

# The Effect of Mentoring on the Self-Adjustment and Well-Being of New Teachers at Primary School in the Interior of Sabah

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## Abstract

This study investigates the level of well-being of new teachers put in schools in the interior of Sabah by examining career adjustment, culture, and the role of mediators. This survey-based study employs a quantitative methodology. The population of this study consisted of rural primary school teachers from the entire state of Sabah. Using a random sampling technique, a sample of 242 rural teachers was selected for this study. Adapted questionnaires from the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), Mentoring Function Scale (MFS), Mentoring and Personal Learning: Content, Antecedents, and Outcomes (MPL), and Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS) comprised the research instrument. According to the findings of this study, there is a significant direct effect between self-adjustment and the mentoring programme, and there is a significant direct effect between self-adjustment and the well-being of new teachers in the interior of Sabah. This study demonstrates that a mentoring programme is essential for new teachers to adapt to their careers in rural schools, confront the hardships of rural life, and attain well-being.

**Keywords :** Mentoring, Self-Adjustment, Well-Being New Teachers

## Introduction

At the beginning of service, new teachers will face interpersonal and interpersonal challenges in building relationships in a new culture, adapting to colleagues, students, parents, society and forming a new way of life in a new and foreign environment. Failure to adapt, manage environmental changes causes unmotivated, low productivity and unwillingness to accept challenges, the quality of teaching and learning becomes less effective (Awani, Madiah, and Ismail, 2016; Abdullah and Laji, 2015). For new teachers who are placed in the interior area, the feeling of worry haunts the thoughts, extreme anxiety affects the emotional or physical and subsequently affects self-adjustment (Hassan, 2019).

The lack of infrastructure in rural schools is a significant obstacle for teachers, particularly new teachers. When posted in rural areas, new teachers must be emotionally, mentally, and physically prepared to work in underprivileged and disadvantaged schools. In a situation of disadvantage, teachers are required to be more professional and optimistic in

performing the assigned responsibility (Firman Mansir, 2018). The situation affects teachers' emotional or physical well-being, which in turn affects their ability to adapt to the new environment and comprehend the culture of the rural community (Tan Yoong Yee and Zainudin Hassan, 2019).

Failure to understand the environment affects self-adjustment (Yee and Hassan, 2019), making it difficult for teachers to adapt, becoming unhappy with the environment, prone to boredom, and constantly demonstrating dissatisfaction, fatigue, and incompetent performance of tasks (Yusof, Zaini, Rosna, and Faekah, 2015), stress (Mustaffah, 2020), and a loss (Ramlee, 2017). Lack of sensitivity to cultural differences, customs, ethnic background, and local community beliefs is one of the reasons why teachers are involved in racial altercations with colleagues (Ahmad and Najeemah, 2016).

### **Research Questions**

Teachers must be more professional and positive in their assigned responsibilities, even if they are placed in disadvantaged areas; they must try to adapt to the new environment and be creative in implementing learning and teaching in disadvantaged areas (Firman Mansir, 2018). The social environment is a determinant of the teacher's adaptation to the environment, which affects their competence in the classroom (Rohman, 2016). According to Neo and Leh (2017), well-being at work provides encouragement or a source of motivation for employees to carry out their responsibilities more effectively. In addition, the high level of egoism among new teachers tends to trigger crises and social conflicts (Omar and Haron, 2018).

The condition of 90% of rural schools in a poor and uncondusive state demands proper attention (Mansir, 2020) and affects the well-being of teachers, which ultimately affects the productivity, performance, and efficiency of teachers (Yusni, Rosna, and Faekah, 2015), as well as the quality of the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Ishak and Rusman, 2018). The lack of infrastructural facilities in rural schools challenges teachers to be big-hearted and show devotion in the face of scarcity. New teachers must adjust to a career environment that lacks everything; this situation affects their emotional or physical well-being, which in turn affects their career adjustment (Yee and Hassan, 2019).

Failure to adapt leads to teachers applying to move or quitting, which has a negative impact on the organisation and the students (Normazwin and Saadiah, 2020). The failure to deal with welfare issues has an impact on efforts to bridge the gap between rural and urban education, retention of teachers in schools, and an increase in transfer requests every year. The issue of the quality of new teachers in the interior who are less passionate about their role as educators (Brok and Want, 2017; Ros Eliana and Norhanan, 2017) will always be in the rhetoric of critics of the teaching profession and teachers who leave their careers at a disadvantage because the government has spent millions of ringgit training teachers during teacher training, especially at Malaysia's Institute of Teacher Education (IPGM) (Husaina et al., 2015; KPM, 2015; Bar-Tal et al., 2020).

Berweger et al (2015), and Rothland et al (2015), stressed the need for teachers to ensure that they are happy and motivated in their careers to achieve career satisfaction and quality to ensure teacher performance Clapham (2015), at the maximum level. This is because the quality of education is highly dependent on the quality of teachers, because good and

creative teachers will produce teaching and learning activities that are interesting and appreciated by students (Abdul Rashid, 2015), even in the face of inadequacy. Brouskeli et al. (2018) emphasised the aspect of teacher well-being as a priority in the education system because it affects the government's efforts to make education in Malaysia on par with that in developed countries (Mansir, F., Purnomo, H., and Tumin, T. 2020; Firman Mansir, 2020).

### **Study Objectives**

1. To identify the relationship between mentoring and the self-adjustment of new teachers in the interior of Sabah
2. To identify the effect of mentoring on the self-adjustment and well-being of new teachers in rural schools in Sabah

### **Research Hypotheses**

H1: There is a relationship between mentoring and the self-adjustment of new teachers in the interior of Sabah.

H2: There is no direct and significant relationship between self-adjustment and the well-being of new teachers in the interior of Sabah.

### **Past Studies**

Adaptation refers to a dynamic process of forming compatibility between an individual and his environment (Arman Abd Sani, 2020). The adaptation of individuals to their physical and social environment is important for survival (Jarrar Ahmad and Mohd. Ahmad Khan, 2016). Tan Yoong Yee and Zainudin Hassan (2019), state that new teachers face emotional problems and difficulty adapting to new conditions. Adaptation has been described as the process of discovering and adapting a mode of behaviour that suits the environment or being around it (C. V. Good, 1959). Adaptation is a change in behaviour, changing one's environment in accordance with the demands of the external environment, becoming a basic need for survival, and helping individuals to balance with their environment (Radha Rani Roy and Ujjwal Kumar Halder, 2018). According to Sakurai et al (2010), if individuals are unable to adapt to the demands of their environment, they will be confused and feel isolated.

Dohms and Stobäus (2017), believe that positive psychology is necessary for individuals to adapt to stressful situations, overcome difficulties in adapting, and develop a healthier personality. In the context of career adjustment, Savickas (2005), contends that the process of readiness for career suitability in a profession is the preparation of individuals to face any situation or change in the workplace. Career adjustment can increase both professional success and well-being (Hirschi, 2010). Dohms and Stobäus (2017), state that individuals need a positive psychology to adapt to a new and stressful environment. Otherwise, it is difficult for them to adapt and grow into a healthier version of themselves.

According to Decheva (2005), professional adjustment is extremely complex in the context of a profession or career, beginning with the process of becoming familiar with the profession and involving a lengthy and complex process of interacting with the professional environment, a lengthy process that begins with entering the workforce and continues until the end of service. Savickas (2005), explains that the process of readiness for career suitability in the profession is the preparation of individuals to face any workplace situation or change. Career modification can increase both career success and well-being (Hirschi, 2010). In his

study of the professional adjustment of novice teachers, Moroz (1990), identified three levels of self-adjustment: the self-formation of young professionals, more formal adjustment, and the level of comprehension and confidence. Moroz (1985), identified three major components of new teachers' professional adaptation structure: didactic adaptation, adaptation of the teacher's work environment with school students, and sociopsychological and physiological adaptation.

Teacher adaptation is very important; teachers who cannot adapt to the environment cannot manage or maintain the balance of the educational process and their students (Rani Roy and Ujjwal Kumar Halder, 2018). The level of teacher adaptation affects the quality of teacher competence and professionalism (Khan and Farhatunnisa, 2016; Yadav 2010). Teacher adaptation helps individuals develop skills, plan a career, and remain in that career (Nugraheni, Wibowo, and Murtadho, 2017). Teachers who can adapt are more committed to their jobs (Collie and Martin, 2017). Career adjustment can increase career success as well as well-being (Hirschi, 2010). A study by Razak and Kutty (2021), revealed a significant relationship between the level of teachers' psychological well-being and their social relationships with colleagues, job satisfaction, and student achievement.

The level of adaptation to the school environment is related to the quality of teachers and the professional competence of teachers. Teacher adaptation affects productivity, teacher efficiency, and teacher performance (Rashid, Ying, and Wah, 2010; Yusof, Hashim, and Ariffin, 2015). This is supported by Xiaofu and Qiwen (2007), and Ghitulescu (2013), who argue that individuals' inability to adapt to the work environment will cause transitional conflicts from pre-service to real-world service, such as work pressure, fear, and difficulties coping with the learning methods of individuals and groups with different achievements. This situation necessitates that new teachers devise a strategy for adapting to the work environment to achieve a satisfactory level of work performance and organisational goals (Yalçınkaya, 2002; Öztürk and Yildirim, 2013).

Casey (2011), explained that the workplace environment is a contributor to stress for individuals in an organisation, and the workload is an obstacle to achieving well-being in life (Amran and Khairiah, 2014). The failure of new teachers to adapt to the organisational and community environment is the primary cause of teacher dissatisfaction, which leads to poor teacher work performance (Abdullah Shukor, Abd Rahim, and Mohamad Yazı, 2006; Lopez, 2010). Teachers who are exhausted, disgruntled, and bored are significantly less effective at their jobs (Yusof et al., 2015).

According to McCann and Johannessen (2004), and Mustafa Öztürk and Ali Yildirim (2013), the parties involved should identify the needs and problems of new teachers in the process of adjusting to the school environment for a prosperous life toward achieving individual well-being in the process of assimilation with the organisation's culture (Steffens et al., 2016). The personal learning process facilitates self-adjustment and increases the confidence of new teachers (Tshannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) to achieve personal goals, understand values, norms, school culture, interpersonal relationships, and skill mastery (Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Deng and Yuen, 2011; Vumilia et al., 2016), all of which affect teachers' reflective and professional practices in the school environment (Killeavy and Moloney, 2010).

Hota (2000), found that there is a positive relationship between organisational health and health adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and job adjustment. Adaptation to the physical and social environment allows the teacher to continue to survive in a safe and happy state. Therefore, new teachers need to be guided and need support to face unexpected situations in the teaching profession (Tengku Sarina Aini Tengku Kasim and Fatimah Sahida Abdurajak, 2018). Samantha L. Dias-Lacy and Ruth V. Guirguis (2017) suggested that first-year teachers require assistance and attention from senior teachers in instructional aspects, emotions, and advice in class preparation, stress reduction, and achieving educator satisfaction. Without support, new teachers will feel isolated, and without support programmes, teachers will be unable to adapt, remain in service (Lacy and Guirguis, 2017), or reduce their risk of leaving after 5 years (Bar-Tal et al., 2020).

Support and guidance help new teachers face the difficulties of teaching their first year (Lacy and Guirguis, 2017) and live comfortably in disadvantaged areas. A systematic and in-situ guidance programme needs to be established. Callahan (2016), argued that personal learning guidance is the basis of emotional support for new teachers to increase confidence and efficiency in performing daily tasks. Failure to provide support and guidance for career development and personal self-learning affects the quality and efficiency of teachers' efforts to help students achieve (Brok and Want, 2017). Systematic guidance programmes such as mentoring will help new teachers understand the teaching career, understand the philosophy of education, pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and technical skills of teaching (Yoo et al., 2015), and develop a character of professionalism that is accurate and superior (Sutarmanto, 2015).

According to Normazwin and Saadiah (2020), many teachers experience psychological well-being problems; they experience stress, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and a fear of crying; they burn out and show low performance, are quick to anger, suffer from depression, or lack cheerfulness; and they are unable to solve problems. Teacher well-being is affected by the teacher's work environment (Malaysia's Education Development Plan, 2013). This indicates that a non-conducive work environment in schools is the reason teachers become demotivated and perform inefficient work (Abdullah Shukor, Abd Rahim, and Mohamad Yazi, 2006; Lopez, 2010).

Teachers' well-being is crucial to the quality of instruction and student learning. According to Kidger et al (2016), teachers with low well-being can be detected by their conduct, which usually consists of discontent, absenteeism, and depression. Sisask et al. (2014), add that teachers with low levels of well-being lack the confidence to assist students who frequently display emotional and academically disruptive behaviour. Briner and Dewberry (2007), explained that the relationship between teacher well-being and student performance is bidirectional: improving teachers' well-being influences students' performance, and improving students' performance gives the teachers satisfaction, which can lead to an increase in teacher well-being. In addition, teachers who consistently experience negative emotions and anxiety when instructing are reported to have high levels of stress and low levels of well-being (Hall, Goetz, and Frenzel, 2017). Positive emotions facilitate goal-directed thinking and action (Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson, 2005).

According to the self-determination theory, motivation is directly tied to happiness. Deci and Ryan (2000), discovered that instructors who experience happiness while teaching are likely to experience less work stress and less desire to switch careers. Conversely, teachers who experience negative emotions and anxiety when instructing will have high levels of stress and low levels of well-being (Wang, Hall, Goetz, and Frenzel, 2017). Teachers with high subjective well-being will be more concerned and accountable for their students' academic performance (Lašek and Vacek, 2007). Klassen, Usher, and Bong (2009) discovered a close link between teacher well-being and work productivity.

Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, and Malone (2006), conducted a well-being research study on almost 2,000 junior high school teachers in Italy. This study indicated that Italian teachers have a high level of well-being, as measured by components of the constructs, i.e., confidence, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction, allowing them to effectively assist students in achieving higher grades. Similarly, the well-being study conducted by Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2014) on 153 Australian academic staff at a single school revealed that well-being staff are more committed to the school and are more satisfied with their careers, in good health, and content with their work and personal lives. Teachers with psychological health are more motivated, have higher self-esteem, work more, and are more concerned and caring about their students' academic progress (Sarah, 2018). According to Jesus (2007), happy teachers are more motivated, skilled, and capable of dealing with issues in the profession; they maximise their efforts throughout their teaching careers.

The well-being of teachers' lives stimulates teachers to work excellently in completing assigned tasks and responsibilities (Bibie Anak Neo and Ling Ying Leh, 2017) and improves the quality of teacher work (McCallum and Price, 2016). Hobson and Maxwell (2017) insist that the well-being of teachers needs to be taken care of because the factors of teacher well-being will determine teacher effectiveness and retention in the profession (Day and Kington, 2008; McCallum and Price, 2010; Graham et al., 2011). Neglecting teachers' well-being results in teachers' performance not being below their actual ability (Nadia Abd. Razak and Faridah Mydin Kutty, 2021). The quality of life or well-being of teachers is a factor that will produce effects in the chain of institutional interpersonal relationships (managers, employees, and students) and direct consequences (positive or negative) in the teaching and learning processes of teachers and students (Dohms and Stobäus, 2017).

Teachers who are unhappy at work have a negative impact on their performance, teaching, and productivity (Yusni Zaini Yusof, Rosna Awang Hashim, and Tengku Faekah Tengku, 2015), are unmotivated, and their work performance suffers as a result (Noriati et al., 2010; Shukor, Rahim and Yazı, 2006; Lopez, 2010). Therefore, McCallum and Price (2010), argue that it is important to create an atmosphere of well-being among new teachers to produce positive feelings and active involvement in work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Adaptation of teachers to the environment helps new teachers achieve a satisfactory level of work performance in line with organisational goals (Yalçınkaya, 2002).

New teachers struggle to adjust to their careers, and struggle to find ways to overcome adjustment problems entering a new environment of uncertain classroom procedures and routines (O'Connor et al., 2011). Without support new teachers will feel isolated, without support programmes teachers cannot adapt, stay in service (Lacy and Guirguis, 2017) and

reduce the risk of teachers quitting after 5 years of service (Tal et al., 2020). In the United Kingdom a conducive and prosperous environment causes employees to remain in the organisation and willing to spend long hours at work (Gray, 2000).

The support of mentors, principals and colleagues help new teachers work in an environment that supports them and it is easy to get cooperation from colleagues (Achinstein et al., 2010) a supportive environment, making the school climate more positive, attracting new teachers to stay longer at school further preventing teachers from leaving the profession, remaining as human capital in education (Collie et al., 2017; Ju et al., 2015; Sergio Merida-Lopez, Martin Sanchez-Gomez, and Natalio Extremera, 2020).

Kaufman et al (2012), found that social support has a great influence on the motivation of teachers at work so as to increase student achievement, make individuals knowledgeable and think critically and creatively, produce proactive individuals and contribute new ideas (Gong et al., 2014), produce more work quality (Azman et al., 2014; Diane, 2014), facilitate the process of mastering and acquiring the theory and pre-requisite skills of new teachers in carrying out their duties (Mao et al., 2016), open opportunities to advance in their careers (Suzanah, 2015), and foster a culture of lifelong learning (Daneckam-Mikus, 2014). According to N. Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012), Poortman et al (2014), and Norhasimah and Hashimah (2015), personal learning is a long-term investment that creates innovative, creative, and positive-thinking individuals in an organisation.

The mentoring programme is a support system for new teachers in the early stages of their teaching careers and aids in the development of their identity as educators (Förbom, 2003). According to Yapıcıoğlu et al (2016), the mentorship programme conceptualises advice in the initial induction of individuals as consistent and ongoing professional training to train and support the development of new teachers. As stated by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), a special induction programme for new teachers that assists, guides, and supports them during and after the induction phase strengthens their understanding of teaching and learning (Hobson et al., 2009; Howe, 2006), their adjustment to situations (Hanson, S., and Moir, E., 2008), the formation of new norms and practices in the teaching profession, and the provision of emotional support (Hellsten et al., 2017). Improvements to the quality of new teachers can be done by boosting their confidence and productivity (Odell and Ferraro, 1992; Callahan, 2016).

Additionally, by offering a structured professional learning process, new teachers' skills can be supported in their first year of service through systematic professional development initiatives (Crouch et al., 2012). The process of adjusting to a new environment should be accelerated by providing groups or individuals with space to learn (Feldman, 1976; Raelin, 2000; Sambrook, 2001; Little et al., 2010). Prior to furthering their careers as educators, acclimation to the norms and culture of the school may assist new teachers to blend in with the socio-economic features of impoverished cities or rural locations (Jiang, 2011; Liaoli, 2011). Educating and assisting teachers in adapting to organisational culture and the teaching profession (Kocoglu, 2008; Ghosh and Reio, 2013; Vumilia, Semali, and Ladislaus 2016; Gozukara, 2017) will have a positive impact on interpersonal development and career development (Kram, 1985; Anderson and Shannon, 1988), as well as on adapting to the

organisational climate by providing support (Anderson and Shannon, 1988; Dzikowski, 2013).

Kobeleva and Strongman (2010), state that the mentoring programme is very effective as a structured socialisation personal learning process, making individuals eager to adapt and ready to learn a new culture, reducing the desire to quit work or move schools, and keeping new teachers in the same school (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Pogrud and Cowan, 2013; LoCasale et al., 2012; Ingersoll and Jeffrey, Kralik, 2004; Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley, 2006; Benjamin Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). Increased levels of satisfaction with the teaching profession cause teachers to persist for a long time in their tenure or service (Strong and St. John, 2001).

Strong and John's (2001), findings were confirmed by subsequent researchers, including Gozukara (2017), Ain et al. (2015), Mahiswaran et al. (2013), and Rajashi Ghosh and Reio (2013), who all discovered that mentoring programmes foster positive and healthy relationships at work. Brock and Grady (1997) discovered that induction or mentoring programmes facilitate the adaptation of new teachers to the organisational culture. Hanson (2008) contends that mentoring programmes educate new teachers about themselves and their profession, hence encouraging the growth of individuals' critical reflective practises (Harrison, Lawson, and Wortley, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Wang, Odell, and Schwille, 2008). Kutsyuruba et al (2019), concur and insist that mentoring programmes are suitable for the individual professional growth process.

In England, Andrew J. Hobson and Patricia Ashby (2012), found that, without guidance, the phenomenon of "reality shock" affects the well-being of teachers in the second year of their service during their transition process from the first year to the second year. Due to this situation, Tally (2008), suggests that the mentoring programme be continued until new teachers can adapt to the career of the teaching profession and achieve prosperity in the context of the school where they work. Marsha and Playko (2001), add that continuous guidance is important in socialisation for social learning to continue and be fully successful; this view corresponds to the objective of the implementation of the mentoring programme in Tanzania, working to promote socialisation between new teachers and more senior staff in addition to providing instructional assistance to new teachers (Nzilano, 2013).

Irish Phaletta McCollum (2014), found and proved that the lack of guidance or mentoring programmes is a factor in many new teachers' leaving the teaching profession early, since inadequate support makes it difficult for teachers to grow in the profession. This is supported by Arends and Kilcher (2010), who state that new teachers are often left to teach in the classroom with little or no support or left to bear with their own failures (Fry and Anderson, 2011; Ingersoll, 2012) when implementing teaching. Such situations cause new teachers to feel alienated (Clark and Brynes, 2012). According to Chesley and Jordan (2012), however, new teachers in their first three years require assistance from mentors, administrators, and schools to confront the problems of adaptation. New teachers require assistance, social skills, and effective collaboration to work well with colleagues (Satu Uusiatti, Sanna Harjula, and Tiina Pennanen, 2014).



Mentoring programmes guide individuals in dealing with psychosocial problems (Ljungberg et al., 2011). Mentoring has a positive impact on mentees, especially in career, psychosocial, and organisational development (Ghosh and Jr., 2013). Hobson and Maxwell (2017) argue that the satisfaction of new teachers' personal needs such as competence, relationship, and autonomy are not the only conditions for guaranteeing the well-being of teachers early in their careers, but that the relationship and interaction factors with the environment affect the level of teacher well-being. Therefore, Shoshani and Eldor (2016) highlighted the importance of learning and an environmental climate that includes aspects of research, dialogue, collaboration, and vision with old teachers in guiding new teachers to achieve positive learning behaviour and help shape subjective well-being. Therefore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), emphasised the need to create an atmosphere of well-being among new teachers by involving old and new teachers actively in work to help new teachers be more energetic and produce positive feelings.

Kardos and Johnson, (2008), in a qualitative study of the implementation of a mentoring or guidance programme throughout the American midwestern states for 147 new teachers and 89 mentors, found that the experience of following a mentoring programme had a positive effect on the development of new teachers from the aspects of positive interaction, collaboration, better teaching, self-improvement, having a clear direction, and being able to feel the life of the community.

Mentoring programmes are extremely beneficial for teaching mentees aspects of career advancement (Nor'Ain, 2015). Based on mentees' strengths and weaknesses, their problems can be ascertained and solved (Friday and Friday, 2002; Ragins, 1999; Wanguri, 1996), thereby boosting their self-esteem (Murray, 1991). Most scientists think that mentoring has favourable effects on mentees, particularly in the psychosocial, organisational, and career domains (Ghosh and Jr., 2013; Rollins et al., 2014; Weng et al., 2010). Policymakers should be sensitive and emphasise the necessity for and implementation of mentorship as the primary strategy for addressing the problem of new teachers in the interior who experience emotions of loneliness and unhappiness with their new surroundings (Kardos and Johnson, 2008).

### **Study Theories**

The Pryce-Jones Model (2010), places well-being as the means for increasing individual potential and true quality of life, making it a comprehensive model for well-being at work. Additionally, the well-being of the mind controls an individual's attitude when working in the organisation as well as the wisdom to act using limited resources. Individuals should be wise and more creative to solve existing problems as best as possible to overcome the challenges of the environment while working, have a strong sense of identity (be resilient), recover from negative experiences, and quickly adapt to their environment.

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) theory of career adaptation postulates that adaptation is a process of integrating multiple conceptions in a career, which gives rise to vocational behaviour from varying perspectives. Career adaptation refers to the willingness of individuals to engage in a conscious and ongoing examination of themselves and their surroundings to successfully deal with a variety of significant career adjustments (Savickas, 2013). Career suitability, the core adaptation of the construct, must become career maturity

as a crucial construct in the developmental perspective of career adaptation. Individual adaptability is based on a person's ability to plan, research, and make decisions, which is a key part of professional growth and maturity.

Albert Bandura's (1986) behavioural theory emphasises social learning, direct learning, and observation for the acquisition of behavioural patterns and the strengthening of task-success expectations. Individuals engage in social learning when they acquire new behaviours through observations, interactions, and modelling, using external reinforcement explanations and internal cognitive explanations to comprehend how they learn from others. Albert Bandura's (1986) social learning theory assumes that humans will behave and comprehend others by observing and emphasising societal rules and values.

### **Methodology**

This study uses a quantitative survey method (cross-sectional survey designs) and appropriate questionnaires to obtain information from respondents about the phenomenon of mentoring, self-adjustment, and the well-being of new teachers. This study involves new teachers in primary schools in the interior of Sabah. The study subjects were selected using a uniform random sampling method. A total of 312 new teachers were selected for this study.

The questionnaire adapted the Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS) by Van Katwyk et al (2000), which measures an individual's well-being at work, and employs a five-point Likert scale consisting of "never," "rarely," "occasionally," "pretty often," "very often," and "always." The Job-related Affective Well-being Scale developed by Van Katwyk et al. (2000) had an overall alpha coefficient of 0.95 for positive items and 0.94 for negative items. The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) is a supplementary instrument that examines the level of professional adaptation and evaluates an individual's career aptitude. CAAS was also employed in this study. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) report that the Cronbach's alpha reliability score was 0.92. The Mentoring Function Scale (MFS) was also employed. According to Armstrong et al. (2002), the derived career function value's internal consistency reliability was 0.85, while the psychosocial function scale's internal consistency estimate was 0.87. Langkau and A. Scandura established the Mentoring and Personal Learning: Content, Antecedents, and Outcomes (MPL) Scale (2002). The reliability rating for personal skill development was 0.84, while the reliability rating for self-learning on the job was 0.82.

### **Research Findings**

The first hypothesis states that there is a relationship between mentoring and the self-adjustment of new teachers in the interior of Sabah. Based on Table 7.1 below, mentoring was found to have a direct impact on new teachers' self-adjustment ( $\beta = 0.312$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.001$ ). This means that when the mentoring value increases by 1 unit, the teachers' self-adjustment value increases by 0.312. Therefore, the research hypothesis H1 is significant.

Table 7.1

*Direct Effects of Mentoring on Self-Adjustment*

Variable	Variable	Regression Variable (Beta)	S.E.	C.R.	p Value	Results
self-adjustment	← Mentoring	0.312	0.063	9.923	***	Significant

Note: *Significance level:*  $p^{**} < 0.05$ ,  $*** p < 0.001$

The second hypothesis states that there is no direct and significant relationship between self-adjustment and the well-being of new teachers in the interior of Sabah. Based on Table 7.2 below, self-adjustment was found to have a direct impact on the well-being of new teachers in the interior of Sabah ( $\beta = 0.063$ ,  $p$  value  $< 0.05$ ). This means that when the self-adjustment value increases by 1 unit, the teacher's well-being value increases by 0.063. Therefore, the research hypothesis H2 is not significant.

Table 7.2

*Direct Effects of Self-adjustment on Well-Being*

Variable	Variable	Regression (Beta)	S.E.	C.R.	p Value	Results
Well-being	← Self-adjustment	0.063	0.098	0.637	0.524	Not Significant

Note: *Significance level:*  $p^{**} < 0.05$ ,  $*** p < 0.001$

**Discussion**

In determining the relationship between mentoring, self-adjustment, and the well-being of new teachers in the interior of Sabah, this study discovered that the well-being of teachers has a substantial impact on the quality of instruction and student learning. According to Kidger et al. (2016), teachers with low well-being can be detected by their behaviour, which frequently consists of discontent, frequent absenteeism, and depression. Sisask et al (2014), emphasise that teachers with low levels of well-being lack the confidence to assist emotionally unstable and frequently academically disruptive students. According to Briner and Dewberry (2007), the relationship between teacher well-being and student performance is bidirectional: enhancing teacher well-being influences student performance, and enhancing student performance provides satisfaction to the teacher. In addition, teachers who consistently experience negative emotions and anxiety when teaching are reported to have high levels of stress and low levels of well-being (Wang, Hall, Goetz, and Frenzel, 2017). Positive emotions facilitate goal-directed thought and action (Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson, 2005).

The well-being of teachers' lives stimulates teachers to work excellently in completing assigned tasks and responsibilities (Neo and Leh, 2017), and improves the quality of teacher work (McCallum and Price, 2016). Hobson and Maxwell (2017), insist that the well-being of teachers needs to be taken care of because the factors of teacher well-being will determine teacher effectiveness and retention in the profession (Day and Kington, 2008; McCallum and Price, 2010; Graham et al., 2011). Neglecting teachers' well-being results in teachers' performance not being below their actual ability (Nadia Abd. Razak and Faridah Mydin Kutty, 2021). The quality of life or well-being of teachers is a factor that will produce effects in the

chain of institutional interpersonal relationships (managers, employees, and students) and direct consequences (positive or negative) in the teaching and learning processes of teachers and students (Dohms and Stobäus, 2017).

To help new teachers achieve well-being, the parties involved in welcoming new teachers, especially those placed in the interior, need to be responsible for identifying the needs and problems of new teachers, especially in their process of adapting to the school environment and daily life. New teachers indeed face emotional problems and difficulties adapting to new conditions (Tan Yoong Yee and Zainudin Hassan, 2019). Due to this, they must go through a process of assimilating into the culture of the organisation (Steffens et al., 2016). New teachers need a personal learning process to understand values, norms, school culture, interpersonal relationships, and skills (Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Deng and Yuen, 2011; Vumilia et al., 2016). This will help them adjust and build their confidence (Tshannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

Teachers with low well-being at work tend to have low performance, subpar teaching, and static productivity (Yusni Zaini Yusof, Rosna Awang Hashim, and Tengku Faekah Tengku, 2015). They are not motivated, so their work performance is less satisfactory (Ariffin Noriati A. Rashid, Boon Pong Ying, and Wong Kiet Wah, 2010; Abdullah Shukor, Abd Rahim, and Mohamad Yazi, 2006; Lopez, 2010). McCallum and Price (2010), argue that it is important to create an atmosphere of positive well-being among new teachers to produce optimistic feelings and active involvement in work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Adaptation to a new environment helps new teachers achieve a satisfactory level of work performance in line with organisational goals (Yalçinkaya, 2002).

To attain well-being, teachers must adapt to stressful situations, modify themselves, establish a personality, and cultivate a better positive psychology (Dohms and Stobus, 2017). Individuals must be prepared to face any situation and any changes in the workplace for the process of career suitability to be complete, and they must undergo a transition process in the context of career adjustment to be equipped with a positive psychology and achieve workplace satisfaction (Hirschi, 2010).

Adaptation refers to a dynamic process of forming compatibility between an individual and his environment (Arman Abd Sani, 2020). The adaptation of individuals to their physical and social environment is very important for survival (Jarrar Ahmad and Mohd. Ahmad Khan, 2016). This situation requires that new teachers adapt a mode of behaviour that suits the environment or the people around them. Adaptation is a change in behaviour, changing one's environment in accordance with the demands of the external environment, becoming a basic need for survival, and helping individuals to balance with their environment (Radha Rani Roy and Ujjwal Kumar Halder, 2018). Failure to adapt to the demands of the environment will cause teachers to become confused and feel isolated (Sakurai et al., 2010).

The level of adaptation to the school environment is related to the quality of teachers and the professional competence of teachers. Teacher adaptation affects productivity, teaching efficiency, and teaching performance. Teachers who cannot adapt to the work environment are always faced with transitional conflicts from pre-service to real-world service, such as work pressure, fear, and dealing with various individual learning methods and

groups with different achievements. In this situation, new teachers must find a way to self-adjust to the work environment to achieve a satisfactory level of work performance and organisational goals.

Teacher adaptability is crucial; teachers who cannot adjust to the environment cannot manage or maintain the educational process's balance or the students' interests (Rani Roy and Ujjwal Kumar Halder, 2018). The level of teacher adaptability influences the competency and professionalism of educators (Khan and Farhatunnisa, 2016; Yadav 2010). Individuals are better able to gain skills, plan a career, and remain in that career because of teacher adaptation (Nugraheni, Wibowo, and Murtadho, 2017). Adaptable teachers are more devoted to their jobs (Collie and Martin, 2017). A career adjustment can boost both career success and well-being (Hirschi, 2010). This was demonstrated in a 2021 study conducted by Nadia Abd. Razak and Faridah Mydin Kutty. They discovered a high correlation between teachers' psychological health and their social ties with colleagues, their work satisfaction, and students' academic achievement.

In determining the impact of the mentoring programme and career adjustment on the well-being of new teachers in Sabah's rural schools, this study supports the belief of Samantha Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017), that first-year teachers require support and attention from more senior teachers in the teaching aspect, emotions, and guidance in planning lessons, reducing stress, and achieving satisfaction as an educator. Support and mentoring enable new teachers to overcome the challenges of their first year of teaching (Dias-Lacy and Guirguis, 2017) and thrive in underprivileged communities. A programme of systematic and on-site guidance must be implemented. Callahan (2016), argues that personal learning coaching is the foundation of emotional support for new teachers to boost their self-assurance and effectiveness in executing everyday activities. The quality and efficacy of teachers' efforts to help students achieve academic achievement are diminished when they fail to provide assistance and direction for career development and personal self-study (Brok and Want, 2017).

Systematic guidance programmes such as mentoring will help new teachers understand the teaching career, the philosophy of education, pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and technical skills of teaching (Yoo et al., 2015), as well as develop a character of professionalism that is accurate and superior (Sutarmanto, 2015). The support of mentors, principals, and colleagues helps new teachers work in an environment that supports them, and it is easy to get cooperation from colleagues (Achinstejn et al., 2010). A supportive environment makes the school climate more positive, attracting new teachers to stay longer at school, further preventing teachers from leaving the profession to remain as human capital in education (Collie et al., 2017; Ju et al., 2015; Sergio Merida-Lopez, Martin Sanchez-Gomez, and Natalio Extremera, 2020).

The mentoring programme is a support programme for new teachers pursuing a career in the profession and helps develop an identity as a teacher (Förbom, 2003). The mentoring programme is based on the concept of guidance in the initial induction, which serves as consistent and continuous professional training to train and support new teachers with professional development. Helping and facilitating teachers to adapt to the culture of the organisation and the teaching profession (Kocoglu, 2008; Rajashi Ghosh and Reio, 2013;

Vumilia, Philbert L., Semali, Ladislaus M., 2016; Gozukara, 2017) has a positive effect on interpersonal development and career development (Kram, 1985; Anderson and Shannon, 1988). Individuals can adapt to the organisational climate if adequate support is offered (Dziczkowski, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Social support has a significant impact on the motivation of teachers at work (Kaufman et al., 2012) so as to increase student achievement, make individuals knowledgeable and think critically and creatively, produce proactive individuals and contribute new ideas (Gong et al., 2014), produce more work quality (Azman et al., 2014; Diane, 2014), and facilitate the process of mastering and acquiring the theory and pre-requisite skills of new teachers in carrying out their duties (Mao et al., 2016). Open opportunities to advance in their careers (Suzanah, 2015) will foster a culture of lifelong learning. Personal development is an organisation's long-term investment in inventive, creative, and optimistic thinkers (Daneckam-Mikus, 2014; N. Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012; Poortman et al., 2014; Norhasimah and Hashimah, 2015).

According to Nor'Ain (2015), mentoring programmes are extremely beneficial for teaching aspects of career development. Mentoring helps solve problems faced by the mentees rationally based on their strengths and weaknesses (Friday and Friday, 2002; Ragins, 1999; Wanguri, 1996), thus boosting their confidence (Murray, 1991). According to many experts, mentoring has a good effect on mentees, particularly in the psychosocial, organisational, and career domains (Ghosh and Jr., 2013; Rollins et al., 2014; Weng et al., 2010). Policymakers should be sensitive and emphasise the necessity for and implementation of mentoring programmes as the primary strategy for addressing the issue of new teachers in the interior who face emotions of loneliness and discontent in their new setting (Kardos and Johnson, 2008).

This study indirectly contributes to theoretical knowledge, especially aspects of contributing to the body of knowledge and improving practice. The development of the rural teacher welfare model helps those involved in policy-making, especially the Malaysian Ministry of Education, the state Education Department and the District Education Office, to plan the development of new teachers to face the challenges of rural areas. For those involved in teacher training, such as the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education, it is essential to see this issue as critical and fundamental by providing exceptional training and addressing specific challenges for teacher preparation in rural areas.

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