

Mentorship, Organizational Support, and Professional Growth Among International Filipino Teachers

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth among Filipino J-1 teachers in a U.S. school district. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 50 Filipino J-1 teachers through a structured survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, the Kruskal-Wallis H test, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were employed to analyze the data.

The findings revealed that respondents experienced generally positive levels of mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth. Mentorship was found to be strong in instructional and emotional support, while organizational support was evident in professional development and feedback mechanisms. However, gaps were identified in career guidance and financial support, particularly in areas such as certification processes, visa-related assistance, housing, and transportation.

Inferential analysis indicated no significant differences in mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth when grouped according to selected profile variables. A significant positive relationship was found among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth, suggesting that support systems play a crucial role in enhancing teachers' professional development.

The study concludes that a comprehensive support system integrating mentorship and organizational support is essential for the professional growth of international teachers. It is recommended that school districts strengthen career guidance and financial support mechanisms to promote more sustainable development and retention of Filipino J-1 teachers.

Keywords: mentorship; organizational support; professional growth; Filipino J-1 teachers; teacher exchange program; social support

1. Introduction

Teacher mobility has become a significant global trend, with increasing numbers of educators participating in international exchange programs to address teacher shortages and promote cross-cultural learning. In the United States, the J-1 Teacher Exchange Program has played a vital role in recruiting qualified teachers from countries such as the Philippines to support diverse educational needs. Filipino teachers, in particular, have become a growing presence in U.S. public schools, contributing their expertise while navigating new

educational systems, cultural expectations, and professional environments.

Despite their contributions, international teachers often face unique challenges related to adaptation, professional integration, and access to institutional support. These challenges include adjusting to unfamiliar curricula, understanding organizational structures, managing visa-related concerns, and coping with personal and cultural transitions (Garcia, 2023; Edlay & Dioso, 2023). As a result, the presence of effective mentorship and organizational support systems becomes critical in facilitating their professional growth and overall well-being.

Mentorship has been widely recognized as a key factor in teacher development, providing both instructional guidance and emotional support (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Similarly, organizational support, including access to resources, training, and institutional assistance, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' professional experiences (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When these support systems are present and effective, they can enhance teacher performance, job satisfaction, and long-term retention.

However, there remains a need to examine how these support systems function specifically for Filipino J-1 teachers within U.S. school districts. While existing studies have explored teacher development and support mechanisms, limited research has focused on the combined influence of mentorship and organizational support on the professional growth of international educators in this context.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth among Filipino J-1 teachers in a U.S. school district.

2. Review of Literature

Mentorship has been consistently identified as a critical factor in teacher development, particularly for novice and international educators (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Hudson, 2023). Effective mentorship provides both instructional guidance and emotional support, enabling teachers to adapt to new teaching environments and improve their professional competence. For migrant educators, mentorship extends beyond classroom practices and becomes a support system for navigating unfamiliar institutional structures and cultural expectations (Yan, 2021).

Research on Filipino teachers abroad indicates that mentorship and community support serve as protective factors that help mitigate stress and promote professional stability (Baria & Avelino, 2024). These findings suggest that mentorship plays both a professional and psychosocial role in shaping teacher experiences.

Organizational support is another key factor influencing teacher performance and professional growth. Based on Organizational Support Theory, employees who perceive strong institutional support are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, satisfaction, and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Chen, 2025). In the context of education, organizational support includes access to professional development, availability of instructional resources, administrative guidance, and overall workplace conditions.

Studies have shown that teachers who receive consistent support from their institutions are more likely to develop professionally and remain in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2017; OECD, 2021). However, research also highlights that organizational support is not always evenly distributed across all domains. While professional development and instructional support are often prioritized, areas such as financial assistance, logistical support, and career advancement guidance may be less emphasized (Tagapulot & Macalisang, 2024).

Professional growth among teachers is shaped by continuous learning, reflective practice, collaboration, and access to development opportunities. Guskey's model of professional development emphasizes that teacher growth is a result of both individual effort and external support systems (Guskey, 2002). When mentorship and organizational support are present, teachers are more likely to engage in professional learning, improve instructional practices, and achieve career advancement.

Despite the growing body of research on teacher development, there remains limited literature focusing specifically on the combined influence of mentorship and organizational support on the professional growth of Filipino J-1 teachers in U.S. school districts.

3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth of Filipino J-1 teachers. The descriptive approach was used to determine the levels of mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth,

while the correlational design assessed the relationships among these variables. Additionally, a comparative approach was utilized to determine significant differences when respondents were grouped according to selected profile variables.

The participants of the study consisted of 50 Filipino J-1 teachers employed in Richland School District Two, South Carolina, during the School Year 2025–2026. A total enumeration sampling technique was used, wherein all qualified members of the target population were included in the study. Participants were selected based on the criterion that they had completed at least one semester of teaching in the district to ensure sufficient exposure to mentorship and organizational support systems.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of four sections: demographic profile, mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth. The items were grounded in established theories, including Organizational Support Theory and models of teacher professional development. The instrument underwent pilot testing with 30 Filipino teachers outside the study area, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.967, indicating excellent reliability.

Data collection was conducted through an online survey distributed to participants. Ethical standards were strictly observed, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of responses. No identifying information was required, and all data were stored securely and reported in aggregate form.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data. The Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed to determine significant differences among groups, while the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that Filipino J-1 teachers experienced generally positive levels of mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth.

The levels of mentorship across dimensions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Level of Mentorship Across Dimensions

Dimension	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	Int (Interpretation)	s (SD)
Personal-Emotional Support	4.30	Very Good	0.791
Career Guidance	3.60	Good	1.35
Professional Knowledge Sharing	4.38	Very Good	0.873
Instructional Process Feedback	4.18	Very Good	0.952
Resource Allocation and Monitoring	4.36	Very Good	0.826
Overall Mean/Standard Deviation	4.16	Very Good	0.958

As shown in Table 1, mentorship was strongest in instructional support and professional knowledge sharing, indicating that teachers received adequate guidance in adapting to instructional practices. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting mentorship as essential for teacher adaptation and development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Emotional support from mentors also played a significant role in helping teachers manage challenges associated with cultural adjustment and professional transition, consistent with research emphasizing the psychosocial role of mentorship (Yan, 2021).

However, lower levels of mentorship were observed in areas related to career guidance, particularly in certification processes, visa-related concerns, and long-term career planning. This suggests that while mentorship effectively supports immediate instructional needs, it may not fully address long-term professional advancement.

The extent of organizational support is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Extent of Organizational Support

Dimension	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	Int (Interpretation)	s (SD)
Orientation and Cultural Training	4.31	Very Highly Supported	0.823
Mentorship and Professional Development	4.27	Very Highly Supported	1.004
Performance Monitoring and Feedback	4.38	Very Highly Supported	0.762
Resource and Financial Support	3.38	Fairly Supported	1.254
Community Integration and Check-ins	4.07	Highly Supported	0.946
Overall Mean/Standard Deviation	4.08	Highly Supported	0.958

As shown in Table 2, organizational support was strong in professional development and feedback mechanisms, but lower in financial and logistical support. Organizational support was found to significantly influence professional growth, supporting Organizational Support Theory which explains that perceived institutional support enhances employee performance and engagement (Eisenberger et al., 1986). High levels of support were observed in professional development opportunities, training programs, and performance feedback, indicating that the school district provides structured systems that promote instructional improvement.

Despite these strengths, financial and logistical support emerged as the weakest dimension. Participants reported limited assistance in areas such as housing, transportation, and certification-related expenses. This finding highlights a critical gap, as unmet basic needs may hinder teachers' ability to fully focus on professional growth.

The level of professional growth is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of Professional Growth

Dimension	$\bar{x}$ (Mean)	Int (Interpretation)	s (SD)
Professional Reflection and Learning	4.44	Very Good	0.661
Participation in Training Opportunities	4.47	Very Good	0.736
Career Stage Progression	3.81	Good	1.140
Collaborative Professional Links	4.24	Very Good	0.997
Achievement of Growth Goals	4.36	Very Good	0.704
Overall Mean/Standard Deviation	4.26	Very Good	0.848

Legend: 4.21–5.00 = Very Good; 3.41–4.20 = Good; 2.61–3.40 = Fair; 1.81–2.60 = Poor; 1.00–1.80 = Very Poor

Table 3 shows that respondents demonstrated positive levels of professional growth, particularly in reflective practice and participation in professional development activities.

The results of the test of differences are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Significant Differences in Mentorship, Organizational Support, and Professional Growth

Variable	Profile Variable	Statistical Tool	p-value	Interpretation
Mentorship	Age	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.789	Not Significant
Mentorship	Sex	Mann–Whitney U	0.535	Not Significant
Mentorship	Civil Status	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.826	Not Significant
Mentorship	Educational Attainment	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.299	Not Significant
Mentorship	Field of Specialization	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.341	Not Significant
Mentorship	School	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.090	Not Significant
Mentorship	Years as J-1 Teacher	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.381	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Age	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.688	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Sex	Mann–Whitney U	0.181	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Civil Status	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.386	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Educational Attainment	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.136	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Field of Specialization	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.576	Not Significant
Organizational Support	School	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.439	Not Significant
Organizational Support	Years as J-1 Teacher	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.400	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Age	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.261	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Sex	Mann–Whitney U	0.270	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Civil Status	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.620	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Educational Attainment	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.108	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Field of Specialization	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.212	Not Significant
Professional Growth	School	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.519	Not Significant
Professional Growth	Years as J-1 Teacher	Kruskal–Wallis H	0.304	Not Significant

As shown in Table 4, no statistically significant differences were found in mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth when respondents were grouped according to selected profile variables ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that support systems were experienced consistently across different groups of teachers.

The correlation among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variables Compared	Statistical Tool	p-value	Decision on H ₀	Interpretation
Mentorship ↔ Organizational Support	Pearson's r (r = 0.688)	< .001	Reject H ₀	Moderate to strong positive relationship
Mentorship ↔ Professional Growth	Pearson's r (r = 0.695)	< .001	Reject H ₀	Moderate to strong positive relationship
Organizational Support ↔ Professional Growth	Pearson's r (r = 0.624)	< .001	Reject H ₀	Moderate to strong positive relationship

Note: $p \leq 0.05$ indicates statistical significance. Correlation coefficients (r) indicate the strength and direction of relationships.

As shown in Table 5, a significant positive relationship was found among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth ($r = 0.695$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that higher levels of mentorship and organizational support are associated with greater professional growth among Filipino J-1 teachers.

Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of a comprehensive support framework that integrates both mentorship and organizational support. While current systems effectively support instructional competence, there is a need to strengthen career guidance and financial support to ensure more holistic and sustainable professional development.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth among Filipino J-1 teachers in a U.S. school district. The findings revealed that both mentorship and organizational support play significant roles in shaping teachers' professional development. When these support systems are present and effective, they contribute to improved instructional practices, professional engagement, and overall growth.

The study highlights that while instructional and emotional support systems are generally strong, there are notable gaps in career guidance and financial support. These limitations may affect teachers' ability to fully navigate long-term career pathways and manage practical challenges associated with working abroad.

Furthermore, the significant relationship among mentorship, organizational support, and professional growth

underscores the importance of a comprehensive support framework for international teachers. Professional growth is not solely dependent on individual effort but is influenced by the quality and consistency of institutional support systems.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that school districts strengthen mentorship programs by incorporating structured career guidance and enhance organizational support by addressing financial and logistical needs. Developing a more holistic support system can contribute to more sustainable professional growth and improved retention of international teachers.

Future research may explore similar variables across different districts or include qualitative approaches to further understand the lived experiences of international educators.

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