in a retrievable format, allowing for review and availability to other parties. Detailed documentation of tape-recordings of interviews was also maintained (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ary et al., 2005).

**Believability:** The researcher enhanced the validity of the study through the technique of member-checking also known as participant validation, which aimed to authenticate credibility of the findings. The researcher in this study sent to participants, the interview transcripts for verification of accuracy and validity (Bryman, 2012; Birt et al., 2016; McDonnell et al., 2000). The participants confirmed and supported the researcher's findings, which allowed for an equilibrium between their perspectives and the way it was represented in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 2011). The member-checking technique proved to be a valuable tool in ensuring the validity and believability of the research results.

#### **4.13 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical concerns must be taken into account throughout a research process and beyond, as research and its outcomes can have a long-term impact on the individuals involved in the research (Liamputtong, Rice, Dune, & Arora, 2022). To ensure ethical considerations are given appropriate



attention, they should be incorporated into all stages of the research process, including planning, during the research, and after the completion of the research (ibid). This is particularly important in educational research, which involves working with human participants to obtain new knowledge that could significantly impact on their lives and well-being. Therefore, researchers have a responsibility to ensure that participants are treated with respect and their safety and well-being are safeguarded (Portney 2020). Therefore, ethical consideration is a crucial issue that requires attention whenever human subjects are involved in research (Yin, 2014). In this research, ethical procedures were strictly followed right from the beginning of the research through to the data collection, analysis, and reporting phases (Creswell, 2013).

According to Liamputtong (2020), research ethics is defined as "the ethical considerations that are essential in ensuring the integrity and credibility of research. It encompasses the principles, values, and moral standards that guide researchers' conduct and decision-making throughout the research process" (p. 3). The main aim of research ethics, according to the author, is to protect the well-being and rights of research participants and to ensure that research is carried out in a responsible and trustworthy way. This entails addressing ethical issues that may arise during the research process and adhering to the legal and regulatory standards that govern research involving human subjects. Compliance with research ethics is crucial in enhancing the dependability and authenticity of research findings, as well as preserving the research process's integrity. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) research ethics is 'the study of ethical issues that arise during the process of conducting research. It encompasses the values, principles, and moral standards that guide researchers' conduct and ethical decision-making when conducting research with human subjects. This thesis, like all other professional studies in social science, is obligated to conform to the ethical standards of conducting research. Thus, this study upheld ethical principles that were both scholarly and professional, with a particular emphasis on respecting the participants of the research.

Before commencing on this research, ethics approval was sought and granted from the Research Committee at the University of Pretoria where this researcher was enrolled as a PhD Candidate. The ethics procedures were strictly followed based on the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Also, the fieldwork in Ghana was approved by the relevant authorities and the local ethics committee of participating university. From there, the researcher requested permission from the Dean of the Faculty of Education of the participating University to



engage the preservice teachers on teaching practice. The Director of the Ghana Education Service also granted permission to visit all the cooperating preschools with the mentor teachers assigned to the preservice teachers during the teaching practice. In achieving that, introductory letters from the Director were sent out to the headteachers to seek their permission on my intention to visit their schools for data collection, and they all responded positively. The data collection process commenced in June, 2021 after the ethical clearance approval was granted in January 2021 by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria. The ethical principles in this study adhered to the Hammersley and Traianou (2012) six principles of research ethics that should be observed when conducting research involving human subjects. These principles are:

#### **4.13.1 Informed consent**

This study's purpose and significance were communicated to the participants through a participant information form, which disclosed the research procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality, and participant rights. The participants were given ample time to ask questions and review the consent form before requesting their consent to participate in the interview (Liamputtong, 2020). According to Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2015), this ensured that the research participants were fully informed about all aspects of the study. After giving participants a written consent form to read and sign voluntarily, the interview commenced (Liamputtong, 2020). The informed consent protocol should provide legal protection for both the researcher and the participants and ensure that their rights and safety are safeguarded throughout the research process (ibid). During the interview, I sought permission to record the conversation to enable me to retrieve the information shared by the participants even in their absence, and explained the importance of capturing all information shared. Once the consent was obtained, the study was conducted in accordance to the procedures outlined.

#### **4.13.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

To safeguard the privacy of participants in this research, confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to as important principles. Participants were informed that any information they disclosed during the interviews would be treated confidentially. To protect their identities, pseudonyms were assigned to the participants and all identifying information was removed or altered from the data during the analysis phase to provide further anonymity (Sengupta, 2020). However, as this research

is been carried out for academic purposes, the level of protection of confidentiality in academic research were also explained to them.

#### **4.13.3 No harm**

Ensuring that research participants are not harmed is of utmost importance in any research study. As Samuel (2019) notes, researchers have a responsibility to safeguard the well-being and dignity of research participants and prevent any form of harm. Harm in this context refers to any emotional or psychological distress caused by inappropriate questioning during the research interview. It is essential that participants feel comfortable and willing to share their life experiences without being subjected to disrespectful or insensitive questioning that may cause emotional distress. Therefore, it was imperative for the researcher to avoid such questioning during the interview sessions.

#### **4.13.4 Respecting autonomy**

The researcher has an obligation to ensure that participants are fully informed and willingly participate in the study. According (Rosnow & Rosenthal (2019) this information allows participants to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate and helps protect their welfare and rights in the research process. The participants were made to understand the purpose of the research and how it may impact their lives (Somekh and Lewin (2005). In this study, participants were informed that their data could be included in the publication, but their engagement was voluntary, and their autonomy was respected (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Also, the participants were told of the option to discontinue their involvement in the research at any point in time and their data would not be used if they opted that I should not use it. Additionally, I furnished them with an approximate duration for the interview for the participants to make an informed decision regarding their involvement, taking their availability into account.

#### **4.13.5 Offering reciprocity**

The researcher has a responsibility to ensure that the study benefits both the researcher and the participants. Reciprocity in this context does not necessarily refer to financial compensation, but rather acknowledging and valuing the opinions of the participants and presenting their views in the way they were expressed. The researcher expressed gratitude towards participants for willingly taken time off their busy schedules and the effort to participate and contribute in the study without any financial reward. However, the researcher organised training for the mentor teachers in the cooperating schools and the preservice teachers for the next cohort of teaching practice. According

to Katz and Martin (2017) stated that offering reciprocity to research participants is an important ethical consideration, as it demonstrates respect for their time, effort, and contribution to the study.

#### **4.13.6 Treating participants fairly**

I ensured equal treatment of all participants and avoided favoritism or bias. As Navalta et al., (2019) advised, researchers should treat participants fairly by avoiding any form of discrimination and ensuring that all participants are given equal opportunities to participate in the research. The author emphasizes the need for researchers to be sensitive to cultural differences and avoid making assumptions about participants based on their backgrounds. Researchers must be cautious of factors that may contribute to bias, such as having strong personal opinions on the subject matter. In order to avoid imposing my own beliefs onto the participants, I carefully listened to their responses and refrained from interjecting my own thoughts. According to Hammersley and Traianou (2012) in treating participants fairly, researchers should avoid the exploitation of participants and ensure that any benefits resulting from the research are fairly distributed.

#### **4.13.7 Data Storage Security and Management**

Patton (2015) suggests that protecting research data is important in order to prevent data loss and leakage. In this study, research interviews were conducted using tape recorders and the recordings were securely stored in compliance with the regulations of the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. The primary data collected from participants was saved on password-protected digital files, which were encrypted and securely stored on a computer and an external hard drive. Access to the data was strictly limited to the supervisors and the researcher. After the study is completed, the electronic data will be retained on an online data management system for five years, after which it will be permanently deleted.

According to Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2001 as cited in Tsephe, 2021) the crux of research ethics is to establish a clear and mutual understanding between the researcher and the participants. This understanding can be achieved through obtaining informed consent, describing the purpose of the study, and ensuring that the participants' rights and dignity are respected (Flick, 2018). The researcher must also ensure that participants' privacy and confidentiality are protected (Creswell, 2014), and that any risks to participants are minimised (American Psychological Association, 2017). According to Bryman (2016) it is crucial to conduct research in a manner that respects the

participants' rights and dignity. Therefore, research ethics involves creating a fair and equitable arrangement that is mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the participants.

#### **4.14 Limitations of the study**

The primary drawback of the research is that its findings cannot be generalised due to the study design and its small sample size (Creswell, 2014), which have been a topic of discussion in recent years (Marshall, 1996; De Vaus, 2001). Despite these limitations, qualitative research has been shown to provide valuable insights and contribute to scientific evidence base in various fields, including teacher education and mentorship (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). This study makes significant contribution to the field of teacher education mentorship by providing evidence that could inform policies and practices regarding capabilities and conversion factors of mentorship during teaching practice (Shulman, 1987).

Following the discussion in Chapter 4 (Research Methodology), one of the challenges faced by qualitative researchers is critics from positivist and objectivist perspectives that is difficulty in generalising its findings to a larger population, mainly due to the small sample size used in qualitative studies (Marshall, 1996; Creswell, 2014). Positivists argue that valid scientific research should be able to generalise its results (Marshall, 2000). As a result, qualitative research, which often involves small sample sizes, is seen as unscientific (Creswell, 2014). De Vaus (2001) also notes that the findings of qualitative studies, particularly case studies, cannot be statistically generalised beyond the specific cases studied. However, it is important to recognise that a study does not have to be quantitative in nature to be considered scientifically valid (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research can provide valuable insight into and understanding of complex social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and contribute to the scientific evidence base in many ways. Moreover, qualitative case studies offer in-depth exploration and analysis of specific phenomenon (Yin, 2016). Creswell (2014) notes that the strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to provide in-depth, contextualised understanding of specific phenomenon, rather than generalisation of results. In the context of teacher education and mentorship, this type of research can provide valuable insights into the experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers to inform policies and practices related to teacher development (Merriam, 2009).

This study, like all qualitative case studies, faces similar criticisms from positivist scholars because of its small sample size (Creswell, 2014) and design. The study was conducted in five preschools

in the Sagnarigu District in the Northern Region of Ghana, which raises questions about its validity and generalisability beyond schools in this specific location (Creswell, 2014).

As discussed in the methodology chapter, qualitative research aims to deepen our understanding of individuals' cultures, beliefs, values, and experiences as well as develop theories that describe these experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Munhall, 2012; Wuest, 2012; Holloway & Galvin, 2016). The focus of qualitative researchers is to offer an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon as perceived by research participants, rather than seek statistical generalisation.

In line with the aforesaid, this study should be evaluated based on its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of capabilities and conversion factors in management of mentoring relationships, and how these conversion factors influence management of the mentoring relationship from the perspectives of mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. The purpose of the study was not to make statistical generalisations, but to enrich our understanding of the experiences and situations related to teacher education mentorship during teaching practice. The findings of the study could provide valuable insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the teaching field.

Several scholars in the field of research methods, including Mays and Pope (2000), Barbour (2001), Golafshani (2003), and Yin (2014), have emphasised the importance of using multiple sources of evidence, known as triangulation, as a way for qualitative researchers to enhance validity and minimise bias. Triangulation refers to the combination of multiple methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) to address reliability and validity concerns. Using multiple data sources and research methods can provide diverse perspectives and eliminate potential bias that may result from relying on one method (Bryman, 2008; Yin, 2011; Gray, 2014).

To avoid bias in data collection, Yin (2011) advises researchers to use two or more sets of data collection and select a wide range of participants, including those who may hold contrary views. In light of these suggestions, the study adopted methodological triangulation as the research strategy, using focus group discussions, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentary review as data collection methods. Furthermore, mentor teachers and all the preschool preservice teachers were deliberately included to examine the phenomenon of management of mentorship during teaching practice.

Further, it is important to note that COVID-19 and financial constraints were the limitations of this study. The financial impact of the pandemic, including the inability to receive a bursary during this critical period, destabilized my financial ability to undertake the study. However, I received support from family members and also had to work extra hours to self-finance the study.

Also, as the study was to be evaluated for a doctoral degree, there was a specific time frame for completion, which was prolonged by COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it became necessary to wait for the next cohort of preservice teachers because the initially projected cohort of preservice teachers could not be used due to the closure of schools following the COVID-19 protocols. The originally planned sample size, comprising 25 preservice teachers and 20 mentors for a total of 45 participants, was not implemented. Instead, the study involved 30 participants, with 20 preservice teachers and 10 mentors. This sample size decision was influenced by Warren (2002), as cited in Bryman (2012), who suggested that for a qualitative interview study, a minimum of 20 to 30 interviews is required.

As previously mentioned, this study is qualitative in nature, which means that the findings cannot be generalised to all institutions with teacher education programmes in Ghana (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, it is important to note that the experiences and perspectives of the participants in this study may not be representative of all mentor teachers and preservice teachers in Ghana. Nevertheless, the data and findings from this study are still valuable, as they provide insights into the complexities of the management of mentoring relationships and factors that influence the success of mentoring relationships. Also, the findings contribute to the existing literature on mentoring programmes in teacher education by shedding light on the experiences and challenges encountered by preservice and mentor teachers, as well as the capabilities and constraints that influence the management of mentoring relationships. These insights can inform the development of future mentoring programmes that are tailored to specific needs and experiences of preservice and mentor teachers during teaching practice.

#### **4.15 Conclusion**

The present chapter delineates the research strategy employed in this thesis. The researcher has expounded on the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the study, which are interpretivist and constructivist. The social reality is considered a construction rather than a



discovery, and this construction is achieved through the application of different data collection methods for qualitative research, such as interviews, documentary review, and focus group discussions. This chapter has also explicated the processes and procedures entailed in the data collection process and acknowledges the challenges encountered and the solutions implemented to alleviate the challenges encountered. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data and the rationale for its selection was discussed. In the subsequent chapter, the report of the analysis that emanated from the data collected is presented. The study was guided by one main research question and three sub-questions, and themes and sub-themes related to the questions were examined.

## **Chapter 5: Data Analysis Presentation**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 provided a broad overview of the methodology that was employed for the study. Specifically, the research approach, design, data collection strategies, data analysis, ethics, and trustworthiness of the study were all outlined in the methodology section. This chapter outlines the steps taken to analyse the collected data in a clear and organised manner for the understanding of readers. The data collection process adhered to a purely qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews, group discussions, and document analysis as data collection techniques. The presentation of the data examines participants' responses to the primary research: What are the capabilities and conversion factors for the management of mentorship during teaching practice at a Ghanaian University?

This chapter outlines the process of compiling, analysing, and interpreting the entire data set for the study. The data presented in here includes the results of interviews and focus group discussions conducted with mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. These interviews sought to bring out the experiences of both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship. They showcase key findings from analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions conducted to determine the capabilities and conversion factors for management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice in a Ghanaian context. The section below focuses on data presentation.

The data collected on the experiences of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice is presented in this section. The actual narratives of the participants were used in the analysis to avoid bias and provide readers with the raw data that participants provided. This allows for a deeper understanding of the participants' responses during the interviews and focus group discussions. As a result, ad verbatim transcripts of the participants contain disfluencies, grammatical errors, indigenous terminology, vernacular, and pauses in their responses. To maintain anonymity of the participants, the real names of preservice teachers and mentor teachers who participated in the study were replaced with pseudonyms or assigned coded numbers. Participants were referred to as "Preservice Teacher" and "Mentor Teacher," respectively, throughout the study to protect their identity and comply with ethical principles. The researcher was responsible for the description and interpretation of the transcripts to ensure their relevance to



the problem being investigated. The analysis of the data was performed based on themes that aligned with specific research questions.

The research questions were:

1. What are the capabilities of mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice?
2. What are the conversion factors enabling management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice from the perspective of the mentor teachers and preservice teachers?
3. What are the conversion factors disabling management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice from the preservice teachers and mentor teachers' perspectives?

The data collected were coded manually and analysed thematically to answer the research questions of the study. The succeeding section is the analysis of the data collected starting with the capabilities in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **5.2.1 Capabilities in the Management of Mentoring Relationship**

This section informs readers the capabilities of the mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the management of mentoring relationship. Capability refers to the idea that a preservice teacher is capable to teach effectively in the classroom because of a combination of inherent talent and pedagogical skills acquired from mentor teachers during teaching practice. This implies a person's capabilities are not just the opportunities or freedoms produced by the combination of social and environmental factors (Nussbaum, 2011), but also innate abilities. The CA places primacy on freedom and choice in living a life an individual has reason to value (Nambiar, 2013). The chapter presents findings thematically derived from responses gleaned during interviews with participants for the study. The themes are categorised into individual/interpersonal/relational, pedagogical and structural/systemic (school level).

The background details, such as anonymised name, age, date, month, year and place where the interviews were conducted of the 30 participants in the study, are presented in Appendix 1. In accordance with ethical standards governing social research, pseudonyms are used to ensure anonymity of the participants (Maree, 2010).

### **5.2.1.1 Individual/interpersonal/relational**

The individual level are characteristics that affect the individual's operations and psychological make-up such as the intelligence of a person, empathy, recognition, dignity, voice, and psychomotor skills, among others.

#### **5.2.1.1.1 Recognition, dignity and respect**

Recognition, dignity and respect are vital ingredients for management of mentoring relationship. Respect and recognition are when individuals value each other equally with respect and dignity in a relationship. Majority of preservice teachers indicated that their mentor teachers recognised, respected and treated them with dignity in the mentoring relationship. They indicated that the recognition and respect felt in the mentoring relationship was confirmed by their having a voice and being involved in decisions of mentor teachers in the classroom as well as being allowed and being encouraged to teach in the class alone by the mentor teachers, which enabled the mentoring relationship. Also, the freedom and opportunities preservice teachers have to express their concerns to mentor teachers is important in management of the mentoring relationship. Similarly, most mentor teachers felt that they were accorded dignity, respect, and received recognition from preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. Majority of the mentor teachers indicated that having freedom to advise and encourage preservice teachers demonstrated that they were respected, acknowledged and treated with dignity, which are capabilities that enabled management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The participants felt their relationship was underpinned by honesty, mutual trust, voice, respect and to appreciation for each and other capabilities in management of the mentoring relationship.

#### **5.2.1.1.2 Respect**

Majority of the preservice teachers indicated that they were respected, acknowledged and treated with dignity in the mentoring relationship. The preservice teachers felt being allowed to have a voice in classroom issues and encouraged by their mentor teachers to practice the knowledge acquired was demonstrated recognition and treatment with dignity in the relationship. Further, majority of the preservice teachers mentioned that they could voice out their concerns on issues in the classroom without being judged by their mentor teachers. Respect, recognition and dignity are considered important in management of the mentoring relationship. This fact that preservice teachers could express their views and concerns freely to mentor teachers suggests that these are

some of the capabilities in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Additionally, preservice teachers indicated that their thoughts on issues in the classroom were allowed by mentor teachers to be expressed and taken into consideration in classroom matters. A preservice teacher mentioned being treated like a colleague and recognised by her mentor teacher, rather than a preservice teacher in the classroom. The preservice teacher's comment was:

*My mentor showed me a certain level of respect in everything in the classroom, although I was a preservice teacher to be trained by her. She treated me like a colleague teacher but not as a trainee. She always consults me anytime she is taking decisions in the classroom and she respected me so much that I felt recognized in the classroom. (Preservice Teacher 14)*

Another preservice teacher said:

*I had some experience because I was very close to my mentor. How you as a mentee sees things might be different from how your mentor sees things because as I was saying, even though my mentor have an experience and she was the one guiding me but I also have the liberty do somethings that she would approached me and would frankly say is really nice and would want me to show her how am able to do those things and the ways I went about it especially when it comes to using some techniques in teaching, then she would say that she likes the way I go about my teaching. I think is because of the respect she has for me in the relationship and that makes her to bring to my notice all these things and I also tells her that the kind of approaches she uses in teaching, fascinates me, and so learns from her. (Preservice Teacher 4)*

These verbatim quotations indicate that the majority of preservice teachers were respected and recognized by mentor teachers. This was demonstrated by preservice teachers being given the opportunity to teach in the classroom with little or no guidance and the freedom to express their concerns and views on classroom issues. The majority of preservice teachers were happy due to the freedom to contribute to classroom issues and express their concerns, as well as being treated with respect, dignity, and recognition. Therefore, respect and recognition are potential resources in the management of mentoring relationship (Huskins et al., 2011; Wasonga et al., 2015). This suggests that a mentoring process that allows preservice teacher to express their innermost feelings and

discuss their confusion and ambiguous situations with mentor teachers who respect, trust and acknowledge them makes a successful relationship (Wasonga, Wanzare & Dawo, 2015). This points to evidence that preservice teachers being treated like colleagues, allowed to teach alone in the classroom, given the opportunity to contribute to decisions and express their views on issues in the classroom made them value being treated with dignity, respect and recognition as required capabilities in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Beck and Kosnick (2002, cited by Arday, 2015) opine that preservice teachers have reason to value respect as essential in the management of mentoring relationships, particularly as the ideas of the preservice teachers are valued in mentor teachers' decision. Similarly, Gardiner (2011), and Kaasila and Lauriala (2010) reiterate that collegiality of ideas increases effectiveness of teachers in the management of mentoring relationship.

However, a preservice teacher lamented that the kind of treatment his mentor teacher gave him was not respectful, despite the fact that he is also training to become a teacher one day:

*My mentor teacher is so strict and would not allow my opinion on matters concerning teaching in the classroom and won't allow me to suggest anything to her. How she even addresses me in front of the kids, I think is not respectful because she normally calls me the 'student teacher' and so the kids see me as a student and this makes them not to give me the respect as a teacher in the classroom and sometimes, she corrects me in front of the kids, when she thinks am not doing things or teaching the way she wants it to be done. I think my mentor is not respecting me and this is making me not to be happy in the relationship which I nearly reported her but later I decided to stay in it like that in order to try to learn somethings from her and also complete my teaching practice because I cannot change her as my mentor. (Preservice Teacher 20)*

Another preservice teacher commented that:

*My mentor teacher never gave me the freedom to express my opinion and always wants me to do as he says in the classroom. He seems to criticizes anything innovations I used in my teaching and would tell me that we were brought to learn from them and not to teach them and so I should learn what he teaches me and not*

*what I feel I want to do in the classroom. I normally feel disrespected and not recognized by my mentor in the classroom in all classroom activities and cannot take any decision except am directed by my mentor teacher in the classroom and so later I decided not to voice out my opinion again, even though she did not tell me not to speak out again. (Preservice Teacher 19)*

A preservice teacher stated that:

*Mentor teachers must have confidence and trust in preservice teachers and believe in the preservice teachers' capability. My mentor respects me and that makes me to do my work well in the classroom because I never wanted her to stop the respect, she has for me. (Preservice Teacher 10)*

The above quotes indicate that a few preservice teachers were not happy with the way their mentor teachers treated them in the mentoring relationship. This dissatisfaction was demonstrated by not being granted an opportunity to voice their views in the mentoring relationship. The preservice teachers claimed they felt disrespected because they were not given the opportunity to bring their initiatives on board in the classroom but were consistently asked to strictly follow the instructions of mentor teachers. This supports that mentor teachers restrict the freedom of preservice teachers to act in ways that they believe is right in traditional mentoring relationship (Axford, 2005 cited in Patrick, 2013). Consequently, the preservice teachers felt unrecognized and disrespected in the mentoring relationship, and this did not align with their values in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This supports Hseih & Nguyen (2020) that preservice teachers value working with mentor teachers who treat them with respect in the mentoring relationship. This confirms that preservice teachers' desire to have some freedom to take control of the classroom (Jackson 2001; Patrick, 2013) during teaching practice. This suggests that the presence of respect and freedom of voice positively influences the mentees' professional growth and development.

Alternatively, most mentor teachers indicated their preservice teachers respected and recognised them as experienced teachers by accepting and acting on their support and encouragement offered in the mentoring relationship. Majority of the mentor teachers felt that been able to express their

views as experts to preservice teachers on matters of the teaching profession and the preservice teachers being prepared to follow directives from them demonstrate recognition and respect and they been treated with dignity as mentor teachers, which are good attributes in management of the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher said:

*I am impressed with my mentee because she is respectful and recognized me as the one guiding her to learn to become a professional teacher in future and never gets angry when you correct her. (Mentor Teacher 5)*

Another mentor teacher proclaimed:

*My mentee respects me and so I have the freedom to tell to him some of his actions which are not good in the mentoring relationship without him unnecessary defending or giving reasons for those actions unlike other mentees. I have a lot of voice in the things we do in the relationship because he always consults me before he takes an action and where he goes wrong and I say is wrong, he accepts it in good faith and make corrections without giving unnecessary excuses for her actions, it makes me feel respected and recognised in the relationship. However, I also accept his opinions on issues in the classroom, when he expresses them to me. I can say we operates in a friendly environment. (Mentor Teacher 9)*

The quotations from mentor teachers revealed that preservice teachers recognised, respected and treated them with dignity as experts by being receptive to their advice, support, encouragement and following directives through their guidance as experienced teachers. This suggests that mentor teachers value a friendly environment, which is devoid of fear and acrimony to have the liberty to talk to preservice teachers and are treated with respect, recognition and dignity in the management of the mentoring relationship. This aligns with the idea that having the capability to express oneself requires a free and open environment where dissenting opinions and active participation are valued and protected (Nussbaum, 2011).

#### **5.2.1.1.3 Empathy**

Majority of the participants indicated that understanding each other in mentoring relationships is required to enable capabilities in the management of the mentoring relationship. The understanding is based on shared values and empathies between preservice teachers and mentor teachers in

management of the mentoring relationship. According to Kennedy (2010) and Sykes et al., (2010), differences in the professional practices of mentor teachers and preservice teachers disable their freedom to achieve wellbeing in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This suggests understanding between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is the panacea for successful management of complexities that exist in the mentoring relationship. This implies that participants have reason to value empathy in management of the mentoring relationship. Participants having the opportunity to understand each other in the mentoring relationship is one of the capabilities that enabled management of mentoring the relationship during teaching practice. A preservice teacher mentioned that:

*To develop a mentoring relationship, you need to understand the person you are working with and know what she or he wants and how he or she does things so that you will know where or when to approach him or her so that whatever you want from him or her, it will be very easy for you because there are some mentors if you talk to them in public, they may not answer you unless maybe in private or alone with him/her. (Preservice Teacher 4)*

Another preservice teacher proclaimed:

*...The relationship is based on understanding each other and so we are always conscious of our time, and I was not joking with that because as a mentee who is ready to learn from my mentor, I was always on time in everything we plan to do. I don't get angry whenever she says that am not doing the right thing and she corrects me if even, I think what I am doing is right. Sometimes he will call me for a discussion but maybe I might be doing something in the classroom and so would come late but because we understand each other in the relationship, he would wait for me to finish and he would not get angry with me equally anytime he scheduled for a meeting and he comes late I won't be angry with him and due to these reasons alone, made me have successful relationship with him (Preservice Teacher 11)*

Majority of the mentor teachers also indicated that understanding was a key ingredient in management of the mentoring relationship because understanding preservice teachers makes the work of mentoring easy to achieve functioning in the relationship.

A mentor teacher also reiterated that:

*I think is all about understanding when the mentees assigned to be mentored. They know why they are here, and so are willing to learn from whoever they are assigned to but we as mentors must know our duty to ensure that the mentees learn something from us for coming here so that they don't go back to their school without any experience. As novice in the profession, they are more likely to make some mistakes but as mentors and experience teachers, we must understand their situation and place ourself in their situation so that we do not make it an issue because they need our support to grow in the profession. So, from my side I think understanding the mentees is key in mentoring relationship. (Mentor Teacher 9)*

Another mentor teacher said that she never argued with her preservice teacher because they understand each other and so her preservice teacher would always listen to whatever she wants her to do and she appreciated her views as an experienced teacher on issues in the teaching profession. She commented that:

*You realized that one of the aspects of influential interaction is the aspect of sharing knowledge and understanding each other. It is always better to work with somebody you understand and have a share value so that no matter the issue, the two of you would still have good relationship especially if you worked with the person for a period of time, you would realize that to understand each other better and to appreciate each other's work in the relationship for personal and professional development and would never argue on any issue. (Mentor Teacher 3)*

These utterances indicate that participants have reason to value understanding in management of the mentoring relationship, which was demonstrated by participants sharing ideas in the mentoring relationship. This indicates that participants sharing ideas with each other and working together ensures successful management of mentoring relationship. The data suggest that understanding helps to keep preservice teachers and mentor teachers in mentoring relationships during teaching practice, providing opportunities to develop professional knowledge. This corroborates the idea that an effective mentoring relationship involves understanding to develop complex skills in the teaching profession (Zachary, 2006; Gless & Moir, 2001). Similarly, other researchers reiterate that



when mentor teachers and preservice teachers share common goals, values and understand the roles of each other in the mentoring relationship, then they are in better position to learn and develop professional skills (Bates, Drits, & Ramirez, 2011; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Leshem, 2012; Levin & Rock, 2003). This supports Kennedy's (2010) assertion that distrust and differences in practices limit collaboration between mentor teachers and preservice teachers in management of the mentoring relationship. Izadinia (2016) reiterates that preservice teachers and mentor teachers' development of shared values and a deep understanding of each other's circumstances enhance their professional knowledge and skills in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

#### **5.2.1.1.4 Encouragement and Professional Support**

Majority of preservice teachers reported that mentor teachers played a supportive role that positively influenced their professional knowledge during teaching practice. The support and encouragement mentor teachers provided to preservice teachers have been identified as one of the essential features for management of the mentoring relationship (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009) globally. In line with this, Izadinia, (2018) corroborates Williams' (1994) view that there is the need for mentor teachers to encourage and support preservice teachers grow professionally in the mentoring relationship. However, some scholars have opined that mentor teachers sometimes tend to provide too much support and encouragement to preservice teachers (Maynard, 1996; Gyimah, 2010), which curtails preservice teachers' initiative and innovation in the mentoring relationship. This resonates with the view that some mentor teachers characteristically become overly friendly towards preservice teachers and provide excessively emotional support that they themselves did not receive during their own practicum experiences as student teachers (Väisänen et al., 2017; Maynard, 2013; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997). The nature of the support suggested by Gold (1996) cited in Gyimah (2010), is of two types: psychological support and academic-related support. Academic support is in the form of pedagogical knowledge, skills instructional strategies provided to preservice teachers, while psychological support involves support that enhances an individual's effectiveness in a professional role and sense of competence provided to preservice teachers to build self-esteem, identity and confidence in the mentoring relationship. The data suggest preservice teachers value both academic and psychological support provided by mentor teachers to build their confidence and self-esteem. In support, Murray-Harvey et al. (2000 cited in Gyimah, 2010) reiterate that preservice teachers are to be constantly supported to develop professionally in the mentoring relationship. However, majority of preservice teachers

value psychological and emotional support more than academic support in the mentoring relationship. A preservice teacher commented:

*... I would want my mentor to be supportive and give me encouragement but not to be spoon-feeding me in my task in the classroom because we have been taught the academic work but the confidence is my problem. (Preservice Teacher 20)*

Another preservice teacher mentioned that she received constant encouragement from her mentor teacher and said:

*To be frank my initial days in the school, I was not confidence in the things I do because I have never stood in front of learners to teach before but my mentor happens to be precisely the kind of mentor I wanted when I was coming to the school because he is been really very supportive in all the things I do. ... It has been really hard sometimes in the school but my mentor was just so helpful in all the things I do as a mentee in the relationship. In fact, sometimes she criticised me when I am wrong, but gives me lot of good words that support and encourages to do better next time. (Preservice Teacher 3)*

Though preservice teachers preferred emotional support, academic support is significant in management of the mentoring relationship. Some preservice teachers mentioned the need to be supported academically to develop their professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. Preservice Teacher 11, for instance, proclaimed:

*My mentor made me to feel as if she opened my head and saw areas, I am afraid of in the teaching profession. I was thinking of how to acquire the skills of teaching strategies during this teaching practice. My mentor supported me in the strategies without me telling her my weakness. She shared her professional skills and experiences with me and supported me academically to improve on the professional skills and knowledge in the classroom. I think mentor teachers should be experience enough to be able to provide academic support when preservice teachers encounter challenges in the classroom and they cannot fix it. In fact, my mentor is not judgmental person. She is always ready for us to sit down to discuss things I did wrong during my lesson delivery in the classroom and how I could do them better*

*professionally. She is always ready and willing to support me academically to improve on my teaching strategies (Preservice Teacher 11)*

A preservice teacher acknowledged learning academically from her mentor teacher in many ways during teaching practice. The preservice teacher said that

*Even though, we were taught academically in the university but I have also learnt a lot from my mentor especially how to develop and improvised teaching learning materials (TLM) to use in the classroom. She told me a teacher must make sure to use TLM at any time to teach especially at the lower level and so she supports me to learn how to develop learning resources that are used in teaching for learners to understand lessons. I learnt from my mentor how to raise learners' curiosity during lesson delivery (Preservice Teacher 2)*

These quotations indicate that preservice teachers were supported both psychologically and academically in the management of mentoring relationship. Emotional and academic support are capabilities in the management of the mentoring relationship during practicum experience. However, majority of preservice teachers preferred mentor teachers to provide more of emotional support because they received academic support in university and indicated that what they need most from their mentor teachers is support to build their confidence and self-esteem in the classroom. This confirms the views of scholars such as (Väisänen et al., 2017; Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011; Kelchtermans & Deketelaere, 2016; Devine, Fahie, & McGillicuddy, 2013) that preservice teachers prefer more of emotional support in the mentoring relationship. Beck and Kosnik (2002) in a study conducted, conclude that an important aspect of practicum from preservice teachers' standpoint is friendliness or emotional support provided in the mentoring relationship. Similarly, Rajuan et al. (2007) reiterate that mentees develop confidence and become innovative in the classroom when their mentor teachers provide the needed support in the mentoring relationship. This supports data suggesting that preservice teachers were not confident in early the days of their teaching practice, but their mentor teachers instilled confidence in them through encouragement and support in the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers had low confidence because of their perceived fear of making mistakes when teaching in the classroom. This perceived fear expressed was alleviated because mentor teachers provided emotional support desired by preservice teachers to develop confidence. However, a few preservice teachers expressed

the need for a little amount of freedom from their mentor teachers so that they could find their own ways of doing things in the classroom. For example, a preservice said that:

*although I hope to receive support from my mentor teacher, I do not want her to be directing and pointing mistakes to me in things I would be doing in the classroom and should give me space when am teaching to try out new things in class without her supervision (Preservice Teacher 5)*

This quotation suggests that even though preservice teachers need support and encouragement from their mentor teachers, they also need some level of freedom to make decisions on their own in the classroom. The finding is in conformity with that of Beck and Kosnik (2002) and Patrick (2013) that preservice teachers look-for the freedom to be in charge of the classroom with little or no guidance from mentor teachers, which affirms Sen (1999) that freedom is concerned with opportunities to achieve valued outcomes. What this suggests is that preservice teachers need freedom to learn on their own in the classroom to develop their professional knowledge. This is in line with Beck and Kosnik (2002, cited in Izadinia, 2016) view that preservice teachers should have some level of freedom from mentor teachers to learn what is possible in contemporary schools. However, one preservice teacher lamented she had non-developmental experiences in the mentoring relationship. He said:

*I was discouraged to work in the classroom because my mentor introduced me as an assistant to him and also a student learning like them because I was there to learn from him . . . I should not be compared to his learners like he did because the learners saw me as a learner like them; I would be qualified as a full professional teacher in less than six months and so he can't compare me with the learners. (Preservice Teacher 9)*

This quotation suggests that the preservice teacher felt inadequate, discouraged, lacked confidence and had low self-esteem to learn how to teach in the classroom. Awaya et al. (2003) argue that mentor teachers should constantly support preservice teachers emotionally and academically with a breath of vigor to be confidence in the classroom. This implies when preservice teachers are not supported by mentor teachers, they become disgruntled in the mentoring relationship. However, not all preservice teachers get the needed professional support and encouragement in mentoring

relationships, which suggests that the process of educational provision (Boni & Lozano, 2012) does not benefit all students equally because the freedom of some students may be restricted by some educational policies or practices (Unterhalter, 2003b) in place.

Majority of the mentor teachers indicated they provided both academic and emotional support and worked closely with preservice teachers and shared their professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This confirms Awaya et al., (2003) view that mentoring is a journey between mentor teachers and mentees with knowledge as the base to share in the journey. Most of the mentor teachers had a slightly different orientation from the preservice teachers in terms of the support needed in the management of the mentoring relationship. Majority of the mentor teachers indicated academic support as their main role to help preservice teachers develop teaching strategies to be able to impart knowledge to learners in the classroom. However, mentor teachers were of the view that they could benefit from emotional support they provided to preservice teachers in terms of the interpersonal connection that would be established to enable them learn from preservice teachers who are coming different learning environments. Mentor Teacher 7 said:

*I allow my preservice teacher to talk more her experience than me after his teaching in the classroom. I allow more time her to express opinions in teaching activities, I listen to his ideas and later encouraged her to always look for other strategies to make lesson delivery perfect. The discussion with her motivate to find gaps between his present teaching and ideal teaching situation in future. She always improves on her teaching after our discussions on the previous lesson.*

A phrase of explanation from Mentor Teacher 2 is cited as follows:

*I always encourage my preservice teacher to foster other abilities to help her confront future teachers' responsibilities to become a competent professional. I supported and encouraged her to actively participate in the training activities such as classroom management skills, computer skills and development of teaching materials and various strategies of teaching skills organised in the school for permanent teachers.*

Similarly, Mentor Teacher 6 stated that:

*...there are moments where things go wrong and I will reprimand her for not doing the right thing. But it does not mean I scream at her, we just talk about it, then I tell her that since this didn't work, she could have dealt with it in other way... I am a mentor to assist and enable her through the teaching experience.*

Further, Mentor Teacher 9 commented that:

*Mentoring is not just one-time conversation, but continuous engagement with mentees for professional growth, on-going support in their teaching activities, and allowing them alone to practice to see what they can do on their own, which also made me the mentor professionally grow.*

Although mentor teachers were oriented towards academic support, they equally provided emotional support to preservice teachers. Similarly, mentor teachers emphasised the importance of creating a safe environment for preservice teachers and assuring them that if they do make mistakes, there will always be someone there to help them pick up the pieces and provide strategies to avoid making the same mistake. This suggests the necessity of providing adequate academic and emotional support to preservice teachers within the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers supported preservice teachers to make informed decisions and were empathetic towards those confronted with problems in the management of the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher mentioned of introducing her preservice teacher to the full social life of school. She said:

*... letting them see what it is like to be a teacher and sometimes even allowing them to be part of a parent meeting to see some of the realities of the teaching profession. Also, letting them know that, they have to be in school early in the morning and they don't have to leave until closing, and when they go home, they have lesson to prepare, have marking to do and so they need support to be able to adjust by taken them through that.... (Mentor Teacher 2)*

Similarly, another mentor teacher said:

*The initial entering into teaching practice in preschools is sometimes uneasy to some of the mentees, especially when they need to meet parents of the children to discuss*

*issues that concern the children with the parents. Also, they become anxious in implementing instructional activities in the classroom and to effectively managed the classroom. I normally comfort my preservice teachers and suggested to them to calm down. I asked them to always think the nature of the problems and the cause when she is confronted with head on but is difficult then she comes for us to discuss how to solve it. I also shared my previous experiences of frustration with her and encouraged her to always go beyond and above the barriers or limits. (Mentor Teacher 7)*

The quotation reveals that mentor teachers provided professional support in the form of more academic than emotional support to preservice teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship. This implies providing professional support and encouragement was significant in the mentoring relationship, but mentor teachers rated highly the need for academic support for preservice teachers to be abreast of the realities in the classroom. This confirms Heeralal and Bayaga's (2011), Aderibigbe's (2013) and du Plessis' (2013) position that unprofessional behaviour of mentor teachers such as taking advantage of preservice teachers, failing to observe them, or not providing instructional modeling to enhance the professional learning experiences of preservice teachers leads to unproductive mentoring relationship. According to Awaya et al. (2003), unprofessional behaviour of mentor teachers contradicts their expected responsibilities of supporting preservice teachers for practical skills and professional knowledge. Similarly, Mukeredzi (2009) argues that mentor teachers evaluate the shortcomings and strengths of preservice teachers to encourage them to develop professional skills to deliver lessons in the classroom. This suggests that lack of professional support by mentor teachers leads to hostile and worrying situations in management of the mentoring relationship. This supports a study that constant professional support and encouragement with valuable experiences are vital for effective mentorship relationship during teaching practice (Hudson, 2010; Maphalala, 2013). The data indicate that mentor teachers admit that when preservice teachers are confronted with obstacles or perceived frustration, it is important to provide them with emotional support. Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2012) conclude that mentor teachers should provide emotional support to preservice teachers, rather than being only educative companions the mentoring relationship. This affirms that mentor teachers might not know how to activate the emotional support in the mentoring



relationship. The preservice teachers reveal that they prefer more of emotional support than the academic support in mentoring relationship. This resonates with research by Hagenauer et al. (2021) that preservice teachers' confidence is heightened when they are warmly received and professionally supported thereby feeling valued and motivated within the mentoring relationship.

#### **5.2.1.1.5 Mutual Trust**

The participants mentioned that being trusted and respected is an essential element in the management of the mentoring relationship. This confirms that management of the mentoring relationship is contingent on trust and respect among the parties involved (Hudson, 2016). They stated that building of trust creates a supportive environment for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to collaborate effectively in the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. Mentor Teacher 3 opined:

*...trusting each other and respecting the kind of relationship between the two of you to the extent that sometimes you just allow the mentee to mark the class register for you to see and further give other tasks to her in the classroom to do including teaching the children and allowing the mentee to approach you the mentor at any time to discuss issues of concern to her in order to determining the successfulness of the mentoring relationship.*

Mutual trust and respect are cornerstones for successful management of the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher mentioned that:

*The utmost importance of mentoring relationship is mutual trust in which mentors and preservice teachers could feel secure and rely on their sincerity for the mentor to take the risk to allow mentees to take initiatives in class and the mentees also to feel comfortable to try new ideas in the class without be betrayed and not supported.*  
(Mentor Teacher 8)

A preservice teacher lamented that:

*... I think when there is mutual trust between us, and the mentor is open to me just as I am to her then she will tell me everything in the school I have need to know, to help me in learning the skills of teaching so that at the end of my stay in the School I will come out successfully in the teaching practice. So, I think the trusting each*



*other is what can help to management the mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 4)*

A preservice teacher highlights the importance of having mentor teacher he can talk to and ask questions without fear of judgement from the mentor teacher.

*We sometimes meet in the town and we just talk about a lot of things just because we had so much in common and it makes me feel so comfortable that I could ask any questions that I want to know from her. Even now, I can call her on phone or even send a text when I don't understand something and she would be ready to answer me or even when she is busy, she tells me she is busy and call me later when she is less busy for her to explain things to me. I really feel comfortable with our relationship because we trust each other. I think meeting outside of school and talking is really important to build that relationship. (Preservice Teacher 14)*

Similarly, mutual trust, honesty, respect and integrity were indicated by mentor teachers as necessary elements in management of the mentoring relationship. Majority of mentor teachers subscribed to respecting each other's perspectives or ideas in the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher said:

*We the mentor teachers must build trust between us and the mentees because in my case I allow the mentee to forge the path on her own to learns and not trying to make my duplicate but just to learn from me. (Mentor Teacher 9)*

The finding suggests that trusting and respecting each other and allowing freedom of expression to share ideas and not fear of being judged, but being valued, sets the tone for management of the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers have reason to value mutual trust and respect as necessary for effective mentoring relationships. The mentor teachers respected and trusted preservice teachers and allowed them to try their initiatives in the classroom. The participants must be willing to show up fully and be open in the mentoring relationship. Majority of the participants attributed successful management of the mentoring relationship to trust shown and openness to each other and highlighted that it is essential trust does not emanate from one side, but from both sides in the mentoring relationship. Mutual trust and respect were found in this study

to be some of the capabilities in management of the mentoring relationship. They demonstrated that mutual freedom of expression and mentor teachers treating preservice teachers as colleagues invigorated most of the preservice teachers to work towards management of the mentoring relationship. This resonates with scholars who recognise mutual respect and trust as an essential ingredient in the mentoring relationship (Leshem, 2012; Bates, Drits, & Ramirez, 2011; Levin & Rock, 2003). The preservice teachers expressed positive views in management of the mentoring relationship because of mutual trust and respect with their mentor teachers. This corroborates the view that mutual trust and goodwill is the glue that grips strong relationships in management of the mentoring relationship between preservice teachers and mentors (Mohono-Mahlatsie & Van Tonder, 2006, in du Plessis & Marais, 2013). Similarly, in a qualitative study, Russell and Russell (2011) conclude that a mentoring relationship requires the trust, respect and shared norms between mentors and mentees in the relationship.

#### **5.2.1.1.6 Open Communication and Accessibility**

One basic function of management is communication, which is an essential element in mentoring relationship. The expression and sharing of ideas, facts, opinions, information and understanding of issues in the management of mentoring relationship is communication. Majority of participants indicated the value of maintaining open communication for successful management of mentoring relationship. They demonstrated by openness, sharing of ideas, communication and reflecting on practices in the mentoring relationship. This supports a study by Izadinia (2015) that the main ingredients of successful management of mentoring relationship is openness in communication. The preservice teachers were able to communicate freely with they listened to mentor teachers during the mentoring relationship. Preservice Teacher 7 said:

*Open communication must be established in mentoring relationship for preservice teacher to ask questions for their mentor teacher to listen attentively.*

Mentor Teacher 1 commented on the importance of communication:

*The mentees need to step outside of their comfort zone and be open with their mentors so that they interact and communicate as well as debate on ideas freely in the mentoring relationship.*

Open communication helps both mentor teachers and preservice teachers to gain confidence and for mentor teachers to motivate preservice teachers to develop their potential. Majority of the preservice teachers indicated that they value mentor teachers who are approachable and provide open communication in the mentoring relationship. A preservice teacher maintained that:

*My mentor is approachable and so I can freely talk to her and deliberate on ideas and debate bit with her on ideas with her not being preachy or too fixed in her own ways and she does not consider me as just a mentee but a colleague. (Preservice Teacher 11)*

The preservice teachers emphasised the cruciality of forming a non-judgmental relationship and environment in which friendly and open communication can exist to allow ideas to be shared freely. A preservice teacher said:

*I had opportunity to share freely my ideas because of being in an atmosphere where my mentor does not judge me on everything and allows for friendly and open communication based on collaboration (Preservice Teacher 2)*

Preservice Teacher 2 expressed the following:

*I think if your mentor is very critical person or will ridiculed you when you are doing something then that would make you to be really working hard because you may not want to go to your mentor and talk to her because she would just reprimand you without supporting or she is just going to make you feel even worse than you were already... but for my case, anytime I go to my mentor teacher and tell her 'I think I have not really done well with this lesson, she would say that thought that is not the right way to go about the lesson, but it has been done already and so we should look at how I can work on it better in another time. She is accessible beyond office hours since I can contact her through phone and always willing to make time for me even when she's busy.*

Similarly, Preservice Teacher 6 said:

*is very good for a mentor to correct a preservice teacher without been judgmental so that the preservice teacher can learn from her experience.*

However, some preservice teachers lamented that their mentor teachers were not effectively communicating with them in the relationship. A preservice teacher stated that:

*We sometimes meet to plan for the week's activities, but she never informs me if she won't be attending class. Consequently, I end up teaching as if we have planned together. So, when it happens like that and I had not prepared, then I had to prepare and teach which normally affect my teaching because I had not adequately prepared for the class. Some mentor teachers are not effectively communicating with us! Communicating on teaching activities to make us prepare before going to teach is very important for mentor to do for us mentees.*

(Preservice Teacher 11).

Another preservice teacher shares the similar sentiment regarding the ineffective communication of mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship.

*I was disappointed, my asked the class go outside to play without telling me and I was supposed to teach. Some mentors do not regard or the need to tell us something in the schools and take arbitrarily decisions because they see us not to be permanent teachers, but communication is important in mentoring relationship.*

(Preservice Teacher 14)

The preceding quotations reveal that preservice teachers prefer non-judgmental and approachable mentor teachers in management of the mentoring relationship. They were demonstrated by the freedom preservice teachers had to share their ideas without being judgmental and mentor teachers not being harsh and always encouraging of preservice teachers. This suggests preservice teachers are frequently enthusiastic of being part of school environment that prioritises open communication. Therefore, lack of open communication from mentors and school management could be detrimental to the management of mentoring relationship. This supports Hobson and Malderez (2013) and Hobson (2016) work, as cited by Jones, Tones, and Foulkes (2018), on judgmentoring, which refers to situations where there is less room for reflection, innovation and discovery as conversation about competency is one- way.

Similarly, mentor teachers also addressed communication and accessibility in management of the mentoring relationship. The majority of mentor teachers agreed that being friendly, honest and participating regularly in meetings as well as being ready to share ideas with preservice teacher are some of the capabilities in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The mentor teachers demonstrated it by being accessible, available and having frequent interactions with preservice teachers to enable them ask questions for their professional development. Mentor Teacher 2 stated that:

*Mentors should have open and regular communication with mentees, so that mentors can freely discuss with mentees what is not going well in the mentoring relationship.*

For preservice teachers to develop their professional identity and autonomy in teaching profession, there must be a mentoring relationship characterized by honesty, trust, open communication, and transparency between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. A mentor teacher said:

*Is very important for a mentor to have an open communication because the mentee have to be comfortable in the relationship and mentors should also be comfortable. This is because as mentors and mentees are comfortable, it makes things easy for them to be able to exchange ideas and share information, however, if they are stressed, then they cannot have open communication in the relationship (Mentor Teacher 7)*

These quotations suggest that a friendly environment with open communication is important in the management of mentoring relationship. This suggests an environment in which preservice teachers do not feel safe to share concerns, hinders open communication and can lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, and reluctance of preservice teachers to seek support and guidance from mentor teachers. Therefore, to create a safe and supportive environment, mentor teachers must foster a culture of trust, empathy, and respect to make preservice teachers feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns, which allows for a more collaborative mentoring relationship, where both parties can work together to achieve wellbeing. This resonates with Patrick (2013) who found that an intimidated environment, because of power relations, generates into fear and self-censoring of

preservice teachers. In Izadinia (2016) power relations in the mentor-mentee relationship seem to be common during teaching practice. This supports the view that unequal power relations in the mentoring relationship of preservice teachers often result in silence of preservice teachers leading to lack of learning (Izadinia, 2016). Unequal power relation leads to poor communication, which is unfavourable in management of mentoring relationship. From the quotations, majority of preservice teachers indicated that friendly and open communication is an essential component in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Similarly, data collected from majority of mentor teachers indicated that open communication is fundamental in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This resonates with Lewin and Mawoyo's (2014) position that the success of preservice teachers is strongly associated with a friendly environment and excellent communication in the mentoring relationship. This suggests an effective communicator encourages and motivates preservice teacher to carry out their duties effectively during teaching.

#### **5.2.1.1.7 Listening Skills**

Interactions happen when a listener undoubtedly understands information a speaker sends across and is considered as an effective communication (He, 2010). Majority of the participants indicated that active listening is a key aspect in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This suggests mentor teachers must listen attentively to understand the thoughts, concerns, and perspectives of preservice teachers, creating a supportive environment for successful mentoring relationship. Actively listening to each other helps to achieve wellbeing in management of the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher emphasised:

*Yes, you need to have good listen skills as a mentor, not only in the classroom but wherever you find yourself. You should listen or should be in position to listen to your subordinates in this case your preservice teachers... (Mentor Teacher 5)*

Similarly, a mentor teacher mentioned:

*Yeah, when mentees are comfortable dealing with a mentor and the mentee is prepared to listen and to do all the things a mentor will assign him/her to do in the school and the mentor is also committed to the roles as a mentor and is prepared and ready to listen to the mentee. (Mentor Teacher 8)*

Another mentor teacher mentioned that she never argues with her mentee but instead listens to whatever the mentee says and thinks about it in the mentoring relationship. This is because she believes in giving her mentee room to think for herself, rather than simply accepting whatever the mentor says. Such an approach empowers mentees to contribute equally in the mentoring relationship by shifting away from placing all responsibilities on the mentor teachers. She stated

*Mentorship is all about listening with your heart and head working in synchronicity. Being a good mentor is being able to listen with open mind and respond with your heart. Therefore, active listening and the ability to respond with respect and be supportive to mentee comes with a great amount of discipline and authenticity. A good-listening mentor enables a mentee to actively participate in the mentoring relationship. (Mentor Teacher 3).*

These quotations suggest that mentor teachers value active listening in management of mentoring relationship. The active listening allows both mentor teachers and preservice teachers to actively participate in mentoring relationship. This supports the concept of "mentoring up" introduced by Gabarro and Kotter (1980), which empowers mentees to actively participate in their mentoring relationships by shifting the emphasis of responsibilities from mentors in the mentor-mentee relationship to placing equal emphasis on the mentees' contributions (Lee et al. 2015). 'Mentoring up' recognises that mentorship is a reciprocated relationship which encourages mentees to be proactive participants that drive the relationship to ensure desired results (Persons et al. 2018). This confirms that mentor teachers who actively listen and encourage their mentees to express their ideas and opinions create an enabling environment that fosters learning and growth in the mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985). This suggests that active listening is an essential element of successful mentor-mentee relationships, as it enables both mentors and preservice teachers to learn from each other and contribute to achieve desired goals and outcomes in the mentoring relationship.

Similarly, preservice teachers also value the active listening of mentor teachers in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. A preservice teacher said that:

*As I ready said to be time conscious, listening to your mentor and behave as a colleague teacher and don't be contradicting your mentor in anyway and taking good care of yourself and respectful your mentor because in our social environment*

*you need a kind of attitude before you can fit in a particular society and so before you can fit in the school and get the necessary help as a mentee then you need to portrait all these characters so that they will know you are respecting them and their learners so that they will also help you to get what you want. (Preservice Teacher 16)*

Similarly, another preservice teacher commented that:

*...my head master was my mentor and he is someone who is very open and so I can talk to him about any issues bordering me and he would listen to me whole heartedly but it must be in the school setting. For instance, if like I see something going wrong in the school and talk about it to him, even though am not a permanent teacher but mentee on off campus teaching, he would still be very open to me. This gave me the opportunity to able to go to him to tell him about my opinion on things in the school and about my practice and he would listen to me and take it, sometimes he acts on some of the issues I talk to him about in the school. He calls the other teachers and then they would work on what I saw even though, I am a preservice teacher. (Preservice Teacher 19).*

Alternatively, a preservice teacher lamented that:

*My mentor is not the listening type and would always make me to feel I know nothing in the classroom and so he needs to direct me as to what to do in the classroom. He one day told me I should not think he would allow me to try ideas which might not work and would affect his pupils in the classroom. He does not listen to any suggestion I make in the classroom and wants me to do only what he has told me to do in the classroom and this is really affecting me because I am not comfortable in the mentoring relationship. I would have preferred a mentor who would listen to new ideas I would bring on board and allow me to try them in the classroom to see the workability because we learnt a lot of theories in the university and is only during teaching practice that you can verify the practicability of those theories. (Preservice Teacher 20)*



These quotations indicate that participants value listening as one of the top notches in management of the mentoring relationship. The data demonstrated that preservice teachers had freedom to share ideas and were listened to by mentor teachers and vice versa. This suggests active listening is a crucial aspect of effective support in the mentoring relationship. This supports Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) view that mentor teachers must pay attention to preservice teachers to provide effective guidance and support throughout the mentoring process. Mentor teachers' active listening is understanding completely the words in a message put forward by preservice teachers, not just hearing the words that are said in the message (ibid). This implies it is important for mentor teachers to not only listen to the words spoken in a message, but also pay attention to the underlying feelings conveyed by preservice teachers. However, when mentor teachers are not listening to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship, it becomes precarious because mentor teachers do not see preservice teachers as needing support and encouragement, but as burden and passive partners in the mentoring relationship (Agoke, 2018). This resonates with the hierarchical nature of the mentor-mentee relationship, which can create an unfair distribution of power that has a negative impact on the mentoring relationship (Christie, 2014).

#### **5.2.1.1.8 Collaboration**

The participants indicated collaboration in mentoring promotes developmental experiences, which suggest that teamwork should be constructed in the journey of mentoring relationship. This implies collaborative mentoring relationship often provides preservice teacher with positive mentoring relationship experience. The data showed that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers worked together successfully for their mutual benefit in the mentoring process. A mentor teacher mentioned that preservice teachers and mentor teachers should have a collaborative relationship in all circumstances. She stated that:

*As mentors we should consider the mentees as colleagues and also know their roles to be helping them and in performing the duties together. I cooperate with my mentee always to co-plan for the classroom activities and help my mentee to grow professionally so that she would be successful in her future teaching career. (Mentor Teacher 9)*

Another mentor teacher commented that:

*We are team players and so plan together each week and share in the topics to teach in the classroom. We shared all activities in the classroom and co-teach topics in the classroom. (Mentor Teacher 2)*

Similarly, a mentor teacher noted that:

*Observing preservice teacher has given me the chance to see teaching in people perspective. I saw that learners were actively participating in the lesson with even those who normally not participating when I am teaching. In our feedback sessions we learn from each other and discussed various ways to encourage learners' active participation and involvement in lesson. I would not have learnt the ways to get more my learners to participate in my lesson without observing my mentees' lesson. (Mentor Teacher 5)*

The quotations indicate that mentor teachers and preservice teachers were in a collaborative relationship in performing their tasks in the classroom. They hold a perspective that a mentoring relationship based on equality, freedom from power imbalances related to positions, ranks, or expertise, fosters mutual learning. The data indicated mentor teachers believe collaborative mentoring is beneficial for preservice teachers as it allows them to expand their knowledge and skills through trial and error, thereby demonstrating their capabilities at all stages of the mentoring journey. Mentor teachers further expressed that collaborative mentoring allows for a more personalised approach to the mentoring relationship that takes into account the unique strengths and needs of individual preservice teachers. This not only leads to more effective mentorship, but also helps to establish a sense of trust and rapport between mentor teachers and preservice teachers, which provides an opportunity for mentor teachers to learn and grow through exposure to new ideas and perspectives brought forth by preservice teachers. The data suggests collaborative mentoring is valuable approach which mentor teachers encourage preservice teacher to contribute ideas within the mentoring relationship. According to Patrick (2013), the concept collaborative mentoring encourages preservice teachers and mentor teachers to engage in professional activities to foster professional and personal growth and development during teaching practice. In support, Hallam et al. (2012) suggest that the personal mentor-mentee relationship is best for successful teamwork in

the management of the mentoring relationship. Similarly, preservice teachers are of opinion that collaborative relationship is important in the management of mentoring relationship.

A preservice teacher said:

*I will say respecting the view of the mentees in the relationship and collaborating in all things in the relationship and listening to the mentor and been punctual in class is a good way to have a successful mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 10)*

Similarly, a preservice teacher 3 mentioned that:

*My mentor always sits to listen to me when I am teaching and that is the best thing for me. He shows me respect and makes me feel that what I do is worthwhile. The we normally had interactions were fulfilling. He accepts my ideas and supports me in my trial and error with methods in the classroom but comes in to help when things are not going as expected.*

Another preservice teacher reiterated that:

*My mentor always holds meetings with me on daily basis to plan and strategize for the lessons to be taught in the classroom. She always encourages me to come out with new ideas or suggestions that we can use in the classroom and she equally suggest new ways and strategies that I can use when I am teaching. She does not undermine my ideas and I also accept all ideas she brings forth. we collaborate with each other in the mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 2)*

Although, generally, collaborative mentoring relationship was developmental to both mentor teachers and preservice teachers, a preservice teacher stated that he had non-developmental experiences:

*My mentor teacher always looks for me to teach and she always give excuses to avoid teaching in the classroom when I am around, so that I cannot observe how she teaches. She always comes to classroom late after I have started the day's lessons, she then comes in and sit to play with her cellphone without even paying attention to give me to give me feedback on my lessons afterwards. (Preservice Teacher 20)*

These quotations indicate that collaboration helps both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. They are demonstrated in the data by teamwork performed in every activity and the treatment of preservice teachers as colleagues by mentor teachers for mutual benefits in management of the mentoring relationship. This resonates with in Stapleton (2013) that the interactive process is greater when a mentor and mentee collaborate in the mentoring relationship. The narrative data largely indicates that collaborative relationship is beneficial for both mentors' and preservice teachers' mutual learning in the mentoring relationship. Mutual learning can improve on knowledge and practices of mentor teachers and preservice teachers. The quotations further show that mentor teachers have reason to value teamwork as their well-being in the management of the mentoring relationship. The data suggests that the opportunity for preservice teachers to have experiences with mentor teachers is important in management of the mentoring relationship. This demonstrates collaborative mentoring relationships are one of the capabilities that facilitate reciprocal learning for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers. This supports studies cited by Calitz (2016) to the effect that when lecturers use collaborative learning practices, students are more likely to be engaged in learning (Schlicht & Klauser 2014; Ruksana & Ronnie, 2007; Seale 2009; Ewald, 2007; Fielding, 2001). Commenting on collaborative mentoring, the cluster of literature on mentoring relationship provides that novice teachers improve on their professional practices with mentors (Koballa, et al., in Bradbury, 2010). This finding confirms the reason participants value collaborative mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

#### **5.2.1.1.9 Confidence**

Fourteen of the twenty preservice teachers mentioned that prior to teaching practice to engage in mentoring relationship, they lacked self-confidence in standing in front of learners or even among their colleagues to teach. However, the data indicate confidence of preservice teachers to be able to convert their intelligence for the achievement of functionings in teaching. Therefore, the mentoring relationship developed self-confidence as one of the capabilities of preservice teachers.

Preservice Teacher 16 said:

*I have confidence now than I was before the teaching practice. Prior to meeting my mentor to understudy her, I was not sure of myself in teaching among any group of people. I always think I will deliver the subject content wrongly if I stand in front to*

*teach learners. It was even difficult for me to lead a group discussion. I would be 'talking' to myself even in group discussion with my peers. I had no confidence in myself initially but now I have self-confidence and am able to deliver lessons very in classroom without talking to what they called board as I used to do before the mentoring relationship.*

Another preservice teacher proclaimed:

*...I learnt how to be humble and other valuable thing because am someone who is a shy person and so it was very hard for me to open up to anyone before the teaching practice of which many people take me to an introvert because I never had any relationship with an elderly person before except my parents. My mentor was very open to me and always wants my opinion on things she does in the classroom and these gave me the opportunity to be confidence and open up to people around me and can contribute to discussions in places I find myself because of the kind of interactions and the engagements with my mentor. (Preservice Teacher 1)*

In a similar vein, a preservice teacher stated:

*...I like Mondays and Fridays because we the mentees are not excluded from the school's meeting and even during the meetings, we were given the opportunity to also give our contributions and our opinions on what we see right and what is not right in the school which helped me to develop confident. (Preservice Teacher 19)*

Similarly, preservice teachers in mentoring relationship believe their mentors supported them to develop confidence to teach learners positively in the classroom. They stated that it has changed them from having no confidence to self-confidence in a big way. A preservice teacher added:

*... my mentor normally leaves the class for me and she sit to observe my teaching at the back of the class but before we would go to the class, she would tell me what am going to teach that day and when we just get to the class, I go straight to the board to teach, however, sometimes she will not even tell me that I will be teaching but when we get to the class then she will tell to teach the kids for her to observe me and she would take notes and after class when we go out of the classroom then she would*

*give me feedback on my teaching which she constantly does and so I always prepared myself before going to school, even on the days she doesn't come to school, she would call from the house to ask me how the lesson went and what happened and all these helped me to be confidence and grow professionally. ...she was constantly supervising and correcting my work as a mentee in the classroom. As a person I will say I have gained a lot of confidence through the mentoring relationship and mastering the subjects I teach in the classroom because I have now seen that you have to read ahead as a teacher before you go to teach in the classroom hence, I have gain confidence that I didn't have before the mentoring relationship. I now have myself confidence and believe that I can teach effectively to attract the attention of kids in the classroom and change their attitude through my achieved functioning in the mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 11)*

The level of confidence demonstrated by the participants in the quotations provided is highly correlates with the development of professional knowledge, which contributes to preservice teachers' achievement of well-being in the mentoring relationship. The data indicated that preservice teachers who participated in the mentorship relationship were able to teach with greater confidence which, in turn, led to their being respected and recognised not only by mentor teachers, but also by learners in their classrooms.

The preservice teachers, given the opportunity and freedom to teach learners with minimal support from their mentor teachers in the classroom is an effective means of developing their confidence. As a result, preservice teachers are able to use their ideas to teach learners with greater assurance and are recognised as colleague teachers by their mentor teachers in the classroom. This resonates with Liliane and Colette (2010) who hold that when mentor teachers support and encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their practices and are open to ideas, preservice teachers are more likely to gain confidence in expressing their own ideas for teaching in the classroom. Similarly, Izadinia (2015) concluded that confidence of preservice teachers developed when mentor teachers support and preservice teachers in mentoring relationship. Along similar lines, Calitz (2016) argues that the impact of pedagogical conditions such as supportive learning environment, teaching practices and positive teacher-student interactions that cater to the needs of students can contribute to increased student confidence. This confirms Izadinia's (2013) study that highlighted the

importance of confidence in developing the professional identity of preservice teachers in mentoring relationship. This suggests confidence is a key capability for preservice teachers as they work towards building their professional identity in the management of mentoring relationship. Carrington, Kervin, and Ferry (2011) self-confidence demonstrated by preservice teachers during teaching practice experiences is crucial to their professional identity and development.

The data indicated that preservice teachers clearly lacked confidence at the early stages of teaching practice, but through support and encouragement from mentor teachers, they had a sense of confidence and enthusiasm in the classroom. A study by Rajuan et al. (2007) found that preservice teachers needed supportive relationship and encouragement from mentor teachers to develop self-confidence in the classroom. This suggests preservice teachers should have freedom and opportunity to experiment professional skills learnt to develop confidence in the mentoring relationship. According to Ticknor (2014), Liu and Fisher (2006 Schlicht), and Williams (2010), mentor teachers play a crucial role in supporting development of preservice teachers' professional identity and self-confidence.

Similarly, confidence is a very important attribute for mentor teachers in management of the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers often face many challenges in management of mentoring, but, with confidence, they are able to overcome. The goal of putting preservice teachers through mentoring relationship is to develop and improve pedagogical and professional competences such as communication, and self-confidence, among others. Majority of the mentor teachers believe their self-confidence increased through support provided to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. A mentor teacher said:

*Well, I have had a lot of experience with the mentees because most of the time I take them through what I know in the teaching field and they become interested to learn more from me and that gives me joy and confidence to teach them more of the things they need to know in the teaching profession. I must say, I become more enthusiastic and confidence when mentees learn and practice what I teach them and comes to me to gain more knowledge and that really makes me feel self-confidence as a mentor for shaping a preservice teacher to be a better teacher in future. (Mentor Teacher 8)*



Similarly, another mentor teacher proclaimed:

*...I have said that the mentees coming for we mentor teachers to mentor them in the school gives us some kind of self-confidence because it makes you feel that you have a kind of knowledge which is required to train preservice teachers or the universities seek for your knowledge in the training of their preservice teachers. The fact is there are number of things the preservice teachers come to asked us as mentor teachers and so if you don't equip yourself with adequate knowledge then you would be exposed as not knowing anything but if you prepare very well then you would have the confidence to be able to impact into them your knowledge and skills in the teaching filed. The truth is the mentoring relationship is a process that help us to equip ourselves well to also transfer the knowledge gained to other and so is a valuable relationship of which some of us cherish it so much because if nothing at all the confidence of impacting knowledge to a preservice teacher gives you joy in the teaching profession. I remember my preservice teacher is so intelligent that the kind of suggestions he gives me, made me to get the confidence to form a debating club and organized a debate competition successfully in this school. Actually, I have gained confidence in most of the things I do now because my preservice teacher urges me on in most of things by learning from me and practice what I teach him which works for him. (Mentor Teacher 3).*

These quotations suggest that mentor teachers do develop self-confidence through mentoring relationship. The data indicated that mentor teachers can gain confidence through the process of mentoring preservice teachers. This suggests mentors feel a sense of pride and accomplishment when they observe positive changes and growth in the personal and professional development of preservice teachers, which enhances their self-confidence as mentor teachers. Furthermore, when preservice teachers develop professional identity and knowledge, they become more independent and capable, which allows mentor teachers to have confidence in their abilities to teach and guide preservice teachers. Therefore, the mentoring process is beneficial for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers which, ultimately, leads to increased confidence and improved teaching outcomes. This corroborates the claim made by Holloway (2001, cited in Stapleton, 2013) that the overall success of preservice teachers contributes to self-confidence of mentor teachers in the management



of mentoring relationship. Akin, Hanson and Moir (2008) reiterate that mentor teachers feel accomplished with a renewed passion when preservice teachers are ready to learn and accept constructive feedback in management of the mentoring relationship. To quote from one of the mentor teachers: “I became very confident when preservice teachers learnt from me to develop their professional competences in the mentoring process” (Preservice Teacher 2). Therefore, mentor teachers are also able to achieve their value beings or doings of self-confidence in the mentoring process during teaching practice. This suggest that the mentoring process is not only beneficial for preservice teachers, but also for mentor teachers, as noted by Holloway (2001) and Wasonga et al. (2015) that mentor teachers can gain self-confidence by fostering mutual respect, collaboration, and sharing of new ideas with preservice teachers during the mentoring process.

#### **5.2.1.1.10 Interpersonal Skills**

This theme is be understood to mean abilities that are necessary for effective communication with individuals or groups of people (Rungadiachy, 2010). Interpersonal relationship is interaction between two or more individuals with the ability to understand message from each other (Chant, et al., 2002; Goldman, 2021). According to Goldman (2021), interpersonal relationships is social connections, contacts, association or bond between two or more individuals, which involves the exchange of verbal and nonverbal communication, understanding and recognition of different personalities, perspectives and ability to empathise with others. This suggests good interpersonal relationships require effective communication, mutual trust, honesty, respect and willingness to compromise and work towards common goals that are important for personal well-being, social support, and achieving personal and professional goals. Therefore, to build strong and positive interpersonal relationship individuals need to have strong interpersonal skills, which are required in management of the mentoring relationship. Interpersonal skills are the abilities that allow people to communicate effectively and develop positive relationships with others.

A mentor teacher stated that:

*... good interpersonal relationship is one of the values that I have acquired in the mentoring relationship because the kind of good interactions with my mentee have made us to have a special bond and connect on personal level to share ideas in the mentoring relationship. Our mentoring relationship is more of a friendship than being just a mere mentee-mentor relationship. I think even after the teaching*

*practice we would still connect to share ideas and to get inspirations from each other (Mentor Teacher 5)*

Similarly, another mentor teacher said:

*You need to build up a positive relationship to begin with so that preservice teacher would feel comfortable in the mentoring relationship with you (Mentor Teacher 3)*

Most of preservice teachers mentioned that their mentor teachers welcomed them warmly to the school and treated them as colleagues and friends, rather than just preservice teachers. This suggests the open relationship established by the mentor teachers allowed for the development of a strong bond between preservice teachers and mentor teachers. Preservice teacher 4 stated that:

*I have learnt how to tolerate people though I will not say I was not tolerant but I have learnt more about how to relate and cooperate with people because we are all humans and my mentor considers me to have all the rights as a teacher in the school but not as a preservice teacher because we are also in the system with as permanent teachers and we learn new things sometimes from each other every day. She has a way of how to approach colleagues and is something I learnt from her because of how he approaches me and other teachers, so I have learnt how to be tolerant, respect and seek for help or voice out issues without been harsh to anyone no matter how the issue would be and so my interpersonal relationship has improved significantly during the teaching practice.*

Further, Preservice Teacher 2 proclaimed:

*You have to know how to foster a positive working relationship with your mentor teacher to learn from their professional experience.*

Another comment underlining importance of interpersonal relationships was made by Preservice Teacher 3:

*Some people go in really closed up but you need to be open and willing to get on with whoever it may be in the relationship.*

The quotations show that the participants were inspired in the relationship, learnt from each other and desired to have a long-lasting relationship even after the teaching practice. They demonstrate that by the friendship established they desire to even be in relationship after teaching practice. This revelation indicates that interpersonal skills enabled mentor teachers and preservice teachers to have reason to value interpersonal relationship in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This suggests interpersonal skills enabled preservice teachers and mentor teachers to maintain working relationships and suggests mentorship develops spontaneously based on interpersonal relationship (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Zachary, 2011). In support, Crasborn et al. (2010) conclude that an interpersonal relationship provides adequate opportunities to challenge preservice teachers to learn new things in the mentoring relationship. Regarding this, Hudson (2011) reiterates that interpersonal relationship is pivotal in management of mentoring relationship. According to Ligadu (2012) cited by Abugre & Kpinpuo, (2017) that interpersonal relationship contributes significantly in the mentoring process. The data suggest mentor teachers and preservice teachers must prioritise interpersonal relationship in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This implies mentor teachers should maintain a friendly and cooperative relationship with preservice teachers to achieve wellbeing in mentoring relationship.

#### **5.2.1.1.11 Self-motivation**

The fact that participants opt to remain in the mentoring relationship and work towards enhancing their professional knowledge and skills demonstrates their self-motivation to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. The participants showed that their personal motivation to succeed as teachers in the teaching profession encouraged them to continue in the mentoring relationship. Majority of mentor teachers felt self-motivated because of the prospect of reflecting on their teaching practices and acquiring novel strategies from preservice teachers through the mentoring relationship. This implies management of mentoring relationship lays emphasis on learning among preservice teachers and mentor teachers to stimulate reflection-on-practice to achieve wellbeing. A mentor teacher said:

*There are different perceptions between my mentee and myself on the things we do and why we do that which helped us to learn from each other. The mentees, joined us at a time we have already written our scheme of work for the term. So, in my case, I have to critically re-examine what I have done knowing I would have to share my lessons with the mentee. The sharing of the lessons with my mentees helped me to*

*learn new ways of teaching, assessments, designing learner activities and discipline in the classroom because of the innovation from the mentee. This is my motivation to ensure successful mentoring relationship with the mentees when they join us for their teaching practice. (Mentor Teacher 1).*

Mentor Teacher 4 added by stating:

*I started critiquing my own lessons: I asked myself, if the lesson was effective? Were instructions clear to the learners? I did all these because of working with mentees.*

Some mentor teachers were of the view that enthusiasm and eagerness of preservice teachers to learn motivated them in the mentoring relationship. On this basis, Mentor Teacher 6 proclaimed:

*...the enthusiastic and initiative nature of my mentee, pushed me to reflect on the kind of teaching-learning activities I do in the classroom as a teacher. The coming of the mentee was an energy, which propelled me to work hard in the classroom to ensure the mentee learn from my experiences for successful mentoring relationship. I can say is the existence of the mentee in my classroom that made me to become more enthusiastic and increase my morale and passion in the mentoring relationship.*

Another mentor teacher indicated aspects she had seen to have been developed professionally because of mentoring of preservice teachers:

*Having preservice teachers to mentor made me to be tolerant, supportive and understanding to novice teachers. This is because the interactions with preservice teachers helped me to better understand pedagogical procedures and reflective practices to improve my teaching (Mentor Teacher 5)*

Some mentor teachers stated that the main thing that kept them in the relationship was their self-motivation for personal and professional development. Mentor Teacher 9 related that:

*Self-motivation kept me going because I knew mentoring someone would help my personal growth and development in the teaching profession. Based on my previous experiences with some mentees and the knowledge I gained for mentoring them I have decided to mentor more as long as I am in the profession, even when things are*

*difficult in the relationship. I see the mentees as young ones who wants to enter the teaching profession and so I must help them to be good teachers in future just as I was helped to be in my position. I have to be a role model to mentees by mentoring them and so for me, the challenges in mentoring relationship are minimised by self-motivation, because I believe a good teacher is not the one who can teach very well in the classroom alone but the one who can also empower mentees to be able to teach well in their classrooms.*

Some preservice teachers pointed out that their passion to become good teachers in future inspired them to stay in the mentoring relationship. This suggests the preservice teachers persisted in the mentoring process, despite challenges in mentoring relationship because it facilitates professional growth by enabling preservice teachers to become proficient teachers in the future. Thus, they persevered until completion of their teaching practice to acquire valuable professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. The mentoring process empowers preservice teachers to learn and grow to acquire professional knowledge from their mentor teachers by integrating theory and practice during teaching practice. (Arnesson & Albinsson, 2017). Preservice Teacher 17 said:

*The motivation to pursue a teacher education programme to become good teacher in future is a passion and innate determination to excel and so you will not leave the school even when there are challenges in the teaching practice. When you start teaching practice and in the early stages your mentor teacher pass nasty comments on how you are teaching, it makes you to feel you have not learnt anything in the university. This is when initially, she gives you the opportunity to teach, you will not even understand what is happening and how things are done in the classroom. However, if the drive comes from within, after several comments from your mentor teacher, you will take on board the feedbacks from your mentor teacher and after some days, you will tell yourself that you would be able to do it as your mentor teacher wants it to be done in the classroom and you will continue to learn.*

Another preservice teacher emphasised that motivation of individuals to pursue teacher education is to become a degree professional teacher and successful completion of mentoring relationship is part of the process to become a degree teacher. She stated:

*...self-motivation, the reason behind my stay in the relationship is strong enough to keep me in the mentoring relationship to learn more from my mentor because I need the professional knowledge and skills to become a teacher in the future and so when feel I cannot go on again because of the difficulties in the relationship then that motivation of mentoring been part of the process of what I want to become in future will keep me going to complete the teaching practice to end the mentoring. Therefore, it is important for me to be strongly self-motivated in the completion of the programme. (Preservice Teacher 19)*

The quotations show that participants' inner passion to improve on their personal and professional growth made them to strive to maintain the mentoring relationship. This suggests mentor teachers reflect on their own pedagogical knowledge in the mentoring process. The data suggest that majority of mentor teachers were self-motivated and voluntary to mentor preservice teachers because of the expected benefits in management of mentoring relationship. This affirms that for mentoring relationship to be successful, mentor teachers must be self-motivated and volunteer to mentor preservice teachers in the teacher education mentoring programme (Wood & Stanulis, 2010). This supports the assertion that the returns individuals expect from others and do actually get from others, typically motivate their voluntary actions (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013). This suggests that preservice teachers' inner drive to learn from mentor teachers to become good teacher in future helped to sustain their commitment in the mentoring relationship. This supports a study conducted by Orpen (1997, cited in Wasonga, Wanzare & Dawo, 2015) that mentees' self-motivation to work hard and their commitment to the relationship leads to better relationship between mentors and mentees in a mentoring programme. Perhaps, this is the reason mentors were motivated and committed to mentees who had close working relationship with them than those who were physically distant from them. This affirms that experience in the relationship becomes meaningful if mentor teachers enjoyed their interactions and there is mutual respect in the mentoring relationship (Wood & Stanulis, 2010; Knowles et al., 2011).

#### **5.2.1.1.12. Perceptions of Mentor and Preservice Teachers**

The participants indicated their perceptions of teaching and learning as an important attribute that enabled management of mentoring relationship. Majority of the preservice teacher noted that it is essential for preservice teachers to develop positive attitudes in terms of preparation for the tasks

by adhering to mentor teachers' instructions in the mentoring relationship. In line with this, a preservice teacher stated that:

*There's no point in the mentor teacher coming to classroom prepared and you as a mentee is not prepared in the morning. The mentee needs to be prepared for the classroom, if the mentor is willing to put in the hard work, then you the mentee need to be willing to double the hard work and that is what is called a good attitude of the mentee, since you're not there [a teacher] yet, need to show enthusiasm for the mentor to see your eagerness in the relationship because as a mentee you're not at the level she is and so you must be poised to work to learn more as a mentee.* (Preservice Teacher 3).

Preservice Teacher 8 said:

*...I realized my mentor teacher is quite strict so I have to obey whatever she asked me because she doesn't want opposing views and so I listen first and do what she wants me to do then when are done, I will tell her my opinion it and how I thought it should have been done. The good aspect of her attitude to me was that I developed the listening spirit and do what she wants to do in the relationship which I think helped me to have a successful mentoring relationship with my mentor teacher. I think a mentor should not just be a boss but rather be a role model and guide...* (Preservice Teacher 8).

However, a mentor teacher stated that:

*As a teacher, I feel that it would be a disservice to my role if I was too rigid to deviate from my lesson plan. If my mentee proposes slightly different approach from my approach, I am open to discuss with him to determine best way to proceed for the benefit of both the learners in the classrooms and the mentee as well.* (Mentor Teacher 7)

Another mentor teacher asserted that:

*A good attitude towards your mentee and sharing ideas with your mentee. Being Open and not hiding anything from your mentee is a good attitude and it improves the mentoring relationship because it will let the mentee know that she should not also hide anything from you the mentor. There are certain things we should not hide from the mentees because that would help them to do the right things such as not coming to school late and not leaving all the work on the mentee which you are supposed to do and correct your mentee when there are errors in what the mentee is supposed to do. Also, if you share ideas with your mentee and then you correct the mentee if there are some errors or you sit down with the mentee to go through the activities in the classroom and see the way you want it to be done and so that next time the mentee can do it well. (Mentor Teacher 5)*

These quotations show good attitude of mentor and preservice teachers is considered as the most important personal conversion factor in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This supports Frels et al. (2013) argument that mentoring can be counterproductive where mentors and mentees have wrong attitude in the mentoring relationship. This implies that the attitude of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship can either facilitate or hinder their ability to achieve their desired goals and actions during teaching practice.

## **5.2.1.2 Pedagogical**

### **5.2.1.2.1 Reciprocated Learning and Exchange of Knowledge**

The data indicated that the opportunity for participants to learn from each other is something they have reason to value in the management of mentoring relationship. Therefore, there is a need to allow interactions among mentor teachers and preservice teachers to sustain dialogical spaces in the mentoring relationship. A preservice teacher said that mentoring relationship serves as an opportunity to learn various approaches of teaching skills from mentor teachers and to develop professional knowledge. The preservice teacher stated that:

*When I am in a classroom with my mentor teacher, I am able to learn from her because I see what she does during a lesson delivery which I do adapt and use in my lesson delivery in the classroom as well and sometimes she also learns from me*



*because of the modifications I make to his approach in lesson delivery and so we learn from each other in the relationship and that help us to have a successful mentoring relationship during the teaching practice. (Preservice Teacher 17)*

Similarly, a mentor teacher indicated that preservice teachers learn from mentor teachers, while mentor teachers may also learn from preservice teachers in the mentoring process. According to that mentor teacher:

*In fact, it was strange to us why the mentees were not coming to our school anymore. We even complained of not getting more of the preservice teachers because a lot of them [**preservice teachers**] exhibit some talent in teaching which some of us the mentors learn from them too. To be frank we the regular teachers also learn from these mentees unknowingly and sometimes you share common ideas with the mentee which I am doing with my mentee in our relationship. Actually, I am really enjoying working with my mentee by learning from different her because of her unique way of doing things in the classroom. (Mentor Teacher 3)*

In the same vein, a mentor teacher explained that learning from each other can potentially ensure a successful mentoring relationship:

*Having a mentee helped me gained new knowledge on teaching styles. We were working together in planning, materials development and sharing of the teaching activities in the classroom made us more open-minded and willing to learn from each other to gain in-depth knowledge. We understood each other and work together on thing we find difficult in the classroom so as to prepare interventions. (Mentor Teacher 6)*

Another mentor teacher said:

*Well, I have had a lot of experience learning from my mentee and she also learning from me because most of the time I take my mentee through what I know in the teaching profession and what she needs to know whiles she learns from me, sometimes she also shares her ideas on thing which I also learns from her even*

*thought I am the mentor teacher whom she is supposed to learn from, yeah* (Mentor Teacher 4)

These quotations utterances indicate that mentor teachers and preservice teachers learn from one another in the mentoring relationship. The finding reveals that views of preservice teachers are considered as pertinent and necessary for management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This resonates with Barrera et al. (2010) and Cochran-Smith (2010) who maintain that the need for mentoring process is to achieve goals of collegiate practices and mutual learning to improve pedagogical and professional knowledge. This supports the notion that there is a departure from the conventional perception of mentor teachers as all-knowing experts, which reinforces a hierarchical one-way perspective, towards a more collaborative learning approach that involves a reciprocal relationship (Bottoms et al., 2013; Le Cornu, 2009; Gardiner, 2011). This suggests the shift in mentoring process towards a mutual and collaborative relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is a reflection of the growing recognition of the value of dialogical spaces in the learning process in mentoring relationship. In dialogical spaces, both mentor teachers and preservice teachers engage in active listening, exchanging perspectives, and co-creating knowledge, rather than mentor teachers simply imparting knowledge and preservice teachers passively receiving knowledge. This allows for a more dynamic and adaptive approach to mentoring, where mentor teachers are open to learning from preservice teachers' unique experiences and perspectives, and preservice teachers are encouraged to actively participate in their own learning and development. The data indicated that management of the mentoring relationship is more of mutual learning of professional development for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers during teaching practice. This suggests the mentoring process is beneficial to both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in management of the mentoring relationship for pedagogical learning and practice. This affirms the view that the crucial element in the mentoring process is to relinquish preconceived notions of power dynamics and rather embrace a willingness to learn from one another in a mentor-mentee relationship. (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012).

#### **5.2.1.2.2 Constructive Feedback**

Feedback in mentoring relationship is helpful for both mentor and preservice teachers to avoid misconceptions and misunderstanding. Feedback refers to intellectual discourses in which mentor teachers stimulate reflection practices and learning of preservice teachers in mentoring relationship

to develop professional skills. This suggests feedback is a process of providing constructive information, opinions, or comments to preservice teachers regarding their performance, behaviour, or progress in the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers offer guidance, suggestions, and insights to help preservice teachers identify their strengths and areas of improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance their professional growth and development. The feedback may be used to foster mutual learning, growth, and accountability in the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers' feedback helps preservice teachers to reflect on their progress and make informed decisions to achieve wellbeing. Therefore, feedback is part of professional development and fundamental to management of the mentoring process during teaching practice. The data indicated that constructive feedback led to developmental experiences in the mentoring relationship. The significance of continuous feedback in the mentoring process is the ability to offer opportunities for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and expertise. The data indicated that mentor teachers value the feedback to reflect on their own practice as teachers in the classroom. A mentor, Teacher 7, argued that:

*The mentees are normally asked to evaluate themselves and do reflections on the effectiveness of their teaching approaches, what they will do to improve and the problems they faced in the classroom and the strategies they used to overcome. When mentees make these reflections then they learn from their errors and avoid them in their next time. We do not tell mentees the things they should have done in the teaching, but allow them see their errors to learn from it.*

This quotation suggests that mentor teachers' feedback to preservice teachers encourage their reflection practices and motivate preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge. However, the ultimate benefit of receiving feedback may not be realized if preservice teachers lack the ability to reflect on their practices and do self-evaluation. This suggests that mentor teachers should encourage preservice teachers to share their experiences, which often leads to constructive discussions and self-reflection. This affirms Liu (2014) opinion that reflection help preservice teachers to understand what they are doing well and what they need to work on to develop their professional knowledge. The data above suggests preservice teachers' own level of expertise is used by mentor teachers to provide feedback to develop abilities, strengths and professional skills to sharpen their pedagogical skills. In line with this, mentor teachers created opportunities during

feedback sessions with preservice teachers for reflection practice on their instructional processes. This affirms that performance of preservice teachers depends on their self-reflective practice in the mentoring relationship (Liu, 2014).

Mentor teachers emphasised the importance of providing frequent and timely feedback to preservice teachers after every lesson because the longer the time between the lesson and the feedback, the lesser the impact of feedback. This implies feedback for preservice teachers should be given within a few minutes after they have taught a lesson in the classroom. Extracts from two mentor teachers are as follows:

*We give feedback immediately after a lesson is taught by using our practical experiences in the classroom but not just focus on the theoretical concepts in feedback (Mentor Teacher 4)*

*I normally point out mentees' teaching characteristics immediately after a lesson. I give mentees frequent and immediate feedback, highlighting on their strengths and weaknesses and then assist them in addressing their weakness in the teaching I have always aim at developing mentees to be good and committed teachers with unique style of teaching and own background. (Mentor Teacher 6).*

The feedback provided by mentor teachers should not discourage, but rather make preservice teachers feel encouraged to learn to develop their professional knowledge. A mentor teacher proclaimed that:

*The apt way of pre lesson observation and the post lesson observation feedback given to the mentees and not judging her is important in the successful management of the mentoring relationship. (Mentor Teacher 10).*

However, another mentor teacher lamented feeling insecure during feedback session with mentees:

*I am selective on what words to tell preservice teachers to avoid hurting their feelings in the mentoring relationship. Many a times, I depart from some comments I have written down during observation of the mentee's lesson for fear of hurting the mentee's ego but which might be important for their professional development. (Mentor Teacher 3)*

This quotation illustrates a non-developmental experience of feedback that contradict the value of feedback in the mentoring relationship. This is because it is an honest and objective feedback that would let preservice teachers know their weaknesses and strengths to improve on their professional development. This implies mentor teachers should be objective and honest in feedback provided to preservice teacher to place them on right path to achieve their goal of professional development. The feedback sessions provided practical guidance and encouragement to preservice teachers, which built their confidence. Basically, feedback is a factor that influences the ability of preservice teachers to achieve their wellbeing in a mentoring relationship. The data suggest that preservice teachers appreciated constructive feedback provided by mentor teachers for preservice teachers' personal and professional growth and development. Some preservice teachers mentioned the importance of receiving continuous feedback in the mentoring relationship in teaching practice.

Two preservice teachers noted:

*I particularly like the idea of immediate assessment of my work to give me feedback on what I have done to know how to go about it the next time. The continuous feedback as you go through the teaching practice is a sort of guides you as you go along in the mentoring relationship. I believe research conclusions that feedback is very important and give a kind of opportunities to be assessed ... so you get a chance to see your progress gradually rather than just feeling like you do not know how you are doing on the job and then unexpectedly you are being awarded a score in just a day that sums up your progress. (Preservice Teacher 17).*

*I gained a lot in the mentoring relationship due to the constructive criticism my mentor gave me in a compassionate way. The honest and gently guidance and advice given to me was what I wanted or needed in the relationship. She was strong on reflection and made me reflect on everything, which really helped my learning during teaching practice (Preservice teacher 15)*

Similarly, another two preservice teachers proclaimed:

*...when we find our self in the staff common room then we would reflect or deliberate on what went on in the classroom and then my mentor teacher gives me feedback on what went right and what didn't you go on well and how to approach it next time so*

*that it will be done in the better way, and these are the most successful mentoring relationship (Preservice Teacher 18).*

*... I always want to be corrected if am doing the wrong thing by telling me the truth. so, I will say that the positive mentor mentee relationship is the feedback I got from the experience of my mentor. Whenever he tells me that what am doing is not right then I know he has interest in what am doing and guides me as to what to do the next time. He tells me this aspect of the lesson you didn't teach it very well and so next time use this kind of teaching -learning materials (TLM) to teach but don't used this one for this type of lesson. The mentor teacher correcting me was very positive in the mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 14).*

The data indicated that feedback is essential for preservice teachers to enhance their pedagogical and professional knowledge and leading to improved performance in the classroom. Preservice teachers emphasised the importance of honest and unbiased feedback as fundamental for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. The feedback offers an opportunity for preservice teachers to identify their mistakes, learn from them, and take corrective measures to improve their overall wellbeing. Although majority of preservice teachers received developmental feedback that supported their professional growth, some reported non-developmental feedback experiences in the mentoring relationship. To illustrate, Preservice Teacher 11 said:

*My mentor is lovely and wants to be mother to every mentee in the school, she is treats us as if we are her own children but because she did not want us to feel hurt so she does not tell us the things whether we are doing something well or wrong yet other mentors were frank to us and very professional in giving feedback to us no matter how bad we would feel.*

In addition, some Preservice Teacher 2 lamented that feedback provided was non-developmental in nature. She said:

*...my experience was not like the other preservice teachers because I am virtually left in my own practice without knowing my performance.*

Preservice Teacher 9 reported overcritical and destructive feedback:

*My problem is not how the feedback is given but how the mentor talks to me during the feedback session. She writes a lot of negative about my teaching with very little positive about how I teach in the classroom. She makes me feel I am useless that sometimes I even want to disappear from the school.*

The quotations show some preservice teachers had developmental experience feedback from their mentors and were happy, while others had non-developmental feedback. They demonstrate the attitudes of mentor teachers in providing only negative comments as feedback to preservice teachers and, in some instances, not giving any feedback to preservice teachers. A preservice teacher complained of not getting feedback because the mentor teacher only observed his lessons in the last week of completing the teaching practice. However, preservice teachers expect mentor teachers to constructively evaluate their lessons taught to provide feedback on what is required for improvements or need to be done differently for professional development. She lamented that:

*I asked my mentor teacher in many times to come and observe me teaching or doing other activities in the class but always she would give me excuses of been busy. She would promise but would never show up until the last week of teaching practice as she had to complete my assessment for the university reports. (Preservice Teacher 13).*

The comment by Preservice Teacher 13 indicates problematic behaviour of some mentor teachers, which undermines the fundamental purpose of the mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationship is where mentor teachers guide and support preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge. However, when mentor teachers provide non-developmental feedback experiences, this can result in preservice teachers' feeling demotivated, unsupported, and lacking guidance they need to grow professionally. This suggests mentor teachers may be failing to meet their responsibilities in the mentoring relationship that, potentially, impedes preservice teachers' progress and hinders achievement of wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. Consequently, it is essential for mentor teachers to be mindful of the type of feedback they provide; it should be supportive, constructive, and focused on development of preservice teachers' professional knowledge. Majority of the preservice teachers have reason to value feedback that promotes reflective practices and mutual



learning of both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. Similarly, honesty and objectivity are required in feedback to ensure the developmental experiences of preservice teachers. This suggests the preparedness of preservice teachers to accept constructive feedback and willingness of mentor teachers to provide constructive feedback had positive effects on their professional work in the mentoring relationship. This means feedback is fundamental to successful management of the mentoring relationship for developmental experience in the relationship (Leshem, 2012; Glenn, 2006; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Bates et al., 2011; Smith, 2005). This suggests that through feedback, mentor teachers and preservice teachers learn and improve on their professional knowledge and practice. Preservice teachers have reason to value the feedback from mentor teachers, which provides them professional advice and gives encouragement to take lead roles in classroom activities. In the same vein, virtually all mentor teachers have reason to value constructive feedback provided to preservice teachers to facilitate their professional development.

#### **5.2.1.2.3 Being Knowledgeable**

To be effective teacher in the classroom, it is important to have a solid foundation of pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge is regarded as a crucial aspect of the mentoring relationship in terms of the essential knowledge and techniques that mentor teachers require for effective teaching in the classroom. Most preservice teachers mentioned that pedagogical content knowledge of mentor teachers assisted them to become knowledgeable and skillful to develop professionally for a good mentoring relationship. Preservice Teacher 6 said:

*...I had a successful relationship because of the knowledge of teaching which is not only from my mentor but from the rest of the other teachers because I use to go to aside my class teacher who is my mentor. Sometimes, my mentor allows me to go to other teachers' classrooms to learn from them too. Sometimes, the teachers allow me to teach in their classrooms for them to guide and to learn from them. The headmaster will occasionally come and asked me to take a class when the teacher is not in school and with that, I have gained a whole lot of experience at the Early grade. I could say for my stay at my practicing school, I have been through almost all Early Grade classes because of the all the teachers' effort in mentoring me. I have a lot of benefits because I did not know how to handle kids in Early Grade*



*class. Before I came, I thought it was the same as how you are going to handle kids in the upper primary until I was posted to teach in the Early Grade Classroom during the teaching practice. I have now observed the difference, and this was because all the teachers were ready to assist me during my teaching practice.*

Preservice Teacher 13 attested to the pedagogical knowledge of mentor teachers in the following words:

*...my mentor was very knowledgeable and assisted me to learn the teaching skills and this made me to derive a lot of benefits during the teaching practice because I have improved on my human relationship as well as how to interact with colleagues at work. I have also benefited from other teachers in the school in terms of teaching of Early Grade learners and other professional knowledge. I learnt teaching skills, class control, classroom management techniques and reflective practices from my mentor in the mentoring relationship.*

Preservice Teacher 17 believed the knowledge of mentors contributes significantly to management of the mentoring relationship. She attested to the fact that having a mentor teacher who has in-depth knowledge in the subject matter is great:

*My mentor was a great teacher, because whenever we are in the classroom before and after teaching the learners, she would ask questions to know how I would have handled the topic but if I am not able to answer, then would asked me to bring me chair closer to her to guide me how to go about the teaching before the teaching starts. She would explain things to me until I understand everything in detail and is only when I have understood that she would let me leave her side. She was a very good mentor because of the knowledge and her expertise in the teaching profession. Sometimes she even would pick a paper and a pen to teach me to understand.*

These quotations suggest that some preservice teachers place great importance on mentor teachers with pedagogical content knowledge a necessary factor for effective teaching in the classroom. They indicated that pedagogical content knowledge is an enabler in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Pedagogical content knowledge of mentor teachers demands a greater emphasis on reasoning and critical thinking, as well as application and conceptual comprehension of a subject and its potential for teachability. This resonates with Shulman (2015), who opined that pedagogical content knowledge:

*. . . embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability. Within the category of pedagogical content knowledge I include, for the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations - in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others . . . [It] also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific concepts easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning (p. 9).*

This quotation underlines the fact that pedagogical content knowledge is in-depth knowledge in subject matter and research skills. Mentor teachers indicated that the mentoring process deepens the pedagogical content knowledge of both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. The aspiration of mentor teachers to gain more in-depth knowledge in the mentoring relationship through teaching preservice teachers resonates with the adage that 'practice makes man perfect.'

A mentor teacher with several years of experience across different schools said that she gained a wealth of professional knowledge through mentoring of preservice teachers and other novice teachers in schools:

*...as a mentor you are going to mentor the mentees so you have to always learn ahead to gain in-depth knowledge in the activities and the subjects you teach in the classroom because in the course of mentoring the mentees may be asking you some questions and if you are not able to answer the question the mentee asked then you will be humiliated in front of the mentee who asked you the question, so the mentoring relationship helps you as a mentor to learn ahead to be more*

*knowledgeable in all the things you do in the school to be able to mentor the preservice teachers very well (Mentor Teacher 1).*

Mentor Teacher 6 proclaimed:

*...I have learned certain new things that has helped my personal development from my mentee and I have become more knowledgeable as a teacher in the Early Grade classroom because although am already in the system and have been teaching for some time now, I still need to learn new techniques in teaching and, they [ **the mentees**] came with new skills and ideas which I have learnt from them to be more knowledgeable in the field of Early Grade specialism.*

Further, Mentor Teacher 10 noted:

*... my mentee was intelligent and ready to learn. The kind of suggestion he gave me, made me to form a debating club and organized a debate in this school. I found him very interesting and innovative because this mentee even before he left, he wrote some story books for the kids to read to improve their reading ability. He introduced new ways of teaching the kids how to read which I learnt and have achieved an innovative way of teaching and helping the kids to learn. Most of his suggestions have helped me in the classroom even though he came to learn from me as a mentor. I can say I have learnt a lot of new techniques of teaching in the Early Grade class from him which has deepen my pedagogical knowledge and improve my professional competences.*

Similarly, Preservice Teacher 15 proclaimed:

*The mentoring relationship has helped me to now know how to assemble teaching materials to teach, how to introduce a lesson and how to go according to what I have plan to teach and how to manage time when teaching as well as how to control my class to have a successful teaching and learning session which prior to the teaching practice I was finding it difficult to do during the on-campus teaching practice. I have also learned how to relate with the learners and with my colleague preservice teachers and other staff in the school.*

These utterances show that both mentors and preservice teachers gained more pedagogical content knowledge through the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers indicated their capability to adapt pedagogical content knowledge learnt from mentor teachers, while mentor teachers were open to integrate new and creative teaching methods into their classroom practices based on the experiences of preservice teachers. This confirms pedagogical content is a complex activity that must continuously be explored by both experienced and novice teachers because what is usually known about the content of pedagogy is a glimpse of the process (Clutterbuck, 2011; Tigchelaar & Korthagen, 2004; Mulhall, Berry, & Loughran, 2003; Barnett & Hodson, 200; Newton, 2000; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Parkay & Standford, 1995; Calderhead, 1987; 1988; Holly, 1989; Shulman, 1986a; 1986b; 1987). This suggests that mentor teachers and preservice teachers should learn from one another to acquire knowledge and adopt innovative teaching methods to enhance their pedagogical content expertise, leading to improved teaching and learning outcomes in the classroom. This resonates with the view that a healthy mentoring relationship contributes to mentor and preservice teachers.

#### **5.2.1.2.4 Pre-planning collaboration**

Pre-planning collaboration implies planning and collaboration between individuals that happens in advance of the actual lesson or teaching experience. The term pre-planning collaboration is the process where preservice teachers and mentor teachers plan the lesson together in the classroom (Dieker & Rodriguez, 2013). The pre-planning collaboration helped to foster a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility among the preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the classroom. One of the vital attributes to successful management of mentoring relationship is co-planning of lessons in the classroom. The preservice teachers indicated that an opportunity must be created for mutual learning in the mentoring relationship. A preservice teacher said co-planning in the classroom as an enabler in the management of the mentoring relationship:

*I guess I had the good relationship with my mentor because he was always planning with me the activities, we are to do in the classroom a day before the activities so I was always prepared to do what would be expected of me in the classroom and I also discussed with her anything I intend to do in the classroom if she would not be around. We plan and decide every activity together before the class starts and these makes me to know why you're doing an activity and the reason why you're doing co-teaching in the classroom and with these I what that aim is and plan what the*

*role of both my mentor and me is going to be and to plan what we'll be doing, so both of us know what you're doing. (Preservice Teacher 2)*

Mentor Teacher 2 explained that to manage the mentoring relationship there is a need to plan ahead for each party to be abreast with activities to do in the mentoring relationship, especially activities in the classroom. She proclaimed:

*I think to be able to work together successfully, you need to plan with the mentee so that you each know what you're doing.*

Similarly, Mentor Teacher 5 said:

*I think people have got to build agreements as to how they're going to do things in the classroom.*

Additionally, Mentor Teacher 8 stressed that:

*... involving my mentee in all activities in the classroom helped to maintain the existing relationship between us. What I do is kind of get my mentee in some less work to do initially, let say when she came, I taught a lesson for her to see first and also taught her how to mark attendance register in the classroom and all these gave her the desire to want to learn more from me and then I told her what she is supposed to be doing as a mentee in the school and then started planning with her in all things to be done in the classroom. My intention is to let her see and do what are needful in the teaching situation in classroom. It was very positive in maintaining the mentoring relationship with my mentee. (Mentor Teacher 8)*

Stressing the importance of planning ahead, Preservice Teacher 11 explained that:

*Apportioning time and duties for the various activities in the classroom in advance between my mentor and I to be done and so we always know what everyone needs to do in the classroom. This planning together helped us to maintain the relationship because my mentor was always there for me in everything I do in the classroom and makes sure I always do the right thing when he gives me the opportunity to teach the learners and then we would sit down and discuss my teaching and she would tell me my strength and weakness and after then start we other planning for the next lesson in the classroom.*

These quotations suggest joint co-planning ahead of lessons creates opportunity for management of mentoring relationship. Co-planning or pre-planning collaboration provides opportunity for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to spell out their roles to foster management of the mentoring relationship. The ability to facilitate pre-planning and collaboration is a crucial skill for mentor teachers in a mentoring relationship. It allows for the development of effective and productive lesson plans, while also providing an opportunity for preservice teachers to actively engage in the learning process and develop their own pedagogical skills and knowledge. Consistent with this, Rippon and Martin (2006 cited in Aderibigbe, 2012) argues that good mentor teachers are those who can provide necessary support and accommodate ideas from others and create the opportunity for pre-planning collaboration to foster successful mentoring relationship. Aderibigbe (2012) supports the idea of pre-planning and collaboration as crucial for mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers to achieve wellbeing. This suggests pre-planning and collaboration can help to establish productive relationships between the mentor teachers and preservice teachers.

### **5.2.1.3 Structural/systemic (school level)**

#### **5.2.1.3.1 Orientation/Induction of preservice teachers in the school**

Induction is used to socialise teachers into the profession of teaching. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), teacher induction is a process that begins before a teacher's first day on the job and continues through the first year of teaching. The authors explain that teacher induction programmes are designed to help new teachers make a successful transition from pre-service preparation to full-time teaching by providing them with support and resources they need to be effective in the classroom. The orientation or induction process introduces preservice teachers to a school's policies, procedures, culture to be adequately familiar with real classroom situations, including information about the school's expectations for behaviour, dress, and communication, as well as the goals of the school. This means that induction can be used to support development of preservice teachers' professional identities, helping them become skilled and knowledgeable teachers who are confident in their abilities to teach and better understand the school culture and student population they would be working with. There is a strong relationship between successful mentoring process and induction during teaching practice (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The mentoring relationship can be managed effectively when preservice teachers are properly oriented before teaching practice. Majority of

mentor teachers claimed to have effective mentoring relationship with preservice teachers who were oriented during teaching practice. Mentor Teacher 7 said:

*When preservice teachers are properly and correctly inducted in the school before they are assigned to mentors and their mentors also induct them in the classroom before the mentoring starts then there is likely to be positive results in the mentoring relationship because there is a positive relationship between induction of preservice teachers and a successful mentoring relationship. (Mentor Teacher 7)*

Mentor Teacher 2 added:

*You know, when preservice teachers are well inducted in the practicing schools, they would know exactly what to do in the classroom because they would know what the mentors expect from them and what they should expect from their mentors in the mentoring relationship. They will understand the mentor teachers and know exactly what to do in the class for smooth mentoring relationship.*

These quotations confirm the significance of induction for preservice teachers to adapt speedily to school culture during teaching practice. Majority of preservice teachers commented that induction enabled them to cope with their mentor teachers in the classrooms. This supports a study conducted by Balster et al. (2010) that 41% of students stated that training assisted them to learn how to effectively interact and communicate with their mentor teachers. Preservice Teacher 14 commented that:

*The more you are introduced properly to your duties and the role of your mentor in your school of practice, it will make it very easy for you to achieve the goals that you have set for yourself and the expectations of your mentor from you. If you know what you need to do in the mentoring relationship as a preservice teacher then you would have a clear direction to have good relationship in the classroom with your mentor.*

Preservice Teacher 19 proclaimed:

*In order to have a successful mentoring relationship, you need to know what you are going to do and what is expected of you in the relationship class and the only way to know is through induction. If preservice teachers are inducted, they are more*



*likely to successful mentoring relationship with their mentor teachers during teaching practice.*

Preservice Teacher 1, who claimed to have proper orientation in her school, said even though they were oriented in the university before coming for teaching practice, her colleagues in different schools who were not oriented when they reported in their schools were struggling to adjust to their mentors in the relationship:

*I will admit that we were oriented in the university before the teaching practice but when I compare myself with my colleagues in the other schools, I can say things are going well with me in the mentoring relationship than them because I know exactly what I have to do as a preservice teacher while they complain of not knowing what they are doing in their schools as preservice teachers. In terms of duties in the classroom, I am way ahead of them and even sometimes assist them and share with them what my mentor have taught me here in this school. Many of my colleagues in the un-inducted schools are confused because they don't know the expectations of their mentors and the school.*

Preservice Teacher 9 commented that:

*Preservice teachers should have to do orientation in the school before actual teaching in the classroom. The orientation will give preservice teachers a better understanding of what is expected of them.*

These quotations indicate that induction organised for preservice teachers at the inception of their teaching practice potentially assisted them to adjust and understand school culture and philosophy to ensure management of the mentoring relationship. They demonstrate that all preservice teachers who had induction in schools claimed to have a successful management of the mentoring relationship compared to their counterparts who were not oriented in schools during teaching practice. This supports research by Wexler (2019), Kupila et al. (2017), and Russell & Russell (2011) that an essential step in developing preservice teachers to be effective practitioners is to orient them before the mentoring relationship at the beginning of their teaching practice. This implies the organising of orientation helped preservice teachers to be more informed of the professional knowledge that needed to be developed in the mentoring relationship during teaching



practice. This resonates with findings by researchers of the need for quality induction to be organised in organisations for every new employee (Kearney, 2016). However, merely developing orientation for preservice teachers does not ensure that mentoring relationships would be successful and effective (Clark et al., 2012) unless there is active participation in the orientation by both preservice teachers and mentor teachers. This affirms that induction of preservice teachers is essential to ensure effective mentoring relationship during teaching practice (Professional Education Practice Unit, 2016). This confirms a study that teachers are to be supported before their teaching (Kearney, 2016) and which confirms the necessity that at every stage of teacher education, orientation programmes should be designed to help new teachers to remain in the teaching practice with adequate training (Beginning Teachers Handbook, 2015). This supports Aubrey and Cohen (1996 cited in Beginning Teachers Handbook, 2015) that wisdom is discovered in the learning environment where parties involved have greater understanding of the workplace.

#### **5.2.1.3.2 Training of mentor teachers**

Training of mentor teachers is important to ensure the mentoring relationship is productive during teaching practice. The training is designed to assist mentor teachers with requisite mentorship skills (Waterman & He, 2011). Mentorship training is crucial for mentor teachers to support preservice teachers in developing professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. This enables trained mentor teachers understand their preservice teachers and to provide needed support in management of the mentoring relationship. Therefore, adequate training for mentor teachers should be provided for an effective mentoring relationship (Waterman & He 2011). This implies mentor teachers need to receive training in integrating subject matter into their conversations and collaborating effectively with preservice teachers. Majority of trained mentor teachers had a significant impact on learning of preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. Mentor Teacher 5 proclaimed:

*I was fortunate to be part of the mentoring training programme or workshop organized by the university before the preservice teachers came for their teaching practice. I think the training has really helped me to know my roles as a mentor and the expectation from the preservice teachers. I don't leave all activities in the classroom on the preservice teacher in the classroom. I am always with preservice teacher in the classroom which previously I was leaving the class for preservice teachers immediately they are assigned to me because my understanding at that time*



*was that preservice teachers are brought to relieve us from the teaching activities for us to rest for a while.*

Mentor Teacher 8 supported the training organised by the University and stated that it contributed to her smooth mentoring relationship:

*Regular mentorship workshops for us during vacation like the way it was been done, I think about 2 or 3 years ago when it was organized for us to come and learn a lot from the university and so when mentees come around, we knew how to handle them to have smooth mentoring relationship but I think these days because of budgetary constraint, they only give us handbook to use which is difficult to comprehend without the training as to how to use the handbook.*

A mentor teacher highlights the importance of giving preservice teachers enough time to learn and grow in their teaching practice.

*The period the mentees come here actually is not the best because the very time you are about to know each other very well or the time they would stand on your feet that would be the time they would be leaving so actually the period is also one of the problems if I had the chance, I will extent it a bit so that they have full experience of the teaching field before they end the teaching practice. (Mentor Teacher 1)*

Similarly, preservice teachers agreed that mentor teachers who were trained as mentors knew their roles as mentors and expectations of preservice teachers from them. In line with this, Preservice Teacher 11 said her mentor was very familiar with all that is needed in the mentoring relationship:

*My mentor knew all what am supposed to be doing in the school as a mentee because she was part of the mentor trained organized by the university. Her training helped me to have better understanding of school processes, how a classroom is organised and policies work within the real school environment.*

The quotations indicate that preservice teachers assigned to trained mentors had successful mentoring relationship and were able to function effectively in the mentoring relationship. This resonates with Stanulis et al. (2013) that trained mentors assisted their mentees to be effective in planning, classroom instruction, and a higher level of reflection practices than their counterparts with untrained mentor teachers. This supports the suggestion that ample consideration should be

given to mentorship training in designing mentoring programmes to ensure a positive experience for mentor teachers within the school (Stanulis et al., 2013). The observation that trained mentor teachers make a significant difference in the learning of preservice teachers and positively impact on their mentoring relationship is in line with the recommendation of Bertram, Mthiyane, and Mukeredzi, (2015) that mentor training is crucial for creating positive mentoring experiences for all parties involved. This suggests that mentor teachers need relevant attitude and skills to adequately encourage and support preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Izadinia, 2015). It supports Burks (2010) position that it is important to recognise that good teachers may not necessarily be qualified to be mentor teachers. This resonates with the Beginning Teachers' Handbook (2015) and Agoke (2018) that being good in teaching children does not mean one is a good mentor because the needed set of skills to work effectively as a mentor with preservice teachers maybe different from those required for teaching in the classroom. Perhaps, this is the reason for teachers need to be trained as mentors before being assigned as mentors in mentoring relationship. According to Mena et al. (2017), teacher preparation institutions should not only focus on skills utilised by mentor teachers in their supervisory role, but also consider the extent to which their support enhances the acquisition of knowledge (p. 58). Ambrosetti (2014) opines that most mentors lack adequate training and preparation for mentoring of preservice teachers. However, complexities of mentoring include the personal attributes of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers, among others, that cannot be ignored (Gurjee, 2020).

#### **5.2.1.3.3 Institutional support (mediation/leadership role)**

Institutional support in the mentoring relationship refers to provision of resources and assistance by educational institutions such as universities, schools, or other organisations to support and enhance the mentoring relationship between mentor teachers and preservice teachers. This support can take the form of training and professional development for mentor teachers, providing time and resources for co-planning and feedback sessions, and ensuring a positive school culture and environment conducive to effective mentoring. The goal of institutional support is to facilitate and promote successful mentoring relationships and, ultimately, enhance professional development of preservice teachers. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers were supported in various ways by authorities of the cooperating schools and the university in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The support ranged from head teachers monitoring the activities of mentor teachers and the university authorities sanctioning preservice teachers who were

not cooperating in the mentoring relationship. The university coordinator was brought in to warn preservice teachers who constantly absented themselves from school without tangible reasons after they had been reprimanded several times by head teachers to no avail. Some preservice teachers left school before closing with the reason that they were to report to the university for important assignment, which, on later verification with the coordinator, was untrue. A mentor teacher claimed they normally seek the university's intervention when preservice teachers are not cooperating with their mentors in the mentoring relationship. She said:

*...some of the mentees give all sort of excuses to leave the school before we close and some don't even come to school. This is real a problem in the mentoring relationship. The head teacher tried several times to let them cooperate but to no avail until the teaching practice coordinator came to the school for supervision and the head teacher reported those not cooperating to him and he warned them and told us not to allow any of them to leave the school or report anyone who doesn't come school. The preservice teachers are now punctual and do not absent from school again. Since the intervention of the coordinator and the frequent monitoring of the university staff, the preservice teachers are now computing themselves which ensures successful mentoring relationship. (Mentor Teacher 7)*

A mentor teacher suggests that the university should monitor the preservice teachers in order to ensure their attendance and commitment to the mentoring programme.

*...when the institution send the preservice teachers for teaching practice, they should constantly come to monitor the preservice teachers, although, we are to mentor them to be better teachers in future but when staff from the institution come to monitor it often helped to reduce preservice teachers' absenteeism from school because some of the preservice teachers normally give all kind of excuses to the head teachers in order for them to leave the school early or would not come to school which restraint the successful management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice (Mentor Teacher 9)*

Participating preservice teachers sought head teachers' intervention when mentor teachers were not being supportive in the mentoring relationship. Preservice Teacher 19 complained that:

*...some of the mentors don't come to school or class early but most of the headteachers they come to school early to supervise the general school activities and so the headteacher monitors and instruct the mentor teachers to come to school early or not to absent from school and also ask the mentor teacher to create the collegial relation with us to ensure successful mentoring relationship.*

A preservice teacher underscores the crucial role of mentor commitment and engagement in a successful mentoring relationship. She said:

*The headteacher took up the role of mentoring me when the mentor assigned to me initially was not available and showing any commitment to the mentoring process and every effort by the headteacher for teacher mentor to be committed was not successful. The headteacher step in as mentor because a mentor who is committed to the process is more likely to be present and available to the mentee, provide valuable feedback, and support the mentee in achieving their goals. The willingness of the headteacher to step in and take on the role of mentor highlights the importance of having a strong support system in place in my school of practice. This suggests a good mentoring is when one mentor is not able to fulfill their role, it is important to have other mentors or supportive figures who can step in to provide the necessary support and guidance. (Preservice Teacher 13)*

These extracts show that mentor teachers sought help when the behaviours of preservice teachers were excruciating in the mentoring relationship. On the one hand, action was taken by reporting to the university coordinator to prevent preservice teachers from absenting themselves from schools or leaving schools before closing time. On the other hand, preservice teachers indicated that they sought help from head teachers to intervene to curb uncooperative behaviours of mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. Subsequently, head teachers encouraged mentor teachers to support preservice teachers and treat them as colleague teachers in the classroom. This means management of the mentoring relationship is not limited to mentor teachers and preservice teachers only, but also involved favourable institutional support from the university and the head teachers in the schools. For instance, where the mentor teacher did not show professional commitment or had to

leave because of circumstances beyond control, the head teachers stepped in or arranged for new mentor teachers to mentor preservice teachers.

### **5.3. Constraints and Enablers for Management of Mentoring Relationship**

Factors that constrain or facilitate successful management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice are referred to as conversion factors. These conversion factors are personal, social, or systemic, and have the potential to impact an individual's ability to develop and make use of their capabilities towards the life they value. It is important to note that even though the themes discussed in this section can hinder success in management of the mentoring relationship, they could be turned around to ensure success (Crocker & Robeyns, 2010) in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Capabilities cannot be fully appreciated without being familiar with conversion factors that individuals have to work within (Nambiar, 2013). Conversion factors refer to the means through which resources are transformed into valuable functionings or capabilities. In the CA, individuals are seen not only as having resources, but also as having the ability to use those resources to achieve valuable functionings that reflect their values. The CA emphasises the importance of understanding how conversion factors impact an individual's ability to transform resources into valuable functionings, and seeks to create policies and programmes that support individuals in their pursuit of valued capabilities.

#### **5.3.1 Personal conversion factors**

Personal conversion factors are of three types in the CA. They are individual factors that can impact an individual's ability to develop and exercise their capabilities. These personal factors include a person's education, skills, knowledge, and motivation, among others. Personal conversion factors are important in the context of mentoring relationships during teaching practice as they can affect both mentor teachers' and preservice teachers' ability to learn in the mentoring relationship.

##### **5.3.1.1 Individual/interpersonal/relational**

###### **5.3.1.1.1 Personality clashes**

The difference in personality of individuals is identified as a conversion factor in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Personality differences refer to disagreements among two or more persons about the task to be performed in relationship (Unger & Nagel (2013).

Most participants described the consequences of personality clashes as leading to inability to maintain a mentoring relationship. Therefore, personality clashes constrain management of mentoring relationships as indicated by majority of the participants. Mentor Teacher 10 said that:

*A mentor teacher should adopt a supportive and guiding approach rather than a controlling one in a mentoring relationship. Over-reliance on the mentor teacher by the mentee can create conflicting interests, so it is crucial to strike a balance to foster a positive and productive mentoring relationship during teaching practice.*

In the same vein, Mentor Teacher 2 proclaimed:

*we all look at the world quite different and so there's a natural barrier for the two to work together especially when two are not good pair due to reasons that would be known to themselves because their behaviour types are very different so they may think differently. I think is just personality difference and if they cannot pair, then the relationship won't work, and it's not going to work brilliantly no matter how hard you try.*

Preservice Teacher 4 recounted her experience with her mentor teacher as follows:

*When I was introduced to my mentor teacher, she didn't show much interest in having a preservice, or she weren't very forthcoming in terms of asking me about anything, or like even answering questions that I had for her. So that kind of relationship continued, and then it became like she just wouldn't talk to me at all, for no reason. She would just not say hello to me even in the mornings. She only gives me task to do in the classroom and would not even give me feedback when am done with the task.*

Preservice Teacher 4 said the personality clash with her mentor teacher was because the mentor teacher was not a trained teacher. In her view, the untrained teacher probably felt threatened by her presence as a preservice teacher in Early Grade specialism:

*Well, I thought to myself that it was because she wasn't actually trained teachers, but nursery caretaker... I have heard of other preservice teachers saying that they had similar experiences, when the mentor teachers weren't actually teachers, when they were maybe nursery caretakers...she felt a bit threatened because I am coming*



*from the university as a preservice teacher and thinks I know more than her because she has not been there. I realise that she is not comfortable with me in her classroom especially when she is teaching. I think she is not the best match for me in the relationship because of her level of education, which made her to have inferiority complex in the mentoring relationship.*

Preservice Teacher 1, however, stated that some preservice teachers become frustrated in the mentoring relationship by being compelled to simply comply with mentor teachers' guidance. He commented:

*I know some mentor teachers become frustrated when mentees do not do the things they wish or expect them to do... the mentees do not follow any of the advice they give. I mean, if a mentor teacher gives an advice but the mentee for any or whatever reason decides not to obey the mentor teacher or forgot or on a regular basis a mentor teacher is giving advice and mentee is not listening and not taking the advice, then I think at a certain point the mentor teacher would feel she is not being helpful because the things she suggests, the mentee is not following my advice... that will make the mentor to stop providing support needed to the mentee.*

The quotations indicate that personality mismatches between preservice and mentor teachers hinder success of the mentoring relationship as they may not share the same aspirations or are not like-minded in the mentoring relationship. The quotation from Preservice Teacher 4 underlines the danger of pairing of preservice teachers with untrained staff, such as nursery caretakers, instead of trained mentor teachers in the classroom. This suggests that compatibility between mentor teachers and preservice teachers is an enabler in management of the mentoring relationship. This finding resonates with the study conducted by Campbell and Campbell (2007, cited in Bakar, 2016) on the need to integrate personality in a mentoring relationship programme. Parker, Xu and Chi (2022) conclude in their study that differences in personality led to a lack of closeness between preservice teachers and their mentors. They indicate that when there is a sense of mutual learning and a lower power differential the mentoring relationship becomes positive (ibid). This is affirmed by Wasonga, Wanzare, and Dawo (2015) in their assertion that personality dynamics may cripple and create even conflicts in management of the mentorship relationship. Mentor teachers, in supporting preservice



teachers, may not want to be seen over-criticising preservice teachers and avoid dealing with conflicting views in the mentoring relationship. This suggests that personality differences between mentor teachers and preservice teachers leads to less learning experience in the mentoring relationship. This implies personality difference is a conversion factor in management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This finding is in line with Bakar (2016), who found that positive personality was a strong enabler in ensuring better mentoring relationship.

#### **5.3.1.1.2 Dress code to school**

Majority of the participants identified dressing to school as a conversion factor in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. A dress code is a set of regulations or rules stating attire or kind of clothing a group or individuals are to wear under specified circumstances (Vera and Suarez, 2020). All teachers in Ghana are expected to wear a dress that presents them in an orderly manner, conducive to the advancement of education. This implies teachers' appearance in school should be neat and acceptable and devoid of items that are disruptive or could cause situations that would diminish the safety of learners in the school. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers used the term 'appropriate' or 'professional' to explain dress code required to be observed at or worn to school. An appropriate garb to school enhances professionalism of mentor teachers and preservice teachers. This is because the physical appearance of people is the primary factor that shapes our initial impression of them since their image carries 80% of our perception of them, with the remaining 20% being ascribed to their verbal communication. However, some preservice teacher found it difficult to conform to the appropriate dress to school in Ghana. This may be because the "Appropriate dress" always has had different meanings among generations since perception is in the eye of the beholder (Vera and Suarez, 2020). Majority of the mentor teachers lamented on the kind of dress some preservice teachers wore to school. Mentor Teacher 6 said:

*In fact, I will stand to say everything was very good and were moving on well, except with only one thing that is their dressing, when you observe especially the female preservice teachers, the kind of attire [dress code] they were wearing to school initially was a big problem. What many of them wearing to the school were not appropriate per the professional standards in the teaching as stated in the Teachers' code of conduct in Ghana. Sometimes the kind of dress a female preservice teacher*

*would wear to school would make you not to let her get close to you since it does not meet the standard of dressing as a teacher in Ghana Education Service [GES]. In regards to this, preservice teachers wear any attire of their choice to school. Some of these attires are transparent blouses, plunging necklines and party dresses. We have asked them to always wear decent attire to school all the time. To be honest some have stop wearing, what I will call ‘unprescribed attire’ to the school, but some are still adamant and are bringing such dresses to the school and these their dressing are negatively affecting our mentoring relationship. I told my mentee one day not to come to my class again if she does not change the type of dress she wears to school and I even have to ‘fight’ with her before she became a little better in her dressing.*

On the same issue, Mentor Teacher 8 lamented that:

*In trying to shape the mentees, it has not been an easy task for us as mentor teachers in the school because they come here with all sorts of mind set and it becomes very difficult to make them [the mentees] understand that this school has a different kind of culture from their university especially regarding their way of dressing to the school. You see Ghana Education Service with its responsibility over teachers has issued a directive that female teachers have been banned from wearing skimpy dresses as well as jeans trousers while their male counterparts are directed to avoid putting on short Nicker's, round neck t-shirts, Jeans to school. These dressing are considered unprofessional to school but when you try to correct them, some of them failed to understand that Ghana education Service has it way of dressing for teachers to dress to school and so refused to be dressing in the acceptable norm by saying that dressing has nothing to do with peoples’ intelligence or performance in the teaching profession. They usually say that they are equally coming from a school where dressing is not considered in the academic work. With this mind set it becomes difficult changing them to dress to the professional standard. I remember a preservice teacher was referred to the University for Sanction before she changed a little better.*

Similarly, Mentor Teacher 9 proclaimed:

*Well, we know that the preservice teachers are coming from a tertiary institution and they have the opportunity to wear anything to their lecturer halls or wherever they want on campus but as they are coming to the preschools for their teaching practice, they become role model to the pupils in the school because once they get into the school settings the pupils see them as teachers. Anything negative at all they do in the school have repercussions or implications on the learners and so their inappropriate or indecent way of dressing is obviously influencing our learners negatively especially those in the upper primary since the preschool is in the same vicinity with the upper classes. The gentlemen wear all kind of funny haircuts which some of our learners have started wearing because they are imitating the young guys and the ladies with miniskirts, jeans trousers and "too much" makeup which is against the norm of our teaching profession and even the culture of the people here for a lady to wear dress to public places. We understand that their university is a secular institution that allows any kind of dressing but what we expect is that when they [the preservice teachers] are coming for their teaching practice, they should try to consider the kind of attire and haircut they wear to the schools because a teacher in Ghana can't wear any dress or haircut to school. The preservice teachers must note that dressing appropriately requires a certain attitude to yourself respect and a concern for high standards and so since they want to become like us, they should learn to dress decently as potential teachers.*

The quotes indicate that dress code is important to expressed the professional identity of a person in the teaching profession. This supports Education world (2020) as cited in Vera and Suarez (2020: 4) *“Dressing appropriately seems to be a phrase with universal meaning, but in an age where ripped jeans as well as flip flops have invaded the world, every teacher should refresh that concept as far as personal grooming does not go unnoticed by students, as it gives indications of our character, state of mind, the education we have received, our customs, tastes and also the principles and values that govern our lives. Personal grooming is a non-verbal language, since it expresses a lot without saying a single word”*. This confirms that clothes that are worn by teachers may not

determine what or how the learners learn, but they can simply affect the level of respect that learners develop for that particular teacher (Vera and Suarez, 2020).

Regarding the dress code, Preservice Teacher 4 said:

*As a preservice teacher who wants to be respected in the mentoring relationship, the most important thing is to be professional in behaviour and dressing because I am there to be mentored to become a professional teacher. I always made sure that my behaviour and dressing were respectful of the learners in school and reflected the professionalism of a teacher. I believe that my professionalism and conduct helped my mentor to give me the due respect and support needed in the mentoring relationship.*

When Preservice Teacher 5 was asked to describe what is unprofessional dressing, she explained:

*Jeans, shorts, t-shirts, tank tops, halter tops, revealing clothes, and flip-flops which are not acceptable and are not really appropriate for school.*

On the same issue, Preservice Teacher 20 said:

*An ideal mentor teacher is Professional, conservative, clean-cut... Nothing low cut or high cut, no ridiculously high shoes, not a lot of make-ups but very conservative. The mentor teacher should not wear anything ... inappropriate to school. An attire is considered to be inappropriate for a mentor teacher to included; Jeans trouser, tank tops with spaghetti straps...really short skirts. Although, many of the mentor teachers were dressing conservative and do not wear such attire to school, some do wear some of these attire to school which were not different from what some of the mentees also wear to school especially the Jeans trousers and the t-shirts.*

Another Preservice Teacher 3 recalled that her mentor teacher's dress to school was not professional and not expected him. She lamented:

*...My mentor teacher's dressing to me was not appropriate because you know as teachers, they inspire trained teachers and even the children in school and serve as role models to us and so if mentor teachers are not discipline in their dressing such as putting on jean's trousers and round-neck T-shirts to classroom to teach the*

*children. I say this because some mentees may copy such way of dressing to school while some of the mentees like me would see such mentor teachers not to be serious in the profession which may hinder the mentoring relationship. The truth is I am not happy with the way my mentor teacher dressing to school, but I can't do anything about it because of my position as a mentee.*

Further, Preservice Teacher 5 commented that:

*Some of the mentor teachers don't present themselves well because they don't dress well to school. You see some mentor teachers come to school with slippers and T-shirt to teach children, but they are supposed to be role model to we the mentees and even to the children in the school.*

However, some preservice teachers acknowledged that their mentor teachers advised them on the way of dressing and were better in appearance in terms of their dressing to school. In this light,

Preservice Teacher 8 said:

*Although, we were told to dress appropriately to school but some of us the way we were dressing to school initially, according to our mentors were not professional. In my case for instance, my mentor was always complaining about my attire to school.... My mentor told me to always look like a professional in the way I dress to school. I should wear shirts and possibly with tie to make me look professional... dress in the appropriate way to play the role of a teacher. I listen to her and change to how she wants me to dress to school and later she applauded me for dressing professionally.*

Similarly, a preservice teacher alluding to the dress code of teachers, reflected on wanting to fit in as a professional teacher:

*I'm a jeans person and...but for now it is absolutely about fitting in, so I try to mirror my mentor teacher. I had to go buy brand new clothes, even though I know I shouldn't have or I didn't have to, but I did...because I wanted everybody to like me especially my mentor and head teacher. That's what my mentor teacher wears, and that's what all the kids see a teacher to be wearing. (Preservice Teacher 7)*

Some preservice teachers said that the dress they wear helps to express themselves as individual preferences in a particular way of dressing, despite acknowledging a kind of dress code as a professional way of dressing. Preservice Teacher 18 said:

*I want to have my own style of dressing to school and still look professional because I don't want to be like everybody else. I want to look...professional...comfortable, but still be me.*

The quotations indicate that preservice and mentor teachers perceived dressing professionally to school as a conversion factor in management of mentoring relationships. The data revealed many preservice teachers were not dressing professionally to school as expected in the teaching profession, but mentor teachers dressed conservatively. Preservice teachers acknowledged being oriented on how to dress as preservice teachers, but some still did not conform to what was expected of them. Mentor teachers initially had problems with some preservice teachers regarding the way they dressed to school, but they were later influenced to change their ways of dressing to conform to the school norm. Conforming to school norm in the mentoring relationship includes preservice teachers dressing professionally to school and not getting into trouble with mentor teachers towards becoming teachers. This implies an appropriate or professional dress code for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers ensures good relationship, a vital enabler in management of mentoring relationships. The dressing of some preservice teachers was inappropriate because they identified themselves as university students who were not restricted in the kind of clothes to wear as a result of their social context. Their preferred dressing was what they normally wear in the university and not what mentor teachers wanted them to wear to school during teaching practice. This resonates with the adaptive preference of Terlazzo (2016) that the social context of individuals influence their choices significantly. This implies social context limits the expectations of the preference of individuals and suggests that what preservice teachers are expected to wear to school is not what actually they wear to school because of their identified social context. This supports Turner's (2015) position that universities need to better recognise the importance and respond to the influence of university students' lives outside the university environment. This means universities are not to focus on what happens only within university boundaries, but also direct attention to activities of students to enable contextual understandings of students within the institution (Tierney, 2013). In line with this Hobson, Harris, Buckner-Manley, & Smith (2012) state that mentoring programmes for student teachers should consist of ethics training, including dress code for mentor teachers and

preservice teachers to be professional. This supports (Vera and Suarez, 2020) claimed that teachers' professionalism is articulated in various languages, including one as simple as the garbs he wears in class. In view of this Viteri (2017) as cited in Vera and Suarez (2020: 4) reiterates that

*“It is not enough to have a doctorate level of education with different specialties, to be up-dated with technological advances and persistent commitment to facilitate the learning process and develop an outstanding teaching work, but also it is crucial, the care of the teacher’s image, which may lead to a good management of his relations with other people as they are judged by students, parents and school managers, colleagues as well as the whole community based on how they dress”.*

### **5.3.2.1 Pedagogical (educational)**

Pedagogical conversion factors refer to educational or instructional aspects that impact an individual's capability to learn, acquire knowledge and develop their professional capacities in the mentoring relationship. These factors may include the pedagogical approaches used by mentor teachers, the quality of feedback provided to preservice teachers, opportunities for reflection and critical thinking during teaching practice. The concept of pedagogical conversion factors in the mentoring relationship has been discussed by several scholars. For example, Orland-Barak and Yinon (2007) state that "pedagogical conversion factors" are essential for successful mentoring relationships and include factors such as the mentor's teaching approach, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. Similarly, Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, and Bertram (2015) emphasise the importance of pedagogical conversion factors, such as the mentor's ability to provide feedback and model effective teaching practices in developing of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Overall, pedagogical conversion factors play a significant role in the success of mentoring relationships during teaching practice.

### **5.3.2.2. Inadequate of teaching resources**

Teaching resources facilitate teaching and learning for the acquisition of knowledge. Lack of or inadequate teaching resources is considered as one of the conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationship. This affirms that the use of teaching resources by mentor teachers is crucial in helping preservice teachers acquire the necessary professional knowledge and skills to effectively utilise teaching resources for the facilitation of teaching and learning in the classroom (Mena et al., 2017). Teaching resources needed for mentor teachers to perform their professional roles effectively



in management of mentoring relationship included, but not limited to, teachers' guides, students' work books, and curriculum materials for their specific subjects. This was evident in comments made by some mentor and preservice teachers. Mentor Teacher 3 said:

*some of the challenges of the mentoring relationship were teaching learning materials to use to show the mentees how to deliver a lesson for them to learn and be able to practice themselves because normally they come to learn all the practical aspect of teaching in the preschool which include the use of the teaching resources in the classroom. The difficulty of mentees to develop professional knowledge is learning from a mentor teaching the children without teaching resources. I think the best way is for mentor teachers to have adequate teaching resources to use in teaching for mentees to learn how to plan and teach lessons with the use of teaching resources to acquire the professional knowledge and skills needed in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.*

Further, Mentor Teacher 7 proclaimed:

*...I realized that the most challenging is actually when you are teaching and need teaching aids to make the lesson interesting for the learners to understand and for preservice teachers to look at it at, learn and to copy from you but that teaching aids are not available and also you can't improvise then it becomes very difficult to get preservice teachers to learn the skills of teaching in the classroom. When it happens that most of the lessons are taught without the teaching aids then we have failed in our role as mentors because we cannot give our best and so we would be happy to get teaching aids to use in our classroom for better teaching practice and mentoring relationship.*

Availability of adequate teaching resources available for mentor teachers to use in classrooms is necessary for preservice teachers to learn lesson planning and preparation, as well as teaching in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for schools to provide teaching resources to ensure effective management of mentoring relationships. In connection with this, Preservice Teacher 15 stated:



*One of the main challenges for me is the inadequate of teaching resources for my mentor to use to learn from her in the classroom. I do not know why the teaching resources are not available in the schools for mentors use in planning lessons and teaching for teacher trainees to learn from them how to use the teaching resources effectively when they get opportunity to teach in the classroom. I think for me as a preservice teacher, I need the support from my mentor in the use of teaching resources to teach, so that I can perform my best when I get the opportunity to teach in the classroom and so without that, I have not achieved the reason of been in the management of mentoring relationship during the teaching practice.*

Preservice Teacher 11 lamented that:

*The non-availability of the teaching material such as books were big challenges in the mentoring relationship because when I came to the school here, I requested for books to use but the books the school gave me were old books because those books did not have the current information which were not helping in my teaching. So inadequate and not up to date teaching materials such as textbooks, flash cards among others were the problems in the mentoring relationship because I could not learn the skills of using teaching materials from my mentor which I think am handicap when it comes to how to plan and effectively use teaching aids in my lesson delivery.*

These utterances show that mentor teachers and preservice teachers acknowledged adequate teaching resources in schools to provide them with the best learning opportunities in the mentoring relationship. This supports the view that availability of adequate teaching resources is crucial for mentor teachers to utilise in their classroom teaching to enable preservice teachers to learn about lesson planning, preparation, and effective teaching strategies (Rodman, 2010; Mukeredzi et al., 2015). Preservice teachers believed they could not effectively use teaching resources in their lesson planning and teaching if they had not had the opportunity to learn from mentor teachers due to inadequate teaching resources in schools. However, mentor teachers who had the necessary teaching resources supported them in developing their professional knowledge to perform their tasks effectively in the mentoring relationship. This suggests mentor teachers used teaching

resources in their lesson delivery to enable preservice teachers accumulate the basic teaching skills they needed for teaching to achieve the goals in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Similarly, mentor teachers said inadequacy of teaching resources in schools was a hindrance to preservice teachers' ability to gain the necessary professional knowledge during their mentoring relationship at the end of their teaching practice. This resonates with an argument in a study that schools with shortage of teaching and learning materials constrain the mentoring relationship (Faircloth, 2009; Fry & Anderson, 2011). This ties in with Wasonga, Wanzare, and Dawo's (2015) conclusion that non-availability of relevant equipment and resources for mentor teachers to use in teaching preservice teachers in the classroom can negatively impact the mentoring relationship and hinder the development of professional knowledge and competencies. It confirms that availability and quality of teaching resources, such as textbooks, materials, and technology, can impact the ability of preservice teachers to develop their professional knowledge and effectively implement lesson plans. This suggests inadequate access to teaching resources can limit the scope and depth of instruction and may impede preservice teachers' ability to experiment and innovate in their teaching methods (Howard et al., 2021). Therefore, providing adequate teaching resources and ensuring their quality is important in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **5.3.3. Structural/systemic (school level)**

Structural or systemic conversion factors refer to external factors that influence the development of capabilities, such as social and economic policies, institutional practices, and cultural norms (Robeyns, 2005). There is structural disparity, which is either structural inequalities or structural equalities. Structural inequalities often diminish the freedom and opportunities preservice teachers and mentor teachers have reason to value to participate and succeed in the mentoring relationship (Bozalek & Boughey, 2020; Naidoo & Wagner, 2020). Structural equality refers to equal distribution of resources and opportunities among different individuals or groups in a society, so that they can develop their capabilities to live the kind of lives they value. According to Robeyns (2005), structural equality requires the elimination of systemic or institutional barriers that limit access of certain groups to resources and opportunities. It also involves the creation of a level playing field, where everyone has equal opportunities to develop their capabilities, regardless of their social or economic status. For example, in the context of the mentoring process, structural

equality refers to a system that is designed to provide equal opportunities and treatment to mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship.

### **5.3.3.1. Language barriers**

The use of language is crucial in the teaching and learning process in schools as it serves as the primary mode for communication (Asrial et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2020). The first language (L1), also known as the mother tongue, is the language that provides a strong basis for a child's learning in their early years (Nishanthi, 2020; Benson, 2019). This is supported by research conducted by Asrial et al., (2019) and Shin et al. (2020) who have shown that language is crucial in the process of teaching and learning in schools. This implies using mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the foundation stage of children's learning has been shown to enhance their problem-solving skills, sensitivity to grammar, and creativity (Nishanthi, 2020; Benson, 2019). However, there has been a mixed outcome in policies across the globe regarding the choice of language to use as a medium of instruction in schools for teaching and learning (Bronteng et. al., 2019). In Ghana, the current policy on the medium of instruction for teaching and learning from kindergarten to lower primary is the dominant mother tongue of the learners in the classroom, which refers to the language that is most commonly spoken and understood by the majority of the students in the classroom. It is the language that they have grown up speaking and are most comfortable using for communication which can promote learning in the classroom. In many cases, it is also the language that they use outside of the classroom and in their everyday lives. However, many non-native preservice teachers identified the use of the mother tongue (first language) as a medium of instruction as a hindrance to developing professional skills because of their difficulty to teach effectively using the learners' mother tongue. Preservice Teacher 3 related that:

*I don't understand the local language used as the medium of instruction in this region and the learners also do not understand English languages which I am familiar with. I am supposed to be practicing the teaching skills observed and learnt, but is not possible because I cannot use English language to teach in the Early Grade classroom and the learners too cannot speak or understand the English language if I use that to teach. I always need my mentor around before I can do a little teaching so that she can be explaining in the local language for the learners to*

*understand the lesson. It was very frustrating because I cannot teach the class as a normal teacher without my mentor in the classroom.*

Preservice Teacher 11 lamented:

*I always struggle to use the English language to teach the class when my mentor teacher is not around because the learners are not familiar with the English language and my expressions in the medium of instruction is not also good and so the learners become disinterested in participating in lessons. I cannot perform my roles as a mentee to the expectations of my mentor because of the language barrier.*

A preservice teacher said a mentor teacher allowed her to use English Language to teach the class because of her inability to teach with the medium of instruction. She pointed out that:

*My mentor allows me to use the English language to teach even though the acceptable medium of instruction is L1 of the learners. The problem is, anytime I finished my lesson in the class, I can see many of the learners did not learn anything and sometimes I have to repeat the lesson to see if I can get more of them to learn something. In days my mentor is available, the lesson becomes a little bit interesting because she would be interpreting some of the things I say in the local language (L1) to the understanding of the learners which brings a little relief to the learners and myself because I don't have to struggle for learners to appreciate the lesson. I think my inability to use the L1 is really affecting me as a mentee in the mentoring relationship because I do not get good feedback from my mentor and even from the learners after teaching in the class. (Preservice Teacher 5)*

However, a few preservice teachers proficient in the accepted medium of instruction stated that they took over all activities in the classroom with mentor teachers having confidence in them to assume full control and management of the classroom. In this respect, Preservice Teacher 4 said:

*My mentor always asked me to do all activities in the classroom because he has confidence that I can use acceptable medium of instruction to teach, however, I had no guidance or feedback after my lessons or activities in the classroom and this gave me a sense of autonomy but I had no idea how good were my lessons or aspects of my teaching I needed improvement for my professional development.*

Mentor teachers lamented the inability of preservice teachers to speak L1 (mother tongue) of learners as a constraint in management of the mentoring relationship because of the difficulty for preservice teachers to practice the teaching skills learnt from their mentor teachers during teaching practice. A mentor teacher said:

*...mentees are here for teaching practice but the problem is communication barrier because they find it difficult to use the accurate medium of instruction to teach. The policy of medium of instruction in Ghana Education Service is for teachers to teach using the mother tongue of the Early Grade learners and in this school the language used is dagomba dialect. As the language policy specified, teachers are to use the mother tongue of learners in the locality that the school is situated but most of the preservice teachers posted here are non-native and so find it difficult to speak local language let alone using it to teach for the understanding of the learners in the classroom. I think, this makes it difficult for the mentee to develop the professional knowledge and skills to teach which one of the goals of mentoring relationship. To be frank, sometimes I allow my mentee to use the English language as the medium of instruction to trial the skills acquired but more than half of the learners may not benefit from the lesson taught. However, I have to allow the use of English language to see how she can practice the teaching skills in the classroom to give feedback which might not necessarily reflect the competencies of mentees. I realized that many of the preservice teachers were non-native speakers and there was no way to force them to use the medium of instruction to teach when they could not speak the language of the learners. (Mentor Teacher 9)*

The quotation indicate that many preservice teachers were not proficient in the dominant mother tongue of learners used as the medium of instruction in Preschools in under Ghana Education Service. This was because many preservice teachers came from different regions with different mother tongues (dialects), which made it difficult for them to teach with the acceptable medium of instruction (the learners' L1) in early grade classes. Mentor teachers complained that inability of preservice teachers to use the local language made it difficult to give constructive and appropriate feedback to preservice teachers because they may not perform to expectations using the English Language to teach Early Grade learners. The data revealed that mentor teachers lamented about

preservice teachers' use of the English Language to teach in Early Grade classroom because of their inability to use the acceptable medium of instruction. This implies many preservice teachers taught in the English Language, which was at a detriment to both learners in the class and preservice teachers. This corroborates studies that language policy in schools, especially the selection of language of instruction in the early years of learners, is crucial for attaining educational outcomes (Trudell, 2016; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Asrial et al., 2019; Shin et al.; 2015; UNESCO, 2016). This implies preservice teachers must be proficient in the acceptable language of instruction for Early Grade learners to benefit from lessons taught and for preservice teachers to benefit from mentor teachers' support and constructive feedback in the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers believed the medium of instruction made it difficult to effectively collaborate with mentor teachers for them to develop professional knowledge to teach effectively in the classroom.

However, mentor teachers did not also provide adequate support to preservice teachers who were proficient in the use of the local language as a medium of instruction. As a result, preservice teachers were not given the opportunity to plan and teach lessons under the guidance and support of mentor teachers, but on their own, and they did not receive feedback on their performance in the classroom (Prilop et al., 2020). Kourieos (2019) argues that the mentoring relationship requires mentor teachers to provide constructive feedback in the professional practice for preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge and pedagogical skills. This implies effectiveness of the mentoring relationship is compromised when mentor teachers fail to offer constructive feedback to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. (Izadinia, 2016; Achinstein & Davis, 2014). Lack of guidance and constructive feedback from mentor teachers is believed to hinder the development of preservice teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge. This is especially where they may not have been exposed to practical aspects of classroom teaching during their university studies and, consequently, mentor teachers remain the primary source of support for them in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **5.3.3.2 Unavailability of mentor teachers**

The unavailability of mentors constrains overall experience of preservice teachers during teaching practice. This suggests mentors' availability leads to better learning opportunities for preservice teachers. A preservice teacher said that she did not get the support needed in the mentoring relationship because her mentor teacher was mostly unavailable to provide her with support even

though she was at school every day. She lamented that her mentor's unavailability was a constraint in the mentoring relationship:

*Maybe if my mentor could be available or have enough time to dialogue with me in the relationship then I could have had more teaching skill as a mentee which is the ultimate in the mentoring relationship. (Preservice Teacher 2)*

Preservice Teacher 20 lamented that though her mentor teacher taught for her to observe, she had no time to support her in the mentoring relationship:

*My mentor teacher often teaches in the classroom and does not give me opportunity to teach practice what I have learnt for her to give me feedback. She always wants to teach for me to observe without having the opportunity to teach and she having time to support and encouragement by providing feedback on my teaching in the classroom. I can she has no time to support me in the mentoring relationship but concentrated on only her teaching responsibilities in the classroom.*

Preservice Teacher 15 stated that her mentor teacher was the assistant headteacher and so did not have enough time to support her, but she enjoyed the experience in the little time they got for her mentor teacher's support in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice:

*My mentor because of her busy schedule as an assistant headteacher, she use the little time at hand to teach me a lot of teaching skills in the classroom. I am confidence that I could have gained more skills if there was enough time to be with her, since my mentor is that eager to let me know more as a mentee in the school, I wish she would have enough time for me to learn more from her in the relationship.*

Preservice Teacher 12 lamented that her mentor teacher's unavailability was affecting her negatively during the teaching practice because she did not know if she was right or wrong in the activities, she carried out alone in the classroom:

*My mentor hardly comes to school since I came and even the days she comes to school, she does not check what I do in the classroom but only tells me that I am capable because I am coming from the university and so have the fresh ideas to implement. She has totally handed over the class to me and does not have time to guide me as expected in the mentoring relationship. She claimed to be busy with*



*other official duties outside the classroom and so I virtually do everything alone in the classroom without her assistance.*

Another preservice teacher reported that even though she was able to learn from the little time her mentor teacher had with her, but the frequent unavailability of her mentor teacher made her not to achieve the full benefit of the mentoring relationship:

*I wish mentors prearranged with their mentees and just set aside just time to talk for few minutes before any other duties in the school. My mentor double as the head teacher, so I spent pretty much of my time with the children alone while my mentor would be busy working with other administrative tasks. On some days, we hardly had the opportunity to meet each other to even exchange a word like hello or even goodbye! Certainly, this was no fault of my mentor but, I just wish we could have had more time together to discuss issues in the classroom. Perhaps if she was not assistant head, we could have had more opportunities to talk to one another for me to learn more from her... However, I am learning a lot from my mentor with the little time she has for me but most of the time she would not be available in the class to guide me (Preservice Teacher 11).*

Similarly, according to Preservice Teacher 1, unavailability of mentor teachers constrains the development of professional knowledge of preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. Her opinion was expressed as follows:

*...my openness and availability whenever I have to provide support to my mentee in her work has made my mentee to learn in the mentoring relationship. You see, these mentees are novice in the teaching profession and so they need our guidance and support to be able to learn the skills of teaching to help them in future but if we have little time with them or not been available to assist them then we as mentors are not helping the future generation of teachers which would eventually affect the quality of teachers needed in the education sector.*

These quotations indicate that preservice teachers acknowledged the unavailability of mentor teachers to be one of the constraints in management of the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers' capacity to provide support and encouragement to preservice teachers to develop professional



knowledge was often hindered by their unavailability to focus on their primary duties of teaching in the classroom for preservice teachers to learn from mentor teachers. This is demonstrated by preservice teachers taking full control and responsibility in the classrooms because of the unavailability of mentor teachers in the classroom to guide or support preservice teachers. This supports Jita and Munje, (2022) who avers that is not unusual for mentor teachers to shirk their responsibilities and duties and erroneously consider mentees as their relief and replacement in the classroom. This implies that preservice teachers are thrown into the deep end of teaching with little experience, resulting in the negative experience in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This supports Moosa and Rembach (2020) that when preservice teachers are exposed to negative mentoring relationship, they feel unsupported and disempowered in mentoring journey to achieve wellbeing. This supports studies suggesting that the availability of mentor teachers during the mentoring relationship significantly influences the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge through their teaching modelling, constructive feedback, guidance, and advice, particularly when mentors empower preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship (Han & Damjanovic, 2014; Mukeredzi, 2016).

The data indicated that mentor teachers' primary focus on the duty of teaching and other duties in and out of the classroom constrain their time to properly provide support and encouragement to preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge. The teaching responsibilities of mentor teachers can, sometimes, impede their ability to provide adequate support and encouragement to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Gurjee, 2020). This is due to their need to prioritise classroom duties, which may not leave enough time for them to engage fully in the mentoring process (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane, & Bertram, 2015; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007). As a result, preservice teachers may not receive the guidance and feedback they need to develop their professional knowledge and skills (Wexler, 2019; Kupila et al., 2017; Russell & Russell, 2011), which can hinder the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. According to Ranellucci et al., (2020), one of the reasons mentor teachers may fail to provide adequate support and encouragement to preservice teachers is demands on their time to perform their primary role of teaching in the classroom. This is supported by findings of other researchers who note that mentor teachers may have competing demands and responsibilities that limit the time and attention they can devote to mentoring relationships (Parnes et al., 2022 Clynes et al., 2019). As a result,

preservice teachers may not receive the necessary feedback and support to develop their professional knowledge and skills in mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **5.3.3.3. Duration of the teaching practice**

Teaching practice facilitates preservice teachers' development of professional knowledge (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017) through mentoring relationship (Jita & Munje, 2022). The duration of teaching practice has a significant influence on the overall experiences of preservice teachers in management of the mentoring relationship. The longer the duration of the teaching practice, the better the learning opportunities for preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. Preservice Teacher 3 stated that although she enjoyed her experience during teaching practice with her mentor teacher, the time was very short for the mentoring relationship:

*The longer duration of time with mentors is very significance in the management of mentoring relationship. if I could stay longer in the relationship that would have made me to develop professional knowledge of the preservice teachers. Although, the teaching practice has a shorter duration, my mentor is really guiding me to know more in the teaching profession. I think when previously, the teaching practice was longer time, the preservice teachers benefited more than we are doing this time because we don't get enough time to be mentored before they start assessment.*

On her part, Preservice Teacher 11 said:

*I feel the teaching practice should be longer for mentees to have longer time in the school to learn a lot from mentors. I really wanted to have a long stay in the school to have more time to chat with my mentor to learn more to develop my professional practices, even though, I have really learnt in the short duration with my mentor and I still want to learn more if duration for teaching practice is longer...*

Similarly, the short duration of teaching practice was recognised by a Preservice Teacher 16, who said:

*I learnt a lot from my mentor for the short period I had with her in the classroom because I had a quality mentoring relationship through the constructive feedback and support provided and encouragement to be innovative in the classroom at any little time that she would be with me. Her support made me to learn a lot in the short*

*period that we together in classroom but I think if the duration of the teaching practice is longer and effective, it would have been even possible to learn more my mentor. From the look of things many of the mentors are preoccupied with outside classroom duties and so if mentees stay longer in the school, they could be learning little by little from the mentors to develop professional knowledge to be perfect in the long round. There should always be longer prearranged time for mentors and mentees to just set aside to talk for their professional development.*

Still on the short duration of teaching practice, Mentor Teachers 5 and 11 lamented, respectively:

*Yes, we should try to improve upon our mentoring especially with preservice teachers because these days you will see a teacher teaching and you don't even know what the person is talking about and this can be seen even in the graduate teachers which is always disappointing, I think that they should have a longer teaching practice period for the mentees to be trained well on the field experience, so that we can mentor them for a longer period and that would improve upon their skills but the short time can't be used to train somebody because we the mentors have other responsibilities which demands our time and can't use for the mentee alone. The time to use to provide feedback to a mentee for lesson taught is not couple with my teaching in the classroom is not enough because I don't have to relinquish primary responsibilities on the mentee which means short duration is not enough to go through proper mentoring relationship.*

*...I think timing is important in mentoring relationship because when the preservice teachers have a short duration for their teaching practice then they can't learn more from the mentor teachers. I think a short period won't be enough for mentees to learn and so the teaching practice period or duration should be an extended period to get the mentees to interact more with their mentors to learn a lot from mentors but if their stay in the school is short period then the mentors don't get enough in the mentoring relationship to interact and to teach mentees right things to become effective teachers in future.*

These quotations indicate that the duration of the mentoring relationship can have a significant impact on its effectiveness. The data revealed that the short duration of teaching practice inhibited

opportunity for mentor teachers to interact more and support preservice teachers to adequately develop professional knowledge in mentoring relationship. Short-term mentoring relationships, such as those that last only a few weeks, may not provide enough time for preservice teachers to develop the professional knowledge and skills needed to be effective teachers. This confirms a study that found a short duration of teaching practice can limit the amount of time available for mentor teachers to provide meaningful feedback to preservice teachers (Hudson & Hudson, 2018). A short duration of mentoring relationship may result in a lower quality mentoring relationship due to limited time for mentor teachers and preservice teacher to build rapport and engage in meaningful interactions (Korthagen, 2010). Mentor teachers and preservice teachers may also have less time to work on specific areas of focus and provide feedback, which can impact the development of preservice teachers' professional knowledge and skills (Korthagen, 2010). This can result in a less effective mentoring relationship which, ultimately, affects the development of preservice teachers' professional knowledge and skills. The data indicated that majority of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers acknowledged a longer duration of mentoring relationship may provide opportunity for mentor teachers to have enough time to support and encourage preservice teachers to grow professionally. Research has shown that a longer duration of mentoring relationship is associated with improved outcomes for preservice teachers, such as increased self-efficacy and improved classroom performance (Vescio et al., 2008). This suggests that the length of teaching practice can have an impact on the mentoring relationship because a longer duration may provide more opportunities for the development of a strong and effective mentoring relationship and allow more time for preservice teachers to learn from mentor teachers and receive feedback on their performance. It also affords more time for mentor teachers to develop a deeper understanding of preservice teachers' strengths and weaknesses. According to Pfund et al., (2021), mentoring relationships require time to develop and become effective. Therefore, a longer duration of teaching practice can provide a greater opportunity for this to happen. A study by Mena et al., (2017) also found that a longer duration of teaching practice allowed for more opportunities for reflection, feedback, and learning, which improved the quality of mentoring relationships. This resonates with a study that found a longer lasting mentoring relationship is positively connected to both quality relationship and support for mentees (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). This suggests that long-term mentoring relationships such as those that last for an entire academic year may provide more opportunities for preservice teachers to learn and grow professionally.

As such, it is important for mentor teachers and teacher preparation programmes to consider the length of the mentoring relationship and provide necessary support to sustain it over time. However, a few preservice teachers indicated in the data that even though they had a short time with their mentor teachers, they benefited by learning a lot in the mentoring relationship. This suggests that the quality of the mentoring relationship is more important than the length of the teaching practice. A shorter duration of teaching practice can still be effective if the mentoring relationship is well-structured, supportive, and focused on the preservice teachers' professional development. Thus, a longer duration of teaching practice may be less effective if the mentoring relationship is not well-managed, lacks structure, or fails to address the specific needs of preservice teachers. Some studies have found negative effects of longer teaching practice duration on mentoring relationships. This resonates with a study by Weiler et al., (2019) suggests longer teaching practice periods can lead to fatigue and burnout for mentor teachers, which can reduce the quality of their support for preservice teachers. This suggests that the duration of teaching practice can have an impact on the mentoring relationship, but it is the quality of the mentoring relationship that is most important in supporting the professional development of preservice teachers. Based on this, it is important for teacher preparation programmes to consider the appropriate length of teaching practice and provide adequate support for mentor teachers to ensure effectiveness of mentoring relationships.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the findings related to the research questions formulated in this study, which were examined using the capabilities approach framework. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 6, provides a detailed discussion and analysis of these findings. It is worth noting that certain themes presented in this chapter are interconnected or overlap, and may be viewed as both capabilities and conversion factors. Therefore, careful consideration was given in determining which research question they best aligned with better.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents findings of the qualitative analysis aimed at answering the research question on management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The findings of the study are based on participants' experiences and insights in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. In this chapter, these experiences are revisited and the opportunities and freedom mentor teachers and preservice teachers had in management of the mentoring relationship are explored regarding the extent to which they were used, or were able to use, these opportunities to achieve their well-being. I will first use Sen's (1992) concepts of well-being to examine the participants' opportunities and choices in managing the trajectory of the mentoring relationship. This will highlight various conversion factors that either constrained or enhanced their achievement of well-being in the mentoring relationship.

Following this is identification of capabilities mentor teachers and preservice teachers valued and how these capabilities were developed or not developed in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Three sub-questions were used to answer the main research question that guided the data collection process. The study focused on examining opportunities and freedoms mentor teachers and preservice teachers had to achieve well-being in management of the mentoring relationship. This analysis was demonstrated in the thorough exploration of the themes supported by the existing literature and the CA. The chapter reviews the concepts of capabilities and conversion factors in the context of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice, as indicated earlier.

### **6.2 Well-being and Achievements in the Management of Mentoring Relationship**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the CA assists in expanding individuals' capabilities to attain wellbeing. Capabilities are the ability to have reason to achieve what, according to Sen (1992), is functioning wellbeing determined by the freedom an individual has reason to value a life path that is evaluated through four aspects: agency achievement, wellbeing freedom, agency freedom and wellbeing achievement (Walker & Boni, 2020). These are essential for individuals to thrive in life and are realised within the social and political systems (Kjellberg & Jansson, 2022). In the context of teacher education, the wellbeing of both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the mentoring

relationship during teaching practice is defined as the actual opportunities and freedoms they possess to pursue their objectives, and to prioritise the things that they value in management of the mentoring relationship. Wellbeing achievement is attainment of desirable outcomes in the mentoring relationship such as confidence and improved pedagogical skills for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship journey. Conversely, agency freedom is the choice available to preservice teachers and mentor teachers in exercising their abilities and pursuing their goals towards becoming effective and dedicated teachers. This freedom provides for personal growth such as learning from different perspectives that are crucial for the life they aspire to lead. Lastly the success of achieving agency goals is driven by self-motivation and other aspirations. Agency achievements often coincide or interact with advancement in the overall wellbeing as they positively impact on the wellbeing of preservice and mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. However, it is important to understand that the ability of mentor teachers and preservice teachers to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship depends on conversion factors that impact on capabilities of mentor teachers and preservice teachers to make informed choices from the available opportunities in the mentoring relationship.

### **6.3 Opportunities and Freedoms in Management of the Mentoring Relationship**

The first research question addressed in this section focuses on available resources and real opportunities that enable preservice teachers and mentor teachers in management of the mentoring relationship. The focus of the research question is on capabilities, which refer to individuals' ability to convert resources into opportunities or a life they have value that contribute to their overall wellbeing in management of the mentoring relationship. Wellbeing, as explained by Sen (1992a: 36), is the ability of individuals to live the kind of life they have reason to value. This means that wellbeing is not just about the absence of illness or poverty, but also about the presence of opportunities and capabilities that allow individuals to live a fulfilling life. The CA places emphasis on an individual's ability or capacity to lead a fulfilling life, rather than solely on their income or assets. In this approach, wellbeing is evaluated based on the freedom a preservice teacher or mentor teacher has to pursue the things they value and the opportunities they have to live a flourishing life. Sen (2009) offers a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of wellbeing, taking into account not only the resources available to an individual, but also the opportunities they have to lead a fulfilling life, rather than traditional approaches that focus solely on income, wealth or



subjective wellbeing. The key factor in determining how well individual is faring is to assess their capacity to live a life that they have reason to consider valuable (ibid). This means considering real opportunities available to individuals to lead a satisfying life, which may include factors such as their access to education, healthcare, and equitable treatment within society. This suggests that looking at real opportunities available to preservice teachers and mentor teachers to lead a fulfilling life such developing and improving on their professional knowledge and pedagogical skills in management of the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers' capabilities are the potential of having access to participate in a mentoring relationship or being respected or developing professional knowledge in the mentoring process. Sen (2009) argues that there is a close relationship between wellbeing and capabilities. This is because an individual's ability to function and lead a flourishing life has a direct impact on their level of wellbeing.

In the section that follows are sub-themes that represent valued opportunities or capabilities that have played important roles in the realisation of goals and experiences of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. It is vital to note in the discussion that the concepts capabilities and conversion factors often overlap and intertwine. Therefore, sub-themes were grouped under the most relevant conversion factors to avoid confusing the reader.

### **6.3.1 Capability for dignity and recognition of mentor teachers and preservice teachers**

The capability for voice is an individual's capacity to express their thoughts, opinions, or views and to have them respected in public discussions (Bonvin and Laruffa, 2021; Bonvin, 2019). In this study, preservice teachers mentioned they felt empowered for being able to communicate their views and opinions with dignity because of the approachable nature of their mentor teachers in the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers encourage preservice teachers to express themselves or foster deeper discussions with preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. This means the opportunity to have a voice and be heard is something that preservice teachers have reason to value in the mentoring relationship journey during teaching practice. The findings suggest that preservice teachers were able to engage in open and active discussion and express their views with their mentor teachers, rather than just accepting everything that mentor teachers asked them to do in the mentoring relationship. This was evident in the mutual respect and trust that had been established



between mentors and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. This supports Blake-Beard, Bayne, Crosby and Muller (2011) suggestion that the mentoring relationship requires both mentor teachers and preservice teachers to build trust, respect for each other and engage in authentic interactions while acknowledging individuals' strengths and weakness in the relationship. For instance, a preservice teacher stated that she could phone her mentor teacher to ask her for clarification on an issue that she does not understand something. Likewise, her mentor teacher could phone her to ask her how the lesson went anytime the mentor teacher did not come to school, which meant she had the courage to talk to her mentor teacher at any time necessary. This suggests that a good mentor-mentee relationship exists when both mentor teachers and preservice teachers can effectively work to achieve wellbeing in mentoring relationship. Therefore, the ability to reach out to each other, whether it be for clarification or feedback, demonstrates that both preservice teachers and mentor teachers are dedicated to develop professional knowledge, which is crucial in the development of future teachers as it allows them to grow and learn in a supportive environment. This suggests that the ability of preservice teachers to express opinions is directly tied to the treatment and respect received from their mentor teachers because an individual who feels respected, recognised, and treated with dignity are more likely to have the confidence to voice their opinions. This resonates with Loots and Walker (2015) that the capability of voice in education is important because it helps the expansion of other capabilities, such as critical thinking and confidence. This suggests that mentor teachers should create an environment that fosters respect, recognition, dignity and allows for open and productive communication, which could lead to the development of critical thinking skills and a growth in confidence of the preservice teachers and mentor teachers. This suggests the reason for mentor teachers to create supportive and empowering atmosphere for their preservice teachers is not only to allow for successful mentoring relationship, but to take interest in well-being and also provide a solid foundation for growth and development of future teachers and mentors as well. This strengthens the concept of mentoring relationship as a reciprocal relationship between mentor and mentee based on mutual respect, care, and the belief that mentor teachers and preservice benefits both in the relationship (Hallam et al., 2012), which aligns with Cook et al. (2020) view of mentoring as a two-way relationship grounded in mutual respect and trust. The findings support Hudson (2013) believe that a positive mentor-mentee relationship is built through elements such as care, supportiveness, friendliness, mutual respect and trust in a non-judgmental environment. This supports the view that preservice teachers believe the

effectiveness of the mentoring relationship is largely dependent on mentor teachers' ability to show respect to preservice teachers. This finding supports Hudson's (2016) position that to create a productive mentoring relationship, mentors should show respect to preservice teachers.

However, three preservice teachers in the study reported receiving mistreatment/poor treatment from mentor teachers and lack of respect and dignity in the mentoring relationship. Lack of support and inability to express themselves freely negatively impacted the success of the mentoring relationship, causing the preservice teachers to choose to stay quiet and not report their mentor teachers in order to complete their teaching practice peacefully. This aligns with a study by Agustin (2019) that found a positive supervisor-student relationship improves students' success, while supervisors who fail to give recognition to mentees can obstruct the mentoring relationship. In line with this, Binder and Binder (2016) argue that recognition of well-being freedom allows people to pursue a diversity of doings and beings. This confirms Anderson's (1999: 316) argument that people should be entitled "to whatever capabilities are necessary to enable them avoid or escape entanglement in oppressive social relationships." Similarly, Robeyns (2005) opines that capability grants a person the possibility of being respected as it shifts cultural constraints and inequalities in a "person's lives such as lack of opinion, non-recognition and inactive participation in public life". In addition, this is a capability similar to the one in Walker's (2006:128-129) ideal-theoretical list for Higher Education capabilities, which states that one should not be "devalued because of one's social class." In this case, the preservice teacher must be given respect in the mentoring relationship.

### **6.3.2 Confidence**

Education is widely recognised as a means to expand capabilities and improve individuals' well-being as it has the potential to enhance other capabilities. This view is supported by scholars such as Robeyns (2006), Sen (1999), and Loots and Walker (2015) for providing evidence of positive impact of education in various aspects of life. Participants indicated that successful management of mentoring relationships improved and increased their professional knowledge and confidence level. This suggests that effective management of mentoring relationships can have a positive impact on the professional development of preservice teachers and mentor teachers in the teaching profession. Through the mentoring relationship, preservice teachers can receive guidance, feedback, and support from more experienced professionals, which can help them improve their skills, increase their knowledge, and boost their confidence in the profession. The findings indicated that mentor

teachers experienced an increase in confidence in their teaching abilities after successfully transferring their pedagogical skills to preservice teachers through the mentoring relationship. Additionally, those mentor teachers who previously lacked confidence in their teaching became self-confident as a result of the mentoring relationship with preservice teachers.

The finding further indicated that preservice teachers developed confidence in their pedagogical knowledge and skills, allowing them to independently and effectively teach learners in the classroom without relying on the directions of mentor teachers. This agrees with a study conducted by Izadinia (2016) which found that preservice teachers gain pedagogical skills and talents needed through the mentoring relationship and develop self-confidence to ride solo through exposure during teaching practice. This confirms that the impact of the mentoring relationship for mentees included enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence (Waters et al., 2002; Abudu & Donkor, 2014). Similarly, Liliane and Colette (2009) concluded that preservice teachers often gained confidence to express their ideas in the classroom if mentors are open to ideas and encourage reflective practices. This supports Hudson and Hudson (2017) who aver that development of mentees is best facilitated by mentors who are active listeners, effective communicators and supportive to cultivate positive attitudes and self-confidence in mentees. Similarly, preservice teachers required a supportive and collaborative relationship with their mentor teachers to develop confidence to experiment innovative ideas in the classroom (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007). This confirms that the term ‘mentoring relationship’ involves guidance to develop self-confidence, autonomous skills, professional skills and trust (O'Brien & Hamburg, 2014). Akin, Izadinia (2015) believes preservice teachers’ overwhelming fears in the classroom and uncertainties could significantly be alleviated and transformed into increased confidence if mentor teachers are more supportive and encourage preservice teachers. Perhaps, this is why, Izadinia (2015) underlines in his study the importance of mentor teachers providing both emotional and academic support to preservice teachers, along with constant encouragement, to boost the teachers’ confidence in the teaching profession. This study revealed that mentor teachers also benefit from the mentoring relationship as they see changes in the behaviour of mentees. This leads to an increase in mentors’ confidence that they can make a difference in an individual through their guidance. The majority of mentor teachers who participated in this study reported a significant increase in their self-confidence as a result of mentoring preservice teachers during teaching practice. The study revealed that both preservice

teachers and mentor teachers benefited from the mentoring relationship, with both experiencing an increase in self-confidence, which prepares them for new challenges. Thus, management of mentoring relationships can have a lasting and meaningful impact on an individuals' career development.

### **6.3.3 Trust in the mentoring relationship**

The findings, in this regard, revealed the significance of trust in the management of mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers and preservice teachers emphasised the importance of open communication, active listening and rapport in building trust in the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. A mentor teacher said that open communication and respect are very important aspects in building trust in the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing, while. Preservice Teacher 7 said:

*We sometimes meet in the town and we just talk about a lot of things just because we had so much in common and it makes me feel so comfortable that I could ask any questions that I want to know from her. Even now, I can call her on phone or even send a text when I don't understand something and she would be ready to answer me or even when she is busy, she tells me she is busy and call me later when she is less busy for her to explain things to me. I really feel comfortable with our relationship because we trust each other. I think meeting outside of school and talking is really important to build that relationship.*

This utterance is line with the view of scholars that critical factors in building trust in the mentoring relationship are active listening skills, allowing open communication and harmonious behaviour on the part of mentor teachers (Burks, 2010; Hallam et al., 2012; Ozder, 2011).

A mentor teacher said that communicating openly and having a trusting relationship are crucial elements for successful mentoring process to achieve wellbeing of improved professional knowledge. This view was echoed by a preservice teacher who said active listening by mentor teachers, informal meetings outside school and open communication are important factors in building trust in the mentoring relationship. This suggests trust and open communication made it easier for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to achieve wellbeing and have positive impact in the mentoring relationship journey. Nash (2010) noted that active listening skills are demonstrated by mentor teachers to build trust with preservice teachers to develop professional

knowledge. Similarly, Russell and Russell's (2011) qualitative study affirm the importance of trust between mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. In support of this findings, Wasonga, Wanzare, and Dawo (2015) define mentoring as a process that facilitates development of professional knowledge of preservice teachers through mutual trust with a more knowledgeable and experienced mentor teacher. This study revealed that open communication and active listening skills are key factors in building trust to promote mutual understanding between mentor teachers and preservice teachers to achieve their wellbeing and establish success in the mentoring relationship. The CA, which emphasises the importance of expanding individuals' capabilities and promoting their well-being, aligns with the role mentoring relationship plays in facilitating human development through fostering of trust and open communication.

#### **6.3.4 Communication**

The findings of the study indicated that preservice teachers and mentor teachers valued open communication and mentor teachers' availability in the mentoring relationship as crucial for building trust, respect and comfort to achieve their wellbeing. A mentor teacher mentioned that maintaining an open line of communication with the preservice teacher was crucial in ensuring a comfortable and productive relationship for both. This finding is supported by White et al. (2010), Huybrecht et al. (2011) and Wilson et al. (2010) that open communication and mentor teachers' availability are important qualities for mentor teachers to effectively perform their roles in the mentoring relationship. Haggard and Turban (2012) emphasise the role of empathic listening and mentor teachers' availability to talk with preservice teachers as crucial in the mentoring relationship.

Similarly, majority of preservice teachers mentioned that it was beneficial to be in a supportive environment where they felt comfortable expressing themselves and not afraid of negative judgements from mentor teachers regarding mentorship. A preservice teacher stressed the importance of having an open, honest, and transparent relationship with mentor teachers to enable them achieve their wellbeing (uniqueness) in the classroom. This view is in line with Liliane and Colette's (2010) argument that preservice teachers will gain confidence in expressing their ideas in the classroom if mentors are open to their ideas and encourage them to reflect on their practice. This suggests that the quality of communication was seen as having a significant impact on the mentoring relationship for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers to achieve their wellbeing. This aligns with Hoigaard and Mathisen (2009) that effective communication is necessary for

mentor teachers and preservice teachers to develop professional and pedagogical knowledge in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice This aligns with He (2009) and Izadinia (2015), who emphasise importance of open communication and approachability of mentors in successful mentoring relationships.

### **6.3.5 Self-motivation**

The findings of the study indicated that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers had a strong motivation to make mentoring relationships successful because of their inner commitment and drive to learn and grow professionally. The study revealed that majority of mentor teachers admitted mentoring preservice teachers helped them to reflect on their own teaching practices and improve their personal as well as professional growth as teachers. This finding aligns with Tomlinson (1995), who found that mentoring the relationship can deepen mentor teachers' teaching skill and force them to reflect on their beliefs about teaching, learning, and the teaching profession. Similarly, Wasonga, Wanzare, & Dawo (2015) found that the mentoring relationship provides an opportunity for mentor teachers to contribute to the teaching profession and achieve personal satisfaction through mentoring less experienced teachers and preservice teachers.

Similarly, preservice teachers indicated that they sustained the mentoring relationship because of their passion to become good teachers and learn from experienced mentor teachers. This suggests that mentoring allows preservice teachers to discuss and reflect on their challenging or confusing situations and learn from the accumulated wisdom and experience of mentor teachers. This supports the idea that mentees can gain from the accumulated wisdom and experience of their mentors for professional development (Wasonga, Wanzare, and Dawo, 2015). The study made it clear that passion, aspiration, and inner drive of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers sustained the successful mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

### **6.3.6 Collaboration**

This analysis examines the impact of collaboration in mentoring relationships on professional development of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice. Collaboration was found to be a key factor for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The study showed that joint decision-making and debriefing in the planning of teaching activities leads to a more positive and effective mentoring experience. This finding confirms a study by Du Plessis and Marais (2013),

which found that a collaborative mentoring relationship enhances professional development of mentor teachers and preservice teachers and reduces a sense of isolation among teachers. Majority of the preservice teachers indicated that their mentor teachers involved them in decision-making in the classroom. This supports experiences of preservice teachers who felt involved in the decision-making process and received constructive feedback from their mentor teachers (Aderibigbe, 2013; Hughes et al., 2013; Kemmis et al., 2014; Margolis, 2007). Similarly, the data showed that majority of mentor teachers were willing to engage in collaborative activities with preservice teachers in the classroom. Mentor teachers emphasised the importance of viewing preservice teachers as colleague teachers working together to plan classroom activities. These findings highlight the need for equality and mutuality in the mentoring relationship to avoid it becoming a judgmental or bullying exercise (Hobson & Malderez, 2013; Maguire, 2001). This confirms that a successful mentoring relationship is characterised by equality and lack of power imbalance between mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Awaya et al., 2003). This confirms benefits of collaboration in teacher education to include mutual learning and professional support (Chen, 2012; Goodnough et al., 2009; Spilková, 2001). It supports the view that mentor-mentee collaboration is vital for developing teachers' professional knowledge and pedagogical skills (Aderibigbe, 2013; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009) which demonstrates the effectiveness of collaboration in the mentoring relationship for preservice teachers and mentor teachers (Chen, 2012; Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman & Stevens, 2009). This study's finding highlights the significance of collaboration in mentoring relationship to be professional development for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers. The data indicated that majority of preservice teachers felt their mentoring relationships were good and met their expectations. This was demonstrated by several preservice teachers who reported being involved in decision-making processes and receiving constructive feedback from their mentor teachers. However, the study also revealed that not all mentor teachers engaged with preservice teachers in a collaborative mentoring relationship. From the data, some mentor teachers did not collaborate with preservice teachers, leading to a non-developmental experience for the preservice teachers. This confirms the fact that some preservice teachers perceived the mentoring relationship as non-developmental because their mentor teachers did not engage and actively collaborate with them in co-planning and providing feedback. This finding supports the study by Hobson and Malderez (2013) that a non-collaborative relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers can result in negative mentoring experiences and a non-



developmental experience for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers. The study highlights the importance of collaboration in mentoring relationships for positive outcomes for preservice teachers. This implies that collaboration in mentoring relationships is essential for the professional development of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers. However, the success of collaboration in mentoring is influenced by dispositions, knowledge, experiences as well as the attitude of individuals involved in the mentoring relationship. This resonates with Zhang (2017) that preservice teachers share their skills and knowledge when observing mentor teachers' effective practices that are worth emulating. The study highlights the need for mutuality and equality in the management of mentoring relationships to avoid non-collaborative experiences of all participants.

### **6.3.7 Being educated and knowledgeable**

The findings of this study suggest that effective management of mentoring relationships enables mentor teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills and knowledge to improve their teaching and pedagogical content knowledge. This supports the claim that mentor teachers can improve on their professional knowledge and expand their capabilities to enhance their overall academic well-being through mentoring of preservice teachers (Robeyns, 2006; Sen, 1999). The findings align with studies by Hall et al. (2008), Hawkey (2006), Le Maistre et al. (2006), and Schwillie (2008) that mentors can gain not only pedagogical skills, but also empathy and become role models through mentoring preservice teachers during teaching practice. Similarly, mentor teachers develop the skills needed to engage preservice teachers in teaching practices (Crasborn et al., 2008; Hennissen et al., 2010).

Mentor teachers, through the mentoring relationship, are able to acquire mentoring skills and knowledge to contribute to professional development of preservice teachers' practical knowledge to become competent and committed teachers, thus contributing to the growth of both themselves and the preservice teachers. Although knowledge is a personal growth, it also contributes to the creation of wealth (Walker, 2006).

The finding also indicated that preservice teachers gained pedagogical knowledge through the mentoring relationship, showing that mentoring prepares preservice teachers with knowledge and practices that can be applied in various teaching contexts (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Grossman et al., 2009). This supports the claim that mentoring relationships enhance the professional development



of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Hudson, 2013) in the teaching profession. Similarly, Du Plessis, Marais, Van Schalkwyk, and Weeks (2010) underline the importance of mentoring relationships in the training of preservice teachers to acquire practical knowledge. Walkington (2014) suggests that mentoring relationships have gained prominence in preservice teacher education courses due to their impact in developing comprehensive knowledge and skills of preservice teachers. This aligns with the views of various scholars who believe that mentorship experiences are essential for developing quality teachers in teacher education programmes (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Mena et al., 2017; Standal et al., 2013).

### **6.3.8 Feedback**

The findings of the study indicated that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers viewed feedback as a crucial component in mentoring relationship to enhance their classroom practice during teaching practice. Further, it was shown that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers acknowledged feedback played a crucial role for the preservice teachers to improve their teaching performance in the classroom during teaching practice. The finding revealed that preservice teachers needed honest and objective feedback from their mentor teachers to enhance their teaching performance. They reported the importance of receiving honest, objective and constructive feedback from their mentors to clearly understand their pedagogical skills, which built their confident. This suggests preservice teachers felt more confident and motivated after receiving honest comments and encouragement from their mentor teachers. This supports the perspective of Awaya et al. (2003), who argue that mentor teachers should provide wise counsel and encouragement to help mentees build confidence. Additionally, the finding supports Hagger and McIntyre's (2006) view that preservice teachers need honest and frank feedback from their mentor teachers and to and more information that strengthens their motivation and self-esteem.

The finding also revealed that mentor teachers view feedback as intellectual dialogues that promote reflection and learning for preservice teachers. This aligns with the findings of Hagger and McIntyre (2006), who argue that feedback is a key factor in promoting reflection and learning among preservice teachers through mentor teachers' practical knowledge and wisdom. This suggests the need for mentor teachers to value continuous and undifferentiated feedback that is tailored to the needs of preservice teachers. This implies mentor teachers should be well positioned to give critical developmental feedback to preservice teachers because of their greater knowledge of relevant

contextual factors in the teaching profession. This fact supports Mukeredzi and Mandrona's stance (2013) that mentor teachers should, on a daily basis, monitor preservice teachers' skills development and reinforce attention to areas that need improvement.

However, the finding also indicated that some mentor teachers reported feeling insecure to provide honest feedback, resulting in a tendency to discuss only the strengths of preservice teachers and overlook their weaknesses to avoid hurting their feelings in the mentoring relationship. This contradicts the view of Awaya et al. (2003) that mentoring should be a journey of providing honest feedback to initiate preservice teachers into their professional life. In addition, Karel and Stead (2011) point out that a mentee who is interested in learning will welcome critical feedback from the mentor and not be defensive. However, Arday (2015) suggests that mentor teachers' insecurities and lack of confidence to provide honest feedback to preservice teachers can be minimised through a comprehensive mentorship training with follow-up and support from training institutions. Training provides a solution for in giving honest and objective feedback for developmental experience of preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. This suggests that an effective mentorship training programme could help mentor teachers to acquire the necessary skills and professionalism to give honest and objective feedback that could, ultimately, lead to a more positive developmental experience for preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship.

### **6.3.9 Support and encouragement**

Findings of the study indicated that preservice teachers view their mentors as a source of professional support and encouragement in developing their knowledge. The majority of preservice teachers reported relying on the experiences and support of their mentors to learn and develop skills in instructional techniques, classroom management, and boost their confidence in the classroom. The findings indicate that the mentor-mentee relationship is crucial for the development of preservice teachers and mentor teachers as well. This suggests the relationship helps in fostering a supportive environment for preservice teacher to learn and grow professionally in the teaching profession. The relationship also helps preservice teachers develop their own teaching strategies and build confidence in the classroom. A study by Tran (2015) found that mentoring can have a positive impact on the self-efficacy of preservice teachers, as they have the opportunity to observe and learn from experienced mentors. The study supports the idea that mentoring provides preservice

teachers with the necessary guidance to help them navigate the complexities of teaching (Tran, 2015).

Further still, the findings suggest that preservice teachers value both emotional and academic support from their mentors, with emotional support being more highly valued, making it essential for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to understand the role of emotional and academic support for mentor teachers to make efforts to provide for preservice teachers to be open to receive it. Emotional support has a direct impact on preservice teachers' confidence, motivation, and self-esteem, which are crucial for their success as teachers with academic support having a direct impact on preservice teachers and mentor teachers' professional development. However, mentor teachers value academic support more highly. This difference in orientation is noted by Martin (2013), who found that mentees saw their mentors' support as emotional, while mentor teachers rated academic support higher. However, Crasborn and Hennissen (2010) emphasise that adequate mentoring involves combination of emotional and academic support.

The findings further showed that majority of preservice teachers felt pressured and stressed when their mentors did not provide constructive feedback. These highlights support from mentor teachers as important in helping preservice teachers tackle stressors. It also aligns with Martin's (2013) study, which found that preservice teachers receive emotional support from their mentor teachers to cope with stressors. Preservice teachers discussed support they received and how mentor teachers used meetings not only to discuss instructional and administrative tasks, but also talk about their struggles in the classroom and ways to overcome them. Similarly, Awaya et al. (2003) found that mentor teachers should act as mouthpieces of wisdom and guide mentees towards solutions by offering support and encouragement in the mentoring relationship. It also confirms that the mentor-mentee relationship can help preservice teachers deal with challenges and stress associated with teaching. A study by Orland-Barak and Wang (2021) found that mentoring helps to emotionally support preservice teachers, particularly during challenging times. This implies mentors can provide encouragement and help preservice teachers navigate through difficult situations by offering insights and strategies they have learned through their own experiences. This suggest that mentor teachers should provide regular and timely feedback to mentees in order to help them improve their teaching practices and address any challenges they may be facing in a constructive manner. A study by Smith, Hill, Cowie, and Gilmore (2014) and Izadinia (2018) found that

preservice teachers who receive constructive feedback from mentors understand better their strengths and weaknesses to help them improve their teaching practices.

A positive and supportive mentor-mentee relationship is crucial for successful development of preservice teachers. This means that mentor teachers can help preservice teachers identify areas for improvement and provide guidance on how to address these areas (Smith, Hill, Cowie, and Gilmore, 2014). However, it is crucial for the mentor-mentee relationship to be based on mutual trust and respect. This can be achieved by making preservice teachers feel accepted, respected, and valued as colleagues and members of teaching profession and foster a collaborative relationship, which is crucial for successful management of the mentoring relationship. A study by Jones et al., (2018) found that preservice teachers who have a positive relationship with their mentors and a supportive learning environment are more likely to feel respected, supported and valued in the mentoring relationship. This can help preservice teachers build their confidence and feel more comfortable discussing their challenges and needs with mentor teachers. This suggests that it is important for mentor teachers and preservice teachers to work together to cultivate a productive and effective mentoring relationship and be proactive in seeking to understand each other's needs and perspectives and make efforts to address them. Mentor teachers should take time to provide the necessary support and resources, while preservice teachers should be open to receiving support and feedback from mentor teachers. By doing so, the mentoring relationship can be a powerful tool in supporting the growth and development of preservice teachers and helping them to become successful and effective teachers. This confirms Griffin's (2012) study that dedicating time to provide support and cultivating a collaborative relationship are important factors for a mentoring relationship.

The preservice teachers reported that they were not being support and encouraged, which made them unhappy with their mentor teachers. They complained about how mentor teachers welcomed and introduced them to pupils in the classroom. A preservice teacher stated how his mentor teacher introduced him as a student who was there to learn how to teach to pupils in the classroom, which clearly negated equality in the relationship. This affirms a study by Mukeredzi (2009) which found that mentees appreciated being accepted, respected, encouraged and regarded as colleagues to feel welcome in the classroom. This implies what preservice teachers value as important in this study was the need to be accepted and respected as colleague teachers, not as students to be taught how

to teach in the classroom. According to Arday (2015) mentees often feel “exposed” and “vulnerable” in the classroom when they are not encouraged and supported by mentor teachers. This supports the view that mentor teachers should act as moral support and encouragement to preservice teachers, and not threaten to discourage them in the classroom (Awaya et al., 2003).

#### **6.3.10 Training of mentor teachers**

The findings revealed that trained mentor teachers were more effective in the mentoring relationship than those who had not participated in any mentorship workshop before mentoring. This supports Heeralal and Bayaga’s (2011) study that school-based mentoring programmes present special challenges that are exacerbated when mentor teachers receive no training before mentoring. This suggests institutions with teacher education should organise mentorship workshops and training sessions to help mentor teachers adaptively guide and support preservice teachers with different characteristics. However, studies have found that supervisory styles of mentor teachers rarely change in response to changing needs of students (Veenman & Denessen, 2001; Williams, 2001). This confirms the need for frequent training for mentor teachers in order to maximise their ability to support preservice teachers (Ganser, 1998 cited in Asuo-Baffour et al., 2019) in mentoring relationship. In support of this, several studies emphasise the need for mentorship training as the absence of such training may negatively influence the intended purpose of teaching practice for preservice teachers (Hobson, 2016; Aspfors & Fransson, 2015; Ambrosetti, 2014; Gareis & Grant, 2014). Perhaps, this is the reason Kourieos (2019) suggests principals of schools should encourage mentor teachers to attend relevant seminars and workshops to be abreast with new trends in teaching skills consistent with school curriculum. This strengthens the notion that effective and experienced teachers do not automatically make good mentors, as specialised knowledge and skills are required for one to be a good mentor (Gareis & Grant, 2014).

According to Russel and Russel (2011) mentorship programmes can have a positive impact on the professional growth and development of preservice teachers because mentorship can lead to increased self-efficacy and confidence in preservice teachers (Park & Kim, 2019). This supports Hobson (2016) that mentorship provide preservice teachers with a supportive and safe learning environment, allowing them to take risks and experiment with new teaching strategies in the classrooms. It is also crucial for mentor teachers to have a clear understanding of their role in the

mentorship relationship (Gareis & Grant, 2014) to provide guidance, support, and feedback and help preservice teachers to reflect on their teaching practices (Ambrosetti, 2014).

According to Russel and Russel (2011) mentor teachers should be able to communicate effectively and establish positive rapport with preservice teachers. This suggests that the success of mentorship programmes depends on preparation and training of mentor teachers. The implication is that effective mentor training should focus on specific skills and knowledge required for mentorship, and be regularly provided to ensure that mentor teachers are equipped to support preservice teachers in their professional growth and development (Kourieos, 2019). However, most teacher education institutions face challenges of inadequate budgets and limited time for mentor teachers to attend training, which makes most of the training institutions not to organise any training or provide handbooks on mentoring, instead of formal mentorship training. Handbooks describe specific guidelines and procedures only, making majority of mentors to support and guide preservice teachers based on their previous experiences and ideology in the mentorship relationship (Liu, 2014). Despite challenges faced by teacher education institutions, investing in mentor teacher training can have a positive impact on both mentor teachers and preservice teachers (Gareis & Grant, 2014).

### **6.3.11 Preservice Teachers' orientation/induction**

The study revealed that orientation for preservice teachers at the start of their teaching practice helped them to be effective and to understand the culture and philosophy of their schools of practice and how to manage the mentoring relationship effectively. Smith et al. (2013) found that the objective of orientation for preservice teachers is to socialise them in order to increase their effectiveness in classroom and improve the likelihood of a successful mentoring relationship. Long et al. (2012) emphasise the importance of empowering preservice teachers to be aware of their roles through workshops or orientation. This confirms Johnson's (2008) study that even the most competent mentor may not be enough if the preservice teacher displays behaviours that could lead to conflict in the mentoring relationship. In addition, Hudson (2016) also highlights that mentees need to be educated through orientation about desirable attributes and practices to form and sustain productive mentoring relationships. This implies the responsibility of preservice teachers in a mentoring relationship is to be clear about what their roles and objectives are during teaching practice and find suitable work places that are aligned with their wellbeing. This suggests the role

of orientation for preservice teachers is crucial for their success in the classroom and the mentoring relationship.

### **6.3.12 Seeking management intervention**

The finding indicates that success of mentoring relationships between preservice teachers and mentor teachers is influenced by the school environment and availability of institutional support. Schools with a collegial and learning culture (Edwards et al., 1998; Lee & Feng, 2007) and preservice teachers having access to support from other teachers or external networks (Whisnant, Elliott, & Pynchon, 2005) are more conducive for preservice teachers to achieve their wellbeing in the mentoring relationships. This supports the existence of mechanisms that allow mentees to replace mentors without negative consequence. The finding indicates all participants demonstrated willingness to seek help in ensuring a successful mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. It also indicates that when preservice teachers exhibit recalcitrant behaviours, mentor teachers report it to the university for possible sanctions. Meanwhile, head teachers take responsibility to address mentor teachers who are not committed to their profession and hold them accountable. Head teachers were reported to play a key role in ensuring successful management of the mentoring relationship, to replace unavailable mentor teachers or those not committed to the mentoring relationship. This points to the importance of institutional support for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers in facilitating cooperation within the mentoring relationship to achieve the wellbeing of both. This implies that seeking help and reporting any recalcitrant behaviours is essential for participants to be able to work towards a successful mentoring relationship.

The finding in the study indicated that unclear expectations from the institution impacted negatively on the management of the mentoring relationship. The mentor teachers indicated that the University had to provide on teaching practice more explicit rules and regulations to govern the mentoring relationships. In support Chen and Chen (2010) stated that institutions have to clearly define and communicate their expectations for mentoring relationship to both mentors and mentees. This suggests that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what actions to take if these expectations are not met, leading to more effective mentoring relationship. Actions to take could involve providing guidelines or a handbook for mentors and mentees that outlines expectations for communication, goal-setting, and progress monitoring (Hansoti et al., 2019). This supports Kourieos (2019) suggestion that the lack of clear



expectations given by the University on teaching practice is a factor that has been identified as being obstructive to effective mentoring relationships.

The next section focuses on factors that hinder management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

#### **6.4 Constraints to the management of mentoring relationship**

According to Robeyns and Crocker (2010), conversion factors play a crucial role in determining the success or failure of converting opportunities into desired outcomes. In this study, the researcher examined factors that impede management of mentorship during teaching practice of preservice teachers in a Ghanaian university. The main focus of the discussion is identification of hindrances preventing successful mentorship of preservice teachers in a Ghanaian University.

##### **6.4.1 Language barrier**

A language is often thought to have the most profound impact on an individual's linguistic and cultural development and forms the basis for their communication and understanding of the world around them (Ozfidan, 2014). In this study, it was found that majority of preservice teachers were struggling to teach and faced difficulties in managing the classroom situation because their language and learners' first language were different. Preservice teachers reported using English Language to teach in Early Grade classroom. In Ghana, language policy regarding education states that the local language (L1) should be used as the medium of instruction from kindergarten 1 to Primary 3, and English should be studied as a subject (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). The policy goes on to say that if the language background of learners is fairly uniform, their' first language should be used as the main medium of instruction in kindergarten and lower primary school (ibid).

Many of the preservice teachers in this study lacked proficiency in the learners' first language, causing a language barrier which prevented them from effectively communicating with learners and making it difficult for them to build relationships and manage classroom behaviour. This implies professional development of preservice teachers can be significantly impacted by a language barrier during their teaching practice. They may also face challenges in participating fully in feedback and reflection sessions with mentor teachers, hindering opportunities for preservice teachers' growth and improvement professionally. Language barrier can cause misunderstandings and cultural insensitivity because of difficulties of preservice teachers in understanding the cultural context in which they are working. Preservice teachers' use of the English Language as the medium



of instruction can be a major impediment for many learners, who struggle to comprehend the academic material and have difficulty understanding interactions because of their limitations in using English. A preservice teacher indicated that she had learned in English throughout school. As such, teaching in the local language became a problem because she struggled to understand when learners spoke to her and could not respond. This is in line with Wilson-Strydom's (2012) research, which found that language barriers can make it difficult for some preservice teachers to communicate effectively with learners in a school. This lack of effective communication can hinder preservice teachers' ability to adapt to a multilingual environment and can make it challenging for them to understand their learners' needs and provide appropriate support.

Studies have shown the importance of using a familiar language to enhance the transmission of quality education to learners (Castro, Ayankoya, & Kasprzak, 2011; Han, 2012; UNESCO, 2016; Zepeda, Castro, and Cronin, 2011). This demonstrates that the ability of preservice teachers to use an appropriate medium of instruction is a critical element of effective education (Achinstein & Davis, 2014; Damar & Sali, 2013). In the same vein, Gilani et al., (2020) point out that the use of English in the classroom with learners having a diverse lingual background not only brings down the morale of preservice teachers, but also encourages edgy behaviours and uncertainty in their own teaching skills. Lee (2012) found that the use of English-only approach in Korea for young English learners was less effective than blending with the local language of the learners. The study found that Korean young learners did not respond positively to using English as the sole language in the classroom. However, Lee (2012) suggests that incorporating limited code-switching into the teaching approach could make English input more understandable and improve EFL acquisition for the learner.

Studies have found a positive and significant correlation between language instruction and performance in academic subjects (Owu-Ewie, 2012). This suggests students who are proficient in the language of instruction tend to perform well in subjects taught in that language. This highlights the importance of addressing the language barrier in classroom settings to ensure that all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. The English Language proficiency of preservice teachers only may not be adequate to meet the demands of learners a classroom context (Kourieos, 2014). This finding is supported by Aderibigbe et al. (2016) and Hobson (2012), who suggest that the effectiveness of mentoring relationships can be influenced by

factors such as the context within which the mentoring takes place. This suggests inability of preservice teachers to effectively teach learners to comprehend due to language barrier can have a significant negative impact on their professional growth and future career success as well as hinder their confidence in the classroom, leading to decreased wellbeing. The language barrier can create challenges for both preservice teachers and the mentor teachers, potentially impacting the overall effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. The finding further indicates that preservice teachers who were proficient in the local language were allowed to implement lessons in the classroom without supervision, even though they lacked the necessary professional knowledge and experience in Early Grade classrooms, which negatively impacted on successful management of the mentoring relationship (Hobson, 2012).

#### **6.4.2 Unavailability of mentor teachers**

The study indicated the crucial role of mentor teachers in supporting the professional development and wellbeing of preservice teachers during teaching practice. During the interview conducted for this study, most preservice teachers mentioned unavailability of mentor teachers as a major hindrance to their achieving wellbeing in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This is because mentors are expected to provide both professional and emotional support, so their absence or lack of time negatively impacts preservice teachers' well-being (Majoni & Nyaruwata, 2015). This suggests that availability of mentor teachers during teaching practice is critical to the success of preservice teachers' wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. According to Majoni & Nyaruwata (2015), lack of time of mentor teachers to focus on their primary duty of teaching impairs their ability to properly assist preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This confirms Mtika (2008) argument that unavailability of mentor teachers hinders their ability to impart practical knowledge to help preservice teachers become competent in the pedagogical content knowledge. This suggests that unavailability of mentor teachers, caused by their administrative responsibilities or fear of being observed because of their professional inadequacy, hinders preservice teachers' well-being in the mentoring relationship. This finding suggests the need for availability of mentor teachers to preservice teachers to provide support and guidance necessary for their success and achievement of wellbeing in the management of the mentoring relationship. The benefits of effective mentoring relationships include: increased self-efficacy, improved teaching skills, and enhanced job satisfaction (Alexander, 2015). Moreover, effective mentoring relationships can help reduce stress and anxiety among preservice teachers,

which are common experiences during the transition from student to professional teacher (Kagan, 2007).

Unavailability of mentor teachers can also affect the confidence and competence of preservice teachers in pedagogical content knowledge. This implies it is imperative that efforts be made to ensure mentor teachers are available during teaching practice to provide necessary support and guidance to preservice teachers. This could involve reducing the administrative responsibilities of mentor teachers or providing them with the necessary resources and support to fulfill their mentoring role effectively. By doing so, the quality of mentoring relationships and the professional development of preservice teachers can be improved.

#### **6.4.3 Duration of the mentoring relationship**

From the study, it was evident that teacher education programmes must aim to provide both longer and higher quality teaching practice experiences for preservice teachers. Many preservice teachers involved in the study mentioned that the short duration of teaching practice is a hindrance to achieving wellbeing in their mentoring relationship. They believe that a longer period mentoring relationship is necessary in order for them to gain valuable experience from their mentor teachers in the classroom. However, one preservice teacher stated that despite the brief duration of the teaching practice, she achieved her wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. She felt she met her expectations in the mentoring relationship and that the short duration was not a limiting factor to her freedom to achieve her wellbeing because her mentor teacher gave her honest and constructive feedback at their meetings. This supports Kauffman's (2006) claim that quality is just as important as quantity in a mentoring relationship. This implies that quality experiences gained in a short mentoring relationship are just as valuable as those gained in a long mentoring relationship. Nevertheless, mentor teachers must have sufficient time devoted to their preservice teachers to provide high-quality experiences.

#### **6.4.4 Inadequate teaching materials**

The finding in this respect indicated participants acknowledged teaching and learning resources as important in providing opportunities to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. They believed schools without adequate teaching resources constrain mentor teachers in providing necessary academic support for the preservice teachers to develop pedagogical skills. This suggests preservice teachers value mentor teachers who use teaching resources to teach learners and support

them to use the resources in their lesson to accumulate the basic teaching skills they need during teaching practice. The preservice teachers said inadequate teaching resources in their schools made it difficult to apply teaching strategies learnt from mentor teachers. The finding also mentor teachers expressed concerned that the inadequate teaching resources might affect preservice teachers to develop the pedagogical skills needed for preservice teacher during teaching practice.

The preservice teachers acknowledged the importance of mentor teachers using teaching resources to teach learners so that the preservice teachers could also learn how to use teaching resources to develop their pedagogical skills during teaching practice. Preservice teachers said inadequate teaching resources constrained opportunities for mentor teachers to provide necessary academic support for the pedagogical skills development in the mentoring relationship. This suggests that preservice teachers value mentor teachers who utilise teaching resources to instruct learners and support them in using these resources in their lessons to acquire basic teaching skills. This means lack of teaching resources in schools made it difficult for preservice teachers to apply the teaching strategies they learned from mentor teachers. Mentor teachers expressed concern that inadequate resources might negatively impact on preservice teachers in developing the necessary pedagogical skills during their teaching practice.

#### **6.4.5 Dress code**

The dressing code for preservice teachers when going to schools for teaching practice is basically their choice because there are no written rules regarding dress code as a standard for preservice teachers to follow in Ghanaian universities. However, there are written policy for dress code for teachers which is stipulated in the codes of conduct for teachers sanctioned by Ghana Education Service council. Mentors complained of unprofessional dressing of preservice teachers to school. They mentioned that preservice teachers' unprofessional dressing to school constrained the drive mentor teachers have to support to them academically to develop professionally. This supports the argument that dressing like a professional teacher may be key to becoming one (Vera & Suarez, 2020).

Some preservice teachers lamented how some mentor teachers were not dressing professionally to school to serve as role models for novice teachers to learn. This suggests inappropriate dressing of mentor teachers was non-developmental experience for preservice teachers because mentor teachers are role models for preservice teachers to learn from in the teaching profession. This

supports that the regulation that a staff (**mentor teacher**) shall serve as a role model to learners by showing a high degree of decency in dressing to portray the dignity of the profession in the general performance of their duties (Code of Conduct for Staff of the Ghana Education Service, 2017). Some preservice teachers changed their way of dressing to suit the school situation during teaching practice in response to mentor teachers' demand in the mentoring relationship, while some of the mentor teachers dressed conservatively, which supports Recine's (2019) position that teachers at K-12 schools are expected to dress conservatively.

The preservice teachers mentioned that mentor teachers dressing professionally is considered as pedagogical strategy to establish a serious working atmosphere, order and respect in the mentoring relationship. This concurs that dressing appropriately attracts a certain attitude of yourself respect and a concern for high standards (Abu, 2019). This implies wearing 'appropriate' attire to school can contribute to creating a professional image and making a good impression on others, especially in formal settings as school. Preservice teachers mentioned that they were informed during orientation of the dress code, that is, what to wear to school as preservice teachers, but they chose to dress based on their personal preferences, which resulted in difficulties with their mentor teachers. However, through mentor teachers' guidance, they were influenced to make changes to their dressing habits. This shift in attire helped to establish a successful mentoring relationship to reinforce the importance of a professional image in the field of education. This suggests that mentor teachers play a crucial role in guiding and advising preservice teachers on their expectations and norms in the teaching profession, including dress code. This implies it is not uncommon for preservice teachers to have misunderstandings about the appropriate attire for school, but working closely with their mentor teachers and adapting their attire accordingly could make a positive impression, build professional relationships, and make them better prepared for their future careers as teachers.

Dress code is a result of the social context of individuals. Preservice teachers are not restricted in their social context in terms of the kind of dressing to wear at university and so their dress preference is not different from what they are to wear to school during teaching practice. However, the advantages of conforming include blending into the school norm and not getting into trouble with mentor teachers. This means preservice teachers are expected to dress in an appropriate attire when

they are going to school. This implies a professional dress code for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers is an important factor to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring process.

#### **6.4.6 Personality clashes**

Personality factors refer to distinct traits that define an individual's behaviour, thoughts, and emotions. These factors shape an individual's unique personality and are often used to explain differences in behaviours and behavioural patterns. It was found that personality factors of participants influenced their ability to form positive and productive mentoring relationships. This implies disparities in goals between mentor teachers and preservice teachers would have a negative effect on their wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. It suggests mentor teachers and preservice teachers be engaged in open and honest communication to align their aspirations and ensure mutual understanding to provide opportunities for professional development for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship. This supports the finding that merely placing preservice teachers in schools and pairing them with experienced mentor teachers does not necessarily ensure smooth integration into school communities or develop them professionally (Huybrechts et al., 2011). This suggests that the decision to select mentor teachers for preservice teachers should be based on criteria such as the mentor teachers' knowledge, experience and willingness to perform their mentoring roles responsibly.

The preservice teachers mentioned that their mentor teachers' strictness limited their freedom to take initiative in the classroom. This supports a study by Kourieos (2019) which found that mentor teachers expect preservice teachers to remain passive and unquestioningly accept their opinions and feedback in the mentoring relationship. It affirms the need to adopt a collaborative approach in the mentoring relationship to ensure mutual learning, rather than mentor teachers imposing their expertise on preservice teachers (Tonna et al., 2017; Kourieos, 2019). This confirms that the traditional hierarchical relationship should be replaced with a more collaborative approach to mentoring to promote a mutually learning environment (Tonna et al., 2017).

Some preservice teachers reported non-professional growth during their interactions with mentor teachers. This was due to the fact that the mentor teachers, who were not professionally trained, felt intimidated and uncomfortable with the presence of preservice teachers in the classroom. This confirms the finding by Kourieos (2019) that mentor teachers are required to share their expertise



with preservice teachers, rather than impose it on them. It implies that the roles of mentor teachers are not only to develop preservice teachers' instructional approaches but also to support and encourage their professional growth through reflection and constructive feedback.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed findings of the study in analysing capabilities and conversion factors for management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice in a Ghanaian University. The succeeding chapter is the conclusion and possible implications of the study.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This study began with a problem statement to investigate the management of mentoring relationship using CA introduced by Amartya Sen (1999) as the theoretical framework. Sen's approach emphasises that individuals (that is, both preservice teachers and mentor teachers) need access to opportunities and freedoms to choose lives they have reason to value to promote their professional development. This study explored only capabilities and conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice in a Ghanaian university. The scarcity of literature on the CA in mentoring programmes in teacher education highlights the need for this study in the Ghanaian context. The findings from the data analysis provide insights into capabilities and conversion factors for the management of mentoring relationship in a Ghanaian university.

### **7.2 Summary of research findings**

This study aimed to investigate capabilities and conversion factors for management of mentorship of preservice teachers in a Ghanaian University.

#### **Research question 1: What capabilities enabled the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice?**

The purpose of first the research question was to examine opportunities and freedoms that mentor teachers consider valuable in the management of the mentoring relationship. The findings revealed that most participants attached importance to respect and being treated with dignity, and recognition in the management of the mentoring relationship. Preservice teachers felt valued, seen, and heard and, therefore, had a voice to raise their concerns or contribute to develop professional knowledge mentoring relationship due to encouragement and motivation they received from mentor teachers, who had a collegiate relationship with them and treated them as colleagues (Calitz, 2016). Similarly, mentor teachers regarded respect and recognition as crucial in the management of the mentoring relationship. They believed that when preservice teachers acknowledge their role as guides in their professional development and have the opportunity to voice their concerns, it ensures proper management of the mentoring relationship. This suggests that individuals had the capability for voice that gave them freedom to express their views in the mentoring relationship, which meant a transition from just freedom to actual being or doing.



However, two preservice teachers felt disrespected by their mentor teachers for not allowing them to express themselves in the mentoring relationship and being constantly instructed, which hindered their freedoms and opportunities in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Another preservice teacher chose not to speak during the mentoring relationship, but only do what the mentor teacher instructed, possibly due to a lack of recognition and respect from the mentor teacher. This highlights that conversion factors in the personal, social, and environmental domain determine how individuals benefit differently from the same resources or arrangements (Robeyns, 2005). Freedom of choice is central to capability as people should be free to choose the life, they consider valuable (Nussbaum, 2011). Therefore, preservice teachers should not be compelled to speak once they have the capability for voice, but have chosen not to speak. What matters is that they have the freedom to speak and actual opportunities to do so if they choose to. Capabilities must prioritise equal access to opportunities for people to have the freedom to choose how to live from the "range of possible ways of living" (Robeyns, 2006b).

**Research question 2 What are the enabling factors for the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice?**

All the participants mentioned emotional and academic support as essential components in the management of the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. Although both mentor teachers and preservice teachers held similar views on the matter, mentor teachers considered academic support to be more important, while preservice teachers valued emotional support from mentors. For mentor teachers, providing support meant helping preservice teachers understand the realities of school life to make informed decisions about becoming a teacher. For preservice teachers, support was perceived as constant encouragement to boost their confidence in the teaching profession. This suggests an emotional connection between the mentor teachers and preservice teachers contributes to development of the preservice teachers' capabilities to achieve wellbeing of professional growth in the management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The study findings imply that mentor teachers' continuous encouragement and emotional backing help preservice teachers to overcome self-doubt to create positive image in the teaching profession.

The participants indicated that the university coordinator and head teacher effectively supported the management of mentoring the relationship during the teaching practice. The head teacher supervised the mentor teachers to promote their commitment and support towards the preservice

teachers. The university coordinator urged the preservice teachers to work collaboratively with the mentor teachers to achieve their wellbeing in the mentoring relationship. The mentor teachers supported the preservice teachers to gain developmental experiences in the mentoring relationship. The preservice teachers have the opportunities to communication with the mentor teachers through telephone to reduce their concerns and anxiety in classroom when the mentor teachers are not in the school. All participants reported having confidence in the management of the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers mentioned that the mentoring experience had improved their confidence as professional teachers, as reflected in their feedback to preservice teachers. They emphasised that the mentoring relationship had not only provided them with experience, but also in-depth knowledge to be good mentor teachers. This aligns with the notion that the mentoring relationship enhances mentor teachers' abilities, which allows them to exude confidence and respect from preservice teachers.

An important finding of this study was that both mentor teachers and preservice teachers have reason to value feedback sessions as a key source of professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. This finding revealed that mentor teachers viewed feedback given to preservice teachers as vital for developing the art of classroom pedagogies and guidance to foster preservice teachers' teaching performance through effective management of the mentoring relationship. The finding further showed that preservice teachers viewed feedback from mentor teachers as important in helping to develop confidence from positive appraisal and constructive feedback. The finding also revealed that most mentor teachers reported positive mentoring experiences from professional support and encouragement provided to preservice teachers. However, it was found that preservice teachers preferred truthful and impartial mentor teachers who highlighted both their strengths and weaknesses in the mentoring relationship. Notwithstanding this, the finding suggests that some mentor teachers were "over nice" to preservice teachers without being objective in their feedback. Fear of hurting preservice teachers led to only discussion of only preservice teacher's strengths and avoiding their weaknesses. This finding contradicts the purpose of the mentoring relationship, where a mentor teacher provides guidance on practical knowledge and professionally supports preservice teachers by encouraging them in the mentoring relationship. The findings also revealed that mentor teachers viewed feedback as an intellectual interchange which promoted preservice teachers' reflection and learning from their own practice. The study finding further revealed that

mentor and preservice teachers' understanding of each other in the mentoring relationships assists in creating and maintaining functional mentoring relationships with opportunities for professional learning and development.

The study uncovered that some preservice teachers did not feel comfortable with their mentor teachers because they were intimidated by power imbalance, which created fear in the mentoring relationship. However, preservice teachers placed value on open and friendly communication with mentor teachers because they viewed it as crucial for effective management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Similarly, mentor teachers recognised the importance of open communication based on trust and respect to achieve professional knowledge. Mentor teachers must be effective communicators and able to encourage preservice teachers to act in a way that benefits both mentor teachers and preservice teachers to develop positive mentoring relationship.

Mentor teachers and preservice teachers consider active listening as crucial factor in effective mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing during teaching practice. This finding suggests that mentor teachers pay attention to the opinions of preservice teachers on matters related to the classroom and school, while preservice teachers listen to their mentor teachers' instructions and suggestions for professional growth and development within the mentoring relationship. This suggests that lack of active listening on the part of the mentor teachers can result in a problematic mentoring relationship because preservice teachers feel marginalised, instead of being equal partners or colleagues in the mentoring relationship.

The need to emphasises the importance of collaboration in management of mentoring relationship between mentor and preservice teachers during teaching practice. This includes treating preservice teachers as colleagues and working together for mutual benefit to achieve wellbeing. The finding demonstrates that mentor teachers and preservice teachers can improve their understanding of teaching practice through reciprocal learning for professional development. This highlights that the mentoring experience in this study was collaborative and suggests both mentor and preservice teachers value collaboration as a critical factor in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Mentor teachers achieved a significant improvement in their pedagogical skills and knowledge through effective management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. This suggests

that through management of the mentoring relationship, mentor teachers are able to expand their capabilities and strengthen their professional development as teachers. The mentoring relationship serves as a platform for mentor teachers to contribute to practical experience of preservice teachers to develop professional growth to become competent and dedicated teachers in future. Moreover, the study highlights that preservice teachers and mentor teachers gained valuable pedagogical knowledge through the mentoring relationship, suggesting that the mentoring relationship leads to enhancement of pedagogical skills and knowledge of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers.

Furthermore, the finding indicates that mentor teachers who participated in the mentorship workshop organised by the University were more effective in their mentoring relationship than those who did not participate. This suggests that a lack of clear expectations in the mentoring relationship can hinder a mentor teacher's ability to support a preservice teacher effectively. However, the study shows that not all mentor teachers were able to attend the workshop due to budget constraints of the university and lack of available time of mentor teachers. The mentor handbook provided by the University was difficult to understand without proper training, which made many mentor teachers rely on their personal ideologies and previous experience to mentor preservice teachers, which may not always result in an effective mentoring relationship. Therefore, mentor teachers who participated in mentorship workshops were effective in their mentoring relationship. This suggests that budget constraints of the university and opportunities for mentor teachers to have proper training constrained effective mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. From the perspective of the preservice teachers, the university's orientation before the start of teaching practice helped them to acclimatize to the school's culture and enlightened about desirable traits needed in management of the mentoring relationship. This shows that orientations clarified the responsibilities and expectations of preservice teachers to clearly understand their role in management of the mentoring relationship. This suggests simply having qualified mentor teachers does not guarantee an effective mentoring relationship when preservice teachers are not properly oriented before the mentoring experience to understand the culture of the school and desirable attributes in the mentoring relationship during their teaching practice. Orientation of preservice teachers at the beginning of their teaching practice is crucial for successful management of the mentoring relationship to achieve wellbeing. Orientation not only helps preservice teachers to

understand schools' culture and philosophy, but also equips them with knowledge and understanding they need to effectively manage the mentoring relationship.

There was institutional intervention to support preservice teachers and mentor teachers to achieve wellbeing in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Management intervention was necessary for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to work together to develop professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. The head teachers had ultimate responsibility as lead mentor teachers to ensure mentor teachers were available to support preservice teachers achieve their wellbeing in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Furthermore, preservice teachers who exhibited challenging behaviours were reported to the university to be cautioned, which prompted them to change their behaviour to collaborate in the mentoring relationship. The results show that participants demonstrated an ability to seek for assistance to ensure effective management of the mentoring relationship, instead of risking failure in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

In conclusion, analysis of management of mentorship using CA lens highlights the following key capabilities of the mentoring relationship as being important:

1. Respect, Dignity, and Recognition: the tendency to be respected, treated with dignity, and have one's views acknowledged and heard.
2. Voice: the ability to express one's opinions, concerns, and perspectives without fear of judgment and participate actively in productive discussions for learning in the mentoring relationship.
3. Institutional Support: the ability to seek and receive helpful support from the university coordinator and head teacher for effective management of the mentoring relationship.
4. Professional Encouragement and Support: the ability to receive support from mentor teachers for both academic and emotional needs to develop professionally and personally.
5. Confidence: the ability to have faith in oneself and make decisions through reflection, and to act on decisions without fear or embarrassment.
6. Flexibility and Adaptability: the ability to be flexible and adapt to changing needs in the mentoring relationship and to be open to new ideas and approaches.

7. **Trust and Honesty:** the ability to build mutual trust between mentor teachers and preservice teachers and to maintain honesty in all communication and interactions, including being transparent in communication, setting clear goals and expectations, and fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for growth and development.
8. **Clear Communication:** the ability to clearly and effectively communicate with mentor teachers and preservice teachers in order to establish and maintain a positive mentoring relationship.
9. **Empathy and Understanding:** the ability to understand and empathise with preservice teachers and provide support and guidance sensitive to their individual needs and perspectives.
10. **Continuous Reflection and Evaluation:** CA highlights the importance of continuous reflection and evaluation of the mentoring relationship, including regularly assessing progress, providing feedback, and making necessary adjustments to ensure the mentoring relationship remains effective and beneficial for all parties involved.

The CA in management of the mentoring relationship underscores the value of empowering both mentors and preservice teachers to reach their full potential and achieve their desired outcomes through a supportive and collaborative relationship during teaching practice. However, the role of personal agency and choice in the mentoring relationship is essential for mentor teachers and preservice teachers. This means that both mentors and preservice teachers should have the capability to make informed decisions and take action to achieve their goals.

**Research question 3: What are the disabling factors for management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice?**

The findings show that several factors constrain mentor teachers and preservice teachers from achieving wellbeing in management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

Preservice teachers had difficulty using the local language as a medium of instruction for preschool learners in the classroom because of lack of proficiency in the native language of learners. Consequently, preservice teachers resorted to using of English as the medium of instruction and, sometimes, mentor teachers allowed them to use English as the medium of instruction, which had a negative effect on learners' understanding of lessons taught by preservice teachers in the

classroom. This hindered the effectiveness of mentor teachers to provide proper feedback to preservice teachers to achieve wellbeing in the mentoring relationship.

Unavailability of mentor teachers was a major constraint in management of the mentoring relationship because mentor teachers played a crucial role in providing support to preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge. The unavailability of mentor teachers was attributed to their administrative responsibilities within schools or lack of confidence in their professional abilities. This study highlights the need for more support and resources for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers to ensure successful mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Mentor teachers' fear of their professional inadequacy affects their ability to provide support to preservice teachers in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. The results suggest that absence of mentor teachers is a significant challenge in effective management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

The length of teaching practice period is a crucial factor in the establishment of an effective mentoring relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers. Long periods of teaching practice provide sufficient time for mentor teachers to understand the strengths and weaknesses of preservice teachers and provide support and guidance in the mentoring relationship. In contrast, short periods of teaching practice hinder preservice teachers from developing professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship. Short periods constrain mentor teachers and preservice teachers from building trust and establishing good rapport in the mentoring relationship. Further, short period of teaching practice constrains preservice teachers from receiving constructive feedback and to having ample time to apply learned skills in the classroom. There is a need for long teaching practice periods to provide adequate opportunities for preservice teachers and mentor teachers to develop professional knowledge in the mentoring relationship.

The finding indicates that absence of adequate teaching resources in schools constrain preservice teachers from developing skills of effectively implementing teaching techniques taught by their mentor teachers, ultimately impacting success of the mentoring relationship and hindering preservice teachers' chances of becoming successful educators in the future.

The results emphasise the importance of having sufficient teaching resources for optimal learning experience in the mentoring relationship. Inadequate teaching materials constrained achievement of wellbeing in the mentoring relationship because mentor teachers were unable to use teaching materials to support preservice teachers to develop professionally during teaching practice. The finding further suggests that preservice teachers could not effectively apply teaching strategies learnt through their mentor teachers because of inadequate teaching resources in schools.

The attire of preservice teachers during teaching practice in schools was primarily up to individual as there are no written guidelines for the dress code at the Ghanaian universities. However, mentor teachers in the Ghana Education Service follow guidelines outlined in the "Code of Conduct for Staff of the Ghana Education Service" (2017). Mentor teachers expressed frustration at preservice teachers not dressing professionally to school as expected by mentor teachers and the code of conduct. Although some preservice teachers changed their attire to meet mentor teachers' expectations to suit school situation, many preservice teachers did not see anything wrong with their attire during teaching practice. Mentor teachers served as role models in the profession, including dressing professionally, but some mentor teachers dressed unprofessionally to school despite the guideline, which made some preservice teachers complain and not take such mentor teachers seriously. The study suggests that the professional attire of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers is crucial for successful management of the mentoring relationship.

Success of the mentoring relationship was constrained by a lack of shared aspirations between mentor and preservice teachers. It was found that some preservice teachers had negative experiences with mentor teachers because of professional inadequacies of mentor teachers and personality mismatches. These negative experiences left preservice teachers feeling threatened and uncomfortable in the classroom, which affected achievement of wellbeing in the mentoring relationship.

### **7.3 Contribution of the study to knowledge**

This study aimed to explore capabilities and conversion factors for successful management of the mentorship of preservice teachers in a Ghanaian university context. The contribution of the study to the body of knowledge lies in bringing forth capabilities and conversion factors necessary for management of the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. In Ghana, there is a paucity of



literature on management of mentoring relationship between preservice teachers and mentor teachers in preschools during teaching practice. Several studies have been conducted on the challenges and benefits of the mentoring programme, but few have documented on preschool mentor teachers and preservice teachers' management of mentoring relationship using the CA. This study acknowledges this gap in the literature on teacher education mentoring programmes and explores it as a contribution to literature on capabilities and conversion factors in mentorship during teaching practice.

### **7.3.1 Management of mentoring relationship through CA lens in Ghana**

This study is the first of its kind to examine the successful management of mentoring relationships, particularly within the context of Ghanaian teacher universities, using the CA lens. Prior literature has explored mentoring programs in teacher education generally, as well as the nature of mentoring relationships, but none have specifically addressed the management of mentoring relationships within the Ghanaian context through the CA lens. As such, this study is the first to investigate the capabilities and conversion factors in the effective management of mentoring relationships in a Ghanaian teacher university during teaching practice.

Many studies have investigated the reasons behind novice teachers' attrition and retention in teacher education, but have overlooked the successful management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice in the initial teacher education programme. It is important to understand the experiences of preservice and mentor teachers in the management of mentoring relationship to equip others to successfully manage such relationships despite the challenges that arise during teaching practice. This study aims to encourage not only mentor teachers and preservice teachers to engage in mentoring relationships, but also any individuals who wish to successfully manage their mentoring relationship in other disciplines. The use of the capability approach in this study further contributes to discourses on teacher professional development, with a focus on individual well-being that may inform policy in university teacher education institutions, particularly in the initial teacher mentoring programme.

### **7.3.2 Identifying a gap in foregrounding mentor teachers and preservice teachers' voices in the mentoring relationship**

This study contributes to the literature on initial teacher education mentoring relationships by prioritizing the voices of preservice and mentor teachers in identifying the capabilities that enable successful management of mentoring relationship. The identification of these capabilities is essential for realizing desired outcomes in the management of mentoring relationship, as it allows preservice teachers to recognize the conversion factors that contribute to the effective management of mentoring relationships. Sen (1999) defines conversion factors as the means by which individuals can transform resources into valuable functionings, such as the capability to manage mentoring relationships effectively. By identifying the capabilities that contribute to successful mentoring relationships, this study highlights the importance of developing these capabilities to empower preservice teachers to recognise and address potential issues in mentoring relationships. Moreover, the CA framework highlights the importance of individual agency and freedom, which is relevant in the context of mentoring relationships where preservice teachers may be vulnerable to power imbalances and limited opportunities to actively participate in the relationship. The development of these capabilities can empower preservice teachers to exercise their freedoms and achieve desired outcomes in mentoring relationships. Failure to develop this capability could result in preservice teachers being deprived of their capabilities and freedoms in mentoring relationships, leaving them vulnerable to corrosive and disadvantageous experiences.

This study contributes to the literature on initial teacher education mentoring relationships by prioritizing the voices of preservice and mentor teachers in identifying the capabilities that enable management of mentoring relationships. The CA framework emphasizes the importance of individual agency and freedom, and the development of capabilities to empower individuals to exercise their freedoms and achieve desired outcomes in mentoring relationships.

### **7.3.3 Contribution to Literature**

The literature on the initial teacher education mentoring programme provides insight into the importance of supporting professional development and growth of preservice teachers (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Previous studies, such as those conducted by Okkolin (2016), Loots and Walker (2015), and Ongera (2016), have examined various aspects of mentoring

relationships in initial teacher education. However, to date, there is no literature that specifically addresses the management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers in Ghana.

The contribution of this study to the literature on mentoring relationships is by providing the freedom and opportunities for preservice teachers in Ghana to voice their experiences in the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice in the Ghanaian context. This understanding is important for developing effective mentoring programmes that can support the professional development of preservice teachers. As such, this study has implications for the larger field of education and may serve as a basis for future research on mentoring programmes.

In addition to its implications for the field of education, this study also contributes to the broader literature on mentoring programmes both globally and locally. By bringing attention to the "unnoticeable" challenges faced by preservice teachers in managing mentoring relationships, this study adds to our understanding of the complexities involved in mentoring programmes. This understanding is important for developing effective mentoring programs that can support the professional development of preservice teachers and contribute to the larger body of knowledge on mentoring programmes.

This study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on mentoring programs in initial teacher education by providing insight into the management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers in Ghana. This study also has implications for the larger field of education and the broader literature on mentoring programmes globally and locally.

The capability approach is a framework that emphasises the importance of enabling individuals to achieve their goals and aspirations by expanding their capabilities and opportunities (Sen, 1999). This approach has been used to examine various aspects of education, including the development of human capabilities through mentoring programs (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). By using the capability approach in this study, is possible to acquire a deeper understanding of the conversion factors that lead to the management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers in Ghana.

The CA highlights importance of empowerment in human development (Nussbaum, 2011). This approach emphasizes the need to create an environment that enables individuals to achieve their

goals and aspirations by providing them with the resources and opportunities necessary to do so. The identification of capabilities that contribute to the successful management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers in this study can be viewed through the lens of the CA. By identifying the capabilities that enable preservice teachers to manage mentoring relationships effectively, this study provides insight into the resources and opportunities necessary to support their professional development.

Moreover, the CA recognises the importance of individual agency in shaping one's life and career (Sen, 1999). In the context of this study, the identification of the capabilities that contribute to the successful management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers underscores the importance of their agency in the mentoring relationship. By recognizing the agency of preservice teachers in managing mentoring relationships, this study emphasises the importance of their active participation in the mentoring process.

This study contributes to the literature on mentoring programmes in initial teacher education by using the CA to identify the factors that contribute to the successful management of mentoring relationships by preservice teachers in Ghana. By recognising the importance of agency and empowerment in human development, this study highlights the resources and opportunities necessary to support the professional development of preservice teachers.

#### **7.4 Recommendations of the study**

Based on findings and conclusions, the study has generated several key issues for consideration regarding implications for management of mentoring relationships between preservice teachers and mentor teachers within an initial teacher education context. These are explained as follows:

##### **Development of a mentorship policy**

For effective management of mentoring relationship, a standardised policy should be developed through a participatory approach involving the UDS, lead mentors, mentor teachers, and preservice teachers. This policy should provide instant feedback and guidance to preservice teachers and serve as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship during their teaching practice experience. Development of this policy should focus on overcoming the specific constraints that hinder achievement of higher levels of capabilities.

## **Provision of support services**

### **i. Mentorship Training**

Training institution must establish and provide adequate support to mentor teachers before and during the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers must undergo formal mentorship training before the mentoring process. Mentorship training should cover not only evaluation process of preservice teachers, but also crucial skills and knowledge needed to be an effective mentor. Mentorship training must equip mentor teachers with tools and resources necessary to support the professional growth and development of preservice teachers. It is also important to emphasise the effective use of communication, interpersonal, and teaching skills by mentor teachers in order to facilitate collaboration with preservice teachers. During mentorship training, professional skills such as management, organisation, assessment, planning, and knowing when and how to allow for preservice teachers' autonomy should also be emphasised.

### **ii. Orientation and Induction Programme**

Prior to teaching practice, training institutions must provide comprehensive orientation to preservice teachers to ensure they are properly supported and clearly communicate to them their roles and expectations in the mentoring relationship during teaching practice. In addition, partnership schools should provide an induction programme to familiarise preservice teachers with the school environment and hold meetings between preservice teachers and mentor teachers to discuss their expectations, ensure both preservice teachers and mentor teachers understand their roles and responsibilities and resolve any potential misunderstanding before starting of teaching practice.

## **Head teachers' selection of mentor teachers**

Head teachers of partnership schools must be meticulous in their choice of mentor teachers and create a supportive environment for both mentor teachers and preservice teachers during the mentoring relationship. Mentor teachers selected must be experienced trained teachers who are willing and dedicated to supporting preservice teachers to develop professional knowledge. Also, trained mentor teachers are to closely monitor the mentoring relationship in cases where nursery nurses serve as mentor teachers for preservice teachers in the classroom.

### **Duration of teaching practice**

The duration of teaching practice must be long, about a school term, to give adequate time to preservice teachers to familiarise themselves with mentor teachers and demands of school environments to develop practical skills necessary for the mentoring relationship in order to achieve wellbeing. A long period will give both mentor teachers and preservice teachers opportunity to engage collaboratively in the mentoring process/ Inadequate time is a hindrance to the mentoring experience during teaching practice.

### **Mentor teachers' feedback in the mentoring relationship**

Mentor teachers should encourage active learning activities and provide timely and constructive feedback to preservice teachers. Mentor teachers should support preservice teachers in reflecting on their teaching practices and continuously adjust and establish regular check-ins and feedback sessions. Mentor teachers must provide regular, specific, and actionable feedback that would help preservice teachers to develop their professional skills and improve their teaching practices.

### **Respect in the mentoring relationship**

Mentor teachers should regularly assess the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship and make changes as needed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of preservice teachers. They must create a safe and supportive environment where preservice teachers feel respected in front of learners and are comfortable to share their thoughts, concerns, and experiences with mentor teachers. The mentor teacher must introduce preservice teachers to pupils with respect to minimise the concern that pupils may not respect them as teachers in classrooms.

### **Fostering collaboration and a growth mindset.**

Mentor teachers should encourage preservice teachers to work together, learn from each other, and embrace a growth mindset. More effort should be made to place multiple preservice teachers in a school for teaching practice. Having multiple preservice teachers in the same school provides an opportunity for preservice teachers to exchange ideas and informally learn from each other through sharing ideas with peers to achieve their wellbeing. Mentor teachers must be mindful of when and how to provide guidance to preservice teachers to promote positive and supportive mentoring relationship. Also, mentor teachers must support the mentoring process as a collaborative learning

process where preservice teachers and mentor teachers can continuously improve on their professional practices. This requires a willingness to learn from others and a collaborative mindset. Mentor teachers must also create an environment where preservice teachers feel comfortable to share their ideas and make contributions in the classroom. This can be achieved through fostering a culture of openness and collaboration, which should be emphasised by universities as a crucial component of mentorship training.

Preservice teachers should actively participate in co-planning with their mentor teachers before lessons, in order to establish a collaborative relationship. Mentor teachers should regularly reflect on their approach to ensure that their actions align with their intended goals and plans.

### **7.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research could consider investigating the long-term impacts of mentoring relationships on both preservice and mentor teachers. Most studies on mentoring relationships during teaching practice focus on short-term outcomes such as improved teaching practices and increased confidence for preservice teachers. However, little is known about long-term impacts of mentoring relationships on the career trajectories of preservice teachers.

Furthermore, future research in this area could concentrate on potential benefits and challenges of technology-mediated mentoring and identify best practices for effective use of technology in mentoring relationships. With the rise of digital communication technologies, mentoring relationships can now take place through various online platforms. While some studies have explored the use of technology in mentoring relationships during teaching practice, more research is needed to understand how technology could be used to support mentoring relationships.

Future studies could also explore cultural factors that influence mentoring relationships in different contexts and identify best practices for effective mentoring across cultures. Much of the research on mentoring relationships during teaching practice has not considered cross-cultural perspectives on mentoring. However, mentoring relationships can be influenced by cultural factors such as collectivism, individualism, power distance and communication style.

## **7.6 Reflections on my PhD journey of Research**

Conducting doctoral research study has been both a demanding and rewarding experience. As Fox and Allan (2014:101) describe in their study of reflexivity, it can be seen as a journey with potential for misperception and uncertainty. The journey was akin to a ride on a rollercoaster with its many twists and turns leading to heightened emotions and moments of doubt. There were great expectations of learning professionally when I gained admission and started the PhD journey in 2019, but as the journey progressed, it became evident that personal development was also a significant aspect of the programme. Levels of resilience emerged as a focal point in overcoming the challenges faced as a full-time academic staff member at the University for Development Studies as well as various personal issues that arose throughout the journey. At times, it felt like an emotional rollercoaster coupled with financial constraints, especially when the bursary was abruptly stopped in the second year and giving up was a tempting option. However, determination, support of my supervisor, genuine interest in the topic, and a strong desire to bring about positive change kept me going through the ups and downs.

I am grateful for all that I have learned through this doctoral research. Over the course of the last five years, my thesis evolved from a focus on the challenges of teaching practice for preservice teachers in northern Ghana to the management of mentorship in a Ghanaian university using the CA. With this change, I have an expanded knowledge of mentorship in teacher education and capability and conversion factors in the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice.

From a professional perspective, this journey has not only enhanced my capacity for research work, but also as a critically reflective practitioner in higher education. The support sessions taught me about the research process itself and introduced me to new concepts such as ontology and epistemology, which challenged my previous knowledge and understanding of research based on positivist experience. The opportunity to delve into teacher education mentorship in depth has pushed me to take a critical look at my own practices and question the beliefs and assumptions that underlie them. This has motivated me to continuously improve as an educator and work towards fostering more informed and consistent mentoring practices within the university, as well as extending these practices to Colleges of Education that University for Development Studies is mentoring in Ghana.



### **7.7 Concluding Remarks**

This project has been both challenging and rewarding, providing me with skills and knowledge that I would not have gained otherwise. Doctoral studies, specifically investigation of mentoring relationships, has shown that research at this level is complex. Despite an abundance of literature on mentoring relationships, information on management of mentoring relationships from the perspectives of preservice teachers using CA is scant in the Ghanaian context.

The primary goal of this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice through the lens of CA, thus it was to delve into mentoring relationships to examine conversion factors and opportunities available to preservice and mentor teachers that facilitate mutual learning that would lead to lives they have reasons to value. To achieve a comprehensive review of literature and analysis of collected data using CA.

It is my hope that this study has contributed to a better understanding of management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice, and that the findings and insights will have practical implications for the education community. By highlighting the importance of CA in management of mentoring relationships, I aim to provide a framework for enhancing the professional development of both mentor teachers and preservice teachers during teaching practice.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

#### Background information of preservice teachers' participants

S/N	Anonymised name	Year	Month/Day	School interviews conducted
1	Preservice Teacher 1	10 <sup>th</sup>	July/2021	Choggu Preschool, Sagnarigu
2	Preservice Teacher 2	10 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Choggu Preschool, Sagnarigu
3	Preservice Teacher 3	11 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Savanna Education complex, Sagnarigu
4	Preservice Teacher 4	11 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Savanna Education complex, Sagnarigu
5	Preservice Teacher 5	12 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Bupkomo L/A Primary School
6	Preservice Teacher 6	12 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Bupkomo L/A Primary School
7	Preservice Teacher 7	20 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Gariba Academy, Academy, Sagnarigu
8	Preservice Teacher 8	20 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Gariba Academy, Academy, Sagnarigu
9	Preservice Teacher 9	24 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Katariga Kindergarten, Sagnarigu
10	Preservice Teacher 10	24 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Katariga Kindergarten, Sagnarigu
11	Preservice Teacher 11	28 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Alhassan Gbanzaba Memorial School
12	Preservice Teacher 12	28 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Alhassan Gbanzaba Memorial School
13	Preservice Teacher 13	4 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Hope Academy, Sagnarigu
14	Preservice Teacher 14	4 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Hope Academy, Sagnarigu
15	Preservice Teacher 15	12 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Etoyle Royale School, Sagnarigu
16	Preservice Teacher 16	12 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Etoyle Royale School, Sagnarigu
17	Preservice Teacher 17	15 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	First Class Winners Academy
18	Preservice Teacher 18	15 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	First Class Winners Academy
19	Preservice Teacher 19	20 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Excellent Kid Academy, Sagnarigu
20	Preservice Teacher 20	20 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Excellent Kid Academy, Sagnarigu

### Background information of mentor teachers' participants

S/N	Anonymised name	Date	Month/year	School interviews conducted
1	Mentor Teacher 1	10 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Choggu Preschool, Sagnarigu
2	Mentor Teacher 2	11 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Savanna Education complex, Sagnarigu
3	Mentor Teacher 3	12 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Bupkomo L/A Primary School
4	Mentor Teacher 4	20 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Gariba Academy, Academy, Sagnarigu
5	Mentor Teacher 5	24 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Katariga Kindergarten, Sagnarigu
6	Mentor Teacher 6	28 <sup>th</sup>	May/2021	Alhassan Gbanzaba Memorial School
7	Mentor Teacher 7	4 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Hope Academy, Sagnarigu
8	Mentor Teacher 8	12 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Etoyle Royale School, Sagnarigu
9	Mentor Teacher 9	15 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	First Class Winners Academy
10	Mentor Teacher 10	20 <sup>th</sup>	June/2021	Excellent Kid Academy, Sagnarigu



## APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHEET

### Municipal Education Office

**TITLE: Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**

**Dear Director of Ghana Education Service,**

I am Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah, currently pursuing a PhD programme at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my PhD degree is "**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**".

The study aims to investigate the capabilities required for the management of preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' mentoring relationship at a Ghanaian University to develop a capability framework for the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach mentor teachers in your pre-schools to participate in this study. Participation in the study is voluntary, and those that are willing to participate will be required to sign an informed consent letter. The interview guide will be conducted in the English Language during break periods and after instructional periods in order not to interfere with learners' lessons or mentor teachers' regular duties. This study involves the use of a semi-structured interview guide and a focus group discussion. The Interview will be scheduled as per the availability of the participant and will take place at a venue convenient to you.

The Interview should take approximately an hour for each participant. In the case the COVID-19 restrictions persist at the time of the data collection, an alternative meeting using a platform most suitable and preferred by the participants: WhatsApp Video call/zoom/google meet or any valid suggestion will be considered. I will be flexible to accommodate what would suit the participants.

The identity of the schools and all participants will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know which schools were used in the research and this information will be treated as confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for the schools and mentor teachers during data collection and analysis. The information that will be collected will only be used for academic purposes. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. In my research report and any other academic communication, pseudonyms will be used for the schools and mentor teachers and no additional identifying information will be given. Any information that is likely to reveal the identity of the participants will be excluded from the research report. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the University of Pretoria's Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies according to the policy requirements.



If you agree to allow me to conduct this research in the schools, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via E-mail.

Upon completion of my studies, I will provide your office with a final copy of the thesis should it be requested. Should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me.

I hope you will find this arrangement in order.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah

**E-mail address:** [jquansah@uds.edu.gh](mailto:jquansah@uds.edu.gh)

**Contact number:** 233 244214802

**Supervisor:** Dr Talita M.L. Calitz

**E-mail address:** [talita.calitz@up.ac.za](mailto:talita.calitz@up.ac.za)

**Contact number:** +27 (0)12 420 5624

<b>DIRECTOR OF GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE'S PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH</b>
--

I, _____, hereby give permission to Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah to use mentor teachers in the preschools in the Tamale Metropolis as participants in his research on “ <b>Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university</b> ”.
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<b>Signature:</b> _____
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<b>Date:</b> _____
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## Faculty of Education

### **TITLE: Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**

#### **Dear Dean of Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies**

As you are well aware, I am currently pursuing my PhD programme at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my PhD degree is "**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**".

The study aims to investigate the capabilities required for the management of preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' mentoring relationship at a Ghanaian University to develop a capability framework for the management of mentoring relationship during teaching practice.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach preservice teachers in the Faculty of Education to participate in this study. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and those that are willing to participate will be required to sign an informed consent letter. This study involves the use of a semi-structured interview guide and a focus group discussion in the school of practice. The Interview will be scheduled as per the availability of the participant and will take place at a venue convenient to you. Semi-structure interview guide and the focus group discussion will be conducted in the English Language during break periods and after instructional periods in order not to interfere with the preservice teachers' regular duties.

The Interview should not take more than an hour for each participant. In the case the COVID-19 restrictions persist at the time of the data collection, an alternative meeting using a platform most suitable and preferred by the participants: WhatsApp Video call/zoom/google meet or any valid suggestion will be considered. I will be flexible to accommodate what would suit the participants.

The reporting phase of the study will use pseudonyms and codes and also any information that is likely to reveal the identity of the participants will be excluded from the research report. No personal information such as the name of the preservice teachers, will be mentioned in the study.

Upon completion of my studies, I intend to have a seminar to brief preservice teachers in the faculty and mentor teachers in the partnership schools. The final copy of the thesis will be submitted to the faculty for record purposes.



Please, if you would agree to allow me to conduct this research, fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via E-mail.

I hope you will find this arrangement in order.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah

**E-mail address:** [jquansah@uds.edu.gh](mailto:jquansah@uds.edu.gh)

**Contact number:** 233 244214802

**Supervisor:** Dr Talita M.L. Calitz

**E-mail address:** [talita.calitz@up.ac.za](mailto:talita.calitz@up.ac.za)

**Contact number:** +27 (0)12 420 5624

<b>FACULTY OF EDUCATION DEAN'S PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH</b>
I, _____, hereby give permission to Mr Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah to use the preservice teachers as participants in his research on “ <b>Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university</b> ”.
<b>Signature:</b> _____
<b>Date:</b> _____

## **Mentor teachers' letter of consent**

### **TITLE: Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**

#### **Dear Mentor Teacher**

I am Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah, currently pursuing a PhD programme at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my PhD degree is "**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**".

The study aims to investigate the capabilities required for the management of preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' mentoring relationships at a Ghanaian University to develop a capability framework for the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice.

I kindly invite you to participate in this study. This study involves the use of a semi-structured interview and a focus group discussion. The interview will be conducted at your school in a venue convenient to you and should not last longer than one hour. An audio recorder will be used to record the interview. The data collection procedure will be done outside your official working hours in order not to interfere with your regular duties.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can decide not to participate or have the right at any time to withdraw from the study without any consequences or explanations to anyone. Any information that you reveal will be treated as strictly confidential. Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times. Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis. Your school will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used and no additional identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes.

If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via email. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to access and verify the recorded views and the transcriptions of your interview responses made if needed.

Kind regards

Mr Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah  
**Email address:** [jquansah@uds.edu.gh](mailto:jquansah@uds.edu.gh)  
**Contact number:** 233 244214802  
**Supervisor:** Dr Talita M.L. Calitz  
**Email address:** [talita.calitz@up.ac.za](mailto:talita.calitz@up.ac.za)  
**Contact number:** +27 (0)12 420 5624



## **Preservice teachers' letter of consent**

### **TITLE: Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**

#### **Dear Preservice Teacher**

I am Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah, currently pursuing a PhD programme at the University of Pretoria. The title of my study towards my PhD degree is "**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**".

The study aims to investigate the capabilities required for the management of preservice teachers' and mentor teachers' mentoring relationships at a Ghanaian University to develop a capability framework for the management of mentoring relationships during teaching practice.

I kindly invite you to participate in this study. This study involves the use of a semi-structured interview and a focus group discussion. The interview will be conducted at your school of practice in a venue convenient to you and should not last longer than one hour. An audio recorder will be used to record the interview. The data collection procedure will be done outside your official working hours in order not to interfere with your regular duties.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can decide not to participate or have the right at any time to withdraw from the study without any consequences or explanations to anyone. Any information that you reveal will be treated as strictly confidential. Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times. Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis. Your school will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used and no additional identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes.

If you have any concerns regarding the data collection procedures, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via email. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to access and verify the recorded views and the transcriptions of your interview responses made if needed.

Kind regards



Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah

**Email address:** [jquansah@uds.edu.gh](mailto:jquansah@uds.edu.gh)

**Contact number:** 233 244214802

**Supervisor:** Dr Talita M.L. Calitz

**Email address:** [talita.calitz@up.ac.za](mailto:talita.calitz@up.ac.za)

**Contact number:** +27 (0)12 420 5624

### APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORMS

#### Mentor teachers' Consent Form

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to respond to the interview guide by Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah for his study on **“Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university ”**.

I understand that:

- I have not been subjected to any form of coercion or inducement to gain consent to participate
- Participation in this study is voluntary and out of my own free will.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the research project at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed.

Within transcribing and reporting the data confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or the report. If direct quotes are used in the report, no identifying information will be included. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor.

- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

<b>MENTOR TEACHERS' PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH</b>
<p>I, _____, hereby give permission to Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah to include me as a participant in his research on <b>“Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university”</b>.</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>



## Preservice teachers' Consent Form

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to respond to the interview guide by Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah for his study on “**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**”.

I understand that:

- I have not been subjected to any form of coercion or inducement to gain consent to participate
- Participation in this study is voluntary and out of my own free will.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the research project at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed.

Within transcribing and reporting the data confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed as recordings will be transcribed in a private setting or with the use of headphones and participants will be coded so that no names will be included in the transcriptions or the report. If direct quotes are used in the report, no identifying information will be included. All gathered data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor.

- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

### PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give permission to Mr. Joseph Yaw Dwamena Quansah to include me as a participant in his research on “**Applying a capability framework to the management of preservice teachers' mentorship at a Ghanaian university**”.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Interview Protocol for Mentor Teachers

Time of interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Male / Female: \_\_\_\_\_

The Mentoring relationship plays a critical role in the preservice teachers training at all levels of teacher education. The purpose of this study is to contribute to research on the management of the mentoring relationship and to develop a capability framework for a mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Pseudonyms will be used in the interviews, data analysis and the findings. The data collected in this study will serve for research purposes only and be treated as confidential. Access to the data will be granted to the researcher and the supervisor only.

Thank you for your participation.

#### Questions:

1. How many years have you been a teacher?
2. Please tell me how you would regard as /define mentoring?
3. How many years have you been mentoring a preservice teacher from UDS?
  - 3.1 Could you tell me a bit more about any experience that you have had in mentoring preservice teachers?
4. How would you explain the concept of “mentoring relationship”?
  - 4.1 Could you share any experience of cultivating a mentoring relationship?
  - 4.2 Was there anything of value to you that you learned from this relationship?
  - 4.3 Was anything challenging or difficult in the relationship?
5. Did you experience anything that helped you grow as a **professional** and as a **person**, as part of the mentoring relationship? Tell me more.

6. What are your expectations from the mentoring relationship?
7. What aspect of the mentoring relationship is most important to you?
8. In your experience, what has been the most positive aspect of the mentoring relationship?
9. What do you think can improve mentoring relationships?
10. What are the most impactful/influential interactions in the mentoring relationship?
11. What in your experience is a successful mentoring relationship?
12. Could you tell me what you consider to be a successful management of the mentoring relationship?
13. In your experience, what skills would you say are needed for the management of the mentoring relationship?
14. In your experience, are there any benefit you have derived from the mentoring relationship? In what way/why have you not?
15. Could you maybe tell me more about the personal strength and qualities that affected the mentoring relationship positively?
16. Tell me about the personal strength and qualities that affect the mentoring relationship negatively?
17. Do you think it is important for head of schools to be involved in mentoring relationships?
18. What do you consider as the major challenges in the management of the mentoring relationship from your experience?
19. In your experience, what were the strategies you used to manage the mentoring relationship?
20. If you could change somethings about the mentoring relationship, what would they be?
21. Is there any other thing you would like to share with me regarding the mentoring relationships?

*Thank you*

## Interview Protocol for Preservice Teachers

Time of interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Male / Female: \_\_\_\_\_

The Mentoring relationship plays a critical role in the training of teachers at all levels of teacher education. The purpose of this study is to contribute to research on the management of the mentoring relationship and to develop a capability framework for a mentoring relationship during teaching practice. Pseudonyms will be used in the interviews, data analysis and the findings. The data collected in this study will serve for research purposes only and be treated as confidential. Access to the data will be granted to the researcher and the supervisor only.

Thank you for your participation.

### Questions:

1. Please tell me how you would regard/define as mentoring?
  - 2.1 Could you tell me a bit more about any experience that you have had in the mentoring?
2. How would you explain the concept of “mentoring relationship”?
  - 4.1 Could you share any experience of cultivating a mentoring relationship?
  - 4.2 Was there anything of value to you that you learned from this relationship?
  - 4.3 Was anything challenging or difficult?
3. Did you experience anything that helped you grow as a professional and as a person, as part of the mentoring relationship? Tell me more.
4. What are your expectations from the mentoring relationship?
5. What aspect of the mentoring relationship is most important to you?
6. In your experience, what has been the most positive aspect of the mentoring relationship?
7. What do you think can improve mentoring relationships?
8. What are the most impactful/influential interactions in the mentoring relationship?

9. What in your experience is a successful mentoring relationship?
10. Could you tell me what you consider to be a successful management of the mentoring relationship?
11. In your experience, what skills do you need would you say are needed for the management of the mentoring relationship?
12. In your experience, are there any benefit you have derived from the mentoring relationship? In what way/why have you not?
13. Could you maybe tell me more about the personal strength and qualities that affected the mentoring relationship positively?
14. Tell me about the personal strength and qualities that affect the mentoring relationship negatively?
15. Do you think it is important for head of schools to be involved in mentoring relationships?
16. What do you consider as the challenges in the management of the mentoring relationship from your experience?
17. In your experience, what were the strategies you used to manage the mentoring relationship from your experience?
18. If you could change somethings about the mentoring relationship, what would they be?
19. Is there any other thing you would like to share with me regarding the mentoring relationships?

***Thank you***