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The Role of Induction and Mentoring Programs in Improving Early-Career Educators' Adaptation and Retention: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:
The transition from initial teacher preparation to professional practice represents a critical period that can shape educators' professional competence, workplace integration, and long-term career decisions. However, beginning educators frequently encounter challenges associated with classroom management, instructional decision-making, professional confidence, and adjustment to institutional expectations. This systematic literature review examines the role of induction and mentoring programs in strengthening early-career educators' adaptation and retention. Following the PRISMA 2020 framework, the review investigates literature addressing program characteristics, professional adaptation mechanisms, organizational integration, retention-related outcomes, and contextual factors influencing program effectiveness. The synthesis is organized thematically to identify connections between structured professional support and sustainable workforce participation. The findings indicate that induction and mentoring serve complementary functions: induction facilitates organizational orientation and role clarification, whereas mentoring supports situated learning through professional dialogue, guided practice, observation, and constructive feedback. Their potential contribution to adaptation can be understood through self-efficacy, reflective practice, adaptive expertise, and organizational socialization. Furthermore, professional adaptation may strengthen educators' sense of belonging, organizational commitment, and intention to remain, although these outcomes should not be equated with actual retention. Program effectiveness depends on the quality of mentoring relationships, mentor preparation, leadership support, protected time for professional learning, adequate resources, and alignment with institutional needs. The review advances an integrated analytical perspective linking induction and mentoring with professional adaptation, organizational integration, and early-career retention. It also emphasizes that professional support alone cannot overcome persistent structural challenges, including excessive workloads and limited career opportunities. Future research should employ longitudinal and comparative designs to examine actual retention outcomes and determine how program characteristics interact with

organizational conditions. These insights provide a conceptual foundation for developing more responsive, context-sensitive, and sustainable professional support systems for early-career educators.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

The availability and sustainability of a high-quality teaching workforce are fundamental prerequisites for achieving a high-quality and sustainable education system. Globally, meeting the demand for teachers remains a significant challenge. UNESCO estimates that approximately 44 million additional teachers will be needed worldwide by 2030 to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education (Febriana et al., 2025). This challenge concerns not only the number of available educators but also the capacity of education systems to retain competent teachers throughout their professional careers. Educators play a strategic role that extends beyond delivering instructional content, as they contribute to the quality of pedagogical interactions, students' character development, and the successful implementation of educational innovations. In Indonesia, the importance of teacher professionalism is also emphasized in Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, which recognizes competence and professionalism as essential elements of national education (Nafi & Rodiyah, 2025). Therefore, contemporary educational challenges cannot be addressed solely through teacher recruitment and preparation; they also require systematic strategies to support professional transitions and retain educators from the earliest stages of their careers (Gariglio, 2021).

The early-career stage represents a critical period that can shape educators' professional competence, identity formation, and career sustainability. During this phase, beginning educators must translate the theoretical knowledge acquired through preservice preparation into complex, dynamic, and often unpredictable teaching practices. These challenges include managing diverse classrooms, developing instructional plans, fulfilling administrative responsibilities, selecting appropriate pedagogical strategies, and adapting to school cultures and organizational expectations. The gap between theoretical knowledge and practical realities can generate *reality shock*, a condition in which actual workplace experiences differ from the expectations formed during teacher preparation. Without adequate professional support, these experiences may develop into emotional stress, diminish professional confidence, and hinder beginning educators' integration into the workplace. Early-career adaptation should therefore be understood not merely as the ability to adjust to school routines but as a multidimensional process involving pedagogical competence, organizational understanding, professional relationships, and the development of an educator identity (Han, 2023).

Difficulties in navigating this transition have important implications for educator retention. When job demands are disproportionate to the support available, beginning educators may

experience declining motivation, job dissatisfaction, and an increased desire to leave the profession or move to another educational institution. Teacher attrition affects not only individual educators but also educational organizations by increasing recruitment and retraining costs, reducing accumulated professional experience, disrupting instructional continuity, and increasing the workload of remaining teachers. In Indonesia, challenges related to teacher supply and distribution, as discussed by Febriana et al. (2025), reinforce the need for retention strategies that extend beyond simply increasing the number of educators. Retention should be incorporated into educational human resource development policies from the point at which teachers enter the workplace. Nevertheless, educators' decisions to remain cannot be explained solely by the availability of mentoring programs, as leadership, workload, organizational conditions, well-being, and career development opportunities may also influence these decisions. An adequate analysis of retention therefore requires an approach that connects individual adaptation experiences with broader institutional support (Hoyt & Moll, n.d.; Kaplan, 2022).

One strategy developed to facilitate this transition is the implementation of induction and mentoring programs. Induction programs provide structured initial support to help beginning educators understand their professional responsibilities, work procedures, organizational culture, and institutional teaching standards. Mentoring, meanwhile, offers more sustained guidance through interactions with experienced educators, discussions of instructional challenges, classroom observations, feedback, and professional reflection. In Indonesia, induction for beginning teachers has a policy foundation, including Minister of National Education Regulation No. 27 of 2010 concerning the Induction Program for Beginning Teachers. These approaches serve complementary functions: induction establishes an organizational framework for orientation and support, whereas mentoring strengthens professional learning through ongoing developmental relationships. Conceptually, this relationship can be understood through the perspectives of social support, adult learning, and pedagogical knowledge development (Maready et al., 2021; Matthews, n.d.). Emotional support, experience sharing, and relevant feedback may help beginning educators strengthen their self-efficacy, improve their competence, and develop a stronger connection with their professional environment. However, the existence of a program does not automatically guarantee successful outcomes. Its effectiveness may depend on mentor competence, the continuity of guidance, the availability of time, leadership support, and the extent to which program activities address beginning educators' needs. It is therefore essential to distinguish program availability from implementation quality and the outcomes actually achieved (Kutsyuruba, 2021).

Although induction and mentoring have received considerable attention in research on teacher professional development, their combined relationships with beginning educators' adaptation and retention require a more integrated synthesis. Research on induction often emphasizes workplace orientation, understanding school policies, and adjustment to organizational environments, whereas mentoring research frequently focuses on teaching competence, pedagogical reflection, and interpersonal support. This separation may limit understanding of how the two forms of support function together during professional transitions. Furthermore, adaptation and retention are often treated as separate outcomes, although they may be conceptually interconnected. Successful adaptation may contribute to professional satisfaction and commitment, while positive mentoring experiences may strengthen educators' intentions to remain. These relationships nevertheless require careful examination of empirical evidence because successful adaptation does not necessarily lead to retention, particularly when educators encounter structural challenges such as excessive workloads, inadequate well-being provisions, or unsupportive organizational environments. Accordingly, the research gap addressed in this article extends beyond the separate examination of induction or mentoring. It concerns the need for a systematic mapping of their interrelationships, the mechanisms through which professional

support contributes to adaptation, and the conditions under which such support may contribute to the retention of early-career educators (Maready et al., 2021).

In response to this gap, the novelty of this study lies in developing a conceptual synthesis that integrates induction and mentoring as complementary forms of professional support while connecting early-career adaptation and retention as related but distinct outcomes. Unlike approaches that examine only the presence or effectiveness of a single program type, this review maps program components, support mechanisms, professional outcomes, and contextual factors that influence implementation. It also distinguishes short-term outcomes, such as adjustment to professional responsibilities and workplace environments, from outcomes requiring longer observation periods, including career commitment and decisions to remain in the profession. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this study identifies patterns across previous findings, similarities and differences among research outcomes, and areas where the available evidence remains limited. Its contribution therefore extends beyond summarizing previous studies to developing an analytical framework that explains how, under what conditions, and through which mechanisms induction and mentoring may support the career sustainability of beginning educators. The Indonesian context is also considered to enable a critical interpretation of international findings in relation to national policies, organizational cultures, and professional development practices within the education system.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze and synthesize empirical evidence concerning the role of induction and mentoring programs in improving early-career educators' adaptation and supporting their retention. Specifically, it seeks to identify the principal characteristics and components of induction and mentoring programs, explain their contributions to the dimensions of professional adaptation, analyze their relationships with retention, and identify factors that facilitate or constrain effective implementation. The study is expected to contribute theoretically by clarifying the relationships among professional support, early-career adaptation, and career sustainability. Practically, the synthesis is intended to provide an evidence-informed foundation for policymakers, teacher education institutions, school leaders, and professional development program managers in designing structured, needs-responsive, and sustainable induction and mentoring systems. Ultimately, support for beginning educators should not be regarded as an orientation activity that ends at the start of employment, but as an institutional investment in developing a competent, adaptable, and sustainable teaching workforce.

Method (منهج)

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to systematically examine the role of induction and mentoring programs in improving early-career educators' adaptation and retention. The review was designed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant empirical studies published between 2015 and 2026, providing an overview of current evidence while identifying persistent research gaps. Literature searches were planned across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar using combinations of keywords such as "teacher induction," "mentoring programs," "early-career teachers," "professional adaptation," "teacher retention," and "teacher turnover." The review focused on peer-reviewed empirical studies addressing induction or mentoring interventions and their relationships with professional adjustment, teaching competence, self-efficacy, organizational belonging, job satisfaction, or retention outcomes. Studies were considered eligible when they directly addressed beginning educators or early-career teachers and provided findings relevant to the review objectives. Duplicate records, studies unrelated to the research questions, and publications without sufficient methodological or substantive information were excluded. The screening process was structured around the PRISMA 2020 framework, covering identification, duplicate removal, title and abstract screening,

full-text eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. The number of records identified, excluded, and retained will be reported based on the actual search and screening results.

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis to identify recurring patterns, differences in findings, proposed mechanisms, and contextual factors associated with induction and mentoring outcomes. The analysis examined four interconnected dimensions: (1) the structural characteristics and implementation quality of induction and mentoring programs; (2) professional adaptation mechanisms, particularly self-efficacy, adaptive expertise, and responses to reality shock and transition shock; (3) relational and organizational outcomes, including sense of belonging, job satisfaction, and professional commitment; and (4) retention-related outcomes, including intention to stay, actual retention where reported, and teacher turnover. These dimensions informed the development of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1. The framework was treated as an analytical model to be examined and refined through the literature rather than as a predetermined causal relationship. Particular attention was given to differences in research design, educational context, mentoring quality, organizational support, and the duration of outcome measurement. This approach enabled the review to distinguish associations from demonstrated intervention effects and to develop an evidence-informed synthesis of how induction and mentoring may contribute to early-career educators' adaptation and professional sustainability.

Result (نتائج)

Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies and Models of Induction and Mentoring

The systematic literature review examined 13 articles published between 2018 and 2026, focusing on induction programs, mentoring practices, professional adaptation, and educator retention. The reviewed studies varied in methodological approach, research context, and analytical emphasis. Their findings provided insights into how structured professional support can facilitate the transition from initial preparation to professional practice. However, the diversity of study populations and research designs requires careful interpretation, particularly when evidence from professions outside school education is considered (Olson Stewart et al., 2021).

The synthesis identified three broad models of induction and mentoring: school-based induction, residency or transition-to-practice programs, and hybrid or digitally supported mentoring. Although these models differ in implementation and intensity, they share an emphasis on guided practice, professional feedback, and structured support during the early stages of a career.

Table 1. Comparative Characteristics of Induction and Mentoring Models

Model	Main characteristics	Key activities	Intended outcomes
School-based induction	Conducted within the employing school and supported by experienced teachers	Workplace orientation, classroom observation, lesson-planning assistance, and feedback	Improved workplace adjustment and teaching competence
Residency/transition-to-practice	Structured practice supported by educational institutions	Supervised practice, guided teaching, mentoring, and	Gradual development of professional readiness

	and professional workplaces	competency evaluation	
Hybrid/digital mentoring	Combines face-to-face mentoring with digital communication and documentation	Online consultation, digital reflection, progress monitoring, and feedback	Greater flexibility and continuity of professional support

Source: Authors' synthesis of the reviewed literature.

The comparison indicates that induction and mentoring are complementary processes. Induction establishes the organizational and procedural foundations of professional entry, whereas mentoring provides individualized guidance and opportunities for reflective learning. Across the reviewed literature, four recurring implementation stages were identified: preparation and mentor assignment, workplace orientation and guided practice, formative assessment and feedback, and evaluation with follow-up development. Nevertheless, the extent to which these stages were formally documented and consistently implemented differed across contexts.

Contributions of Induction and Mentoring to Early-Career Educators' Professional Adaptation

A recurring finding was the importance of structured support in helping beginning educators navigate the gap between theoretical preparation and classroom realities. Challenges included classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, administrative responsibilities, communication with parents, and adjustment to school culture. Induction helped clarify professional expectations and organizational procedures, while mentoring enabled beginning educators to discuss practical difficulties, observe experienced teachers, and receive feedback relevant to their instructional needs (Olson Stewart et al., 2021; Orland Barak, 2021).

The synthesis further suggested that guided practice and reflective dialogue may strengthen self-efficacy and adaptive expertise. These mechanisms allow beginning educators to develop confidence in handling professional responsibilities and to respond more flexibly to unfamiliar classroom situations. The potential contribution of induction and mentoring also extends to four broad dimensions of teacher competence, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Professional Adaptation Outcomes Associated with Induction and Mentoring

Competency dimension	Initial challenges	Potential developmental outcomes	Supporting mechanisms
Pedagogical	Classroom management, lesson planning, and assessment difficulties	Improved instructional planning, classroom management, and assessment practices	Observation, demonstration, guided teaching, and feedback
Personal	Low confidence, anxiety, and difficulty managing professional demands	Stronger self-efficacy, resilience, and professional responsibility	Emotional support, reflection, and constructive feedback
Social	Professional isolation and limited communication with colleagues or parents	Improved communication, collaboration, and workplace integration	Collegial mentoring and participation in professional communities
Professional	Difficulty translating theoretical knowledge into practice	Deeper curriculum understanding, subject knowledge, and reflective practice	Collaborative planning, professional dialogue, and continuous learning

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis of the reviewed literature.

Table 2 illustrates how professional adaptation can be understood as a multidimensional process rather than a single outcome. Pedagogical development may strengthen beginning educators' confidence, while positive professional relationships can improve access to advice and collaborative learning. These dimensions are interconnected, although their development may vary according to mentor competence, school resources, program duration, and individual needs. Accordingly, the findings suggest potential contributions rather than uniform effects across all induction and mentoring programs.

Relationships Between Professional Adaptation, Organizational Integration, and Educator Retention

The reviewed literature positioned professional adaptation and retention as distinct but potentially interconnected outcomes. Adaptation refers to educators' ability to manage professional responsibilities and integrate into their workplace environments, whereas retention concerns their continued participation in the teaching profession or employment within a particular institution. This distinction is important because an intention to remain in teaching does not necessarily translate into actual retention, and remaining in the same school is not equivalent to remaining in the profession (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Pikić Jugović et al., 2025).

Three mechanisms were identified as particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between induction, mentoring, and retention: professional confidence, organizational belonging, and job satisfaction. Table 3 summarizes these mechanisms and their potential implications.

Table 3. Potential Mechanisms Linking Induction and Mentoring to Educator Retention

Mechanism	Contribution of induction and mentoring	Potential implications for retention
Self-efficacy and professional confidence	Provides guidance, feedback, and opportunities to develop teaching skills	May reduce uncertainty and increase confidence in managing professional demands
Sense of belonging	Facilitates collegial relationships, inclusion, and participation in school activities	May reduce professional isolation and strengthen organizational attachment
Job satisfaction	Helps educators address workplace challenges and obtain professional support	May strengthen positive evaluations of the work environment
Professional commitment	Encourages reflective learning, recognition, and continuing professional development	May reinforce the intention to remain in the profession
Adaptive expertise	Develops the capacity to respond to changing instructional situations	May improve perceived readiness to manage long-term professional challenges

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis of the reviewed literature.

The table presents a potential explanatory pathway rather than proof of direct causation. Structured induction and mentoring may strengthen professional adaptation, which can support organizational integration and job satisfaction. These experiences may, in turn, contribute to stronger professional commitment and an intention to remain in teaching. However, retention is also influenced by workload, compensation, employment security, leadership, career opportunities, and working conditions. Therefore, induction and mentoring should be considered components of a broader retention strategy rather than independent solutions to educator turnover.

Factors Enabling and Constraining the Effectiveness of Induction and Mentoring

The effectiveness of induction and mentoring depends not only on program design but also on the conditions under which support is delivered. The synthesis identified three interconnected levels of influence: individual characteristics, school-level conditions, and system-level support. At the individual level, motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and openness to feedback may facilitate engagement in mentoring. At the school level, mentor preparation, protected mentoring time, leadership support, and a collaborative culture can create conditions for sustained professional learning. At the system level, clear guidelines, adequate funding, monitoring, and appropriate digital infrastructure can support implementation (Pikić Jugović et al., 2025; Powell, n.d.; Schaap et al., 2021).

Table 4. Enabling and Constraining Factors in Induction and Mentoring Programs

Level	Enabling factors	Constraining factors
Individual	Professional motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and readiness to receive feedback	Low confidence, excessive anxiety, reluctance to seek assistance, and resistance to constructive feedback
School	Trained mentors, protected mentoring time, supportive leadership, clear responsibilities, and collaborative culture	Mentor workload, limited mentoring time, unclear roles, weak collaboration, and assignments outside teachers' areas of expertise
System and policy	Clear implementation guidelines, funding, mentor development, monitoring, and appropriate digital platforms	Budget limitations, inconsistent implementation, weak monitoring, and inadequate technological infrastructure

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis of the reviewed literature.

Table 4 demonstrates that program effectiveness is shaped by the interaction between individual readiness, institutional capacity, and broader policy support. Even a well-designed induction program may produce limited benefits when mentors lack sufficient time or preparation. Similarly, digital platforms can improve communication and documentation but cannot replace trust, professional judgment, and meaningful interpersonal support. Effective implementation therefore requires coordinated action across all three levels (Yap et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings indicate that induction and mentoring are best understood as complementary forms of professional support that may facilitate early-career educators' adaptation and contribute to retention. Their potential contribution depends on the quality of implementation, the strength of mentoring relationships, and the organizational and policy environments in which they operate. These findings provide the basis for further discussion of the mechanisms connecting professional support, adaptation, and educator sustainability.

Discussion (مناقشة)

Induction and Mentoring as Complementary Mechanisms of Professional Socialization

The findings suggest that induction and mentoring should be understood as complementary mechanisms for supporting early-career educators rather than as isolated professional development activities. Induction provides a structured entry into the profession by

clarifying institutional expectations, introducing workplace procedures, explaining professional responsibilities, and familiarizing educators with the school's pedagogical and organizational culture. Mentoring, in contrast, provides sustained interpersonal support through dialogue, observation, feedback, reflection, and the discussion of practical teaching challenges. Their complementary value lies in connecting institutional orientation with the continuous development of professional competence. While induction helps beginning educators understand the environment in which they work, mentoring helps them interpret that environment and respond to its demands (Wyatt & O'Neill, 2021).

This relationship can be explained through organizational socialization theory, which conceptualizes newcomers' transition into an organization as a process of acquiring role clarity, developing confidence, gaining social acceptance, and understanding organizational norms. Bauer et al. (2007) demonstrate the theoretical importance of newcomer adjustment in connecting organizational socialization practices with outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to remain, and turnover. Applied to education, this perspective suggests that early-career educators need more than administrative orientation. They also require opportunities to understand how institutional expectations translate into classroom practice, professional relationships, and everyday decision-making. A well-designed induction program can establish this foundation, while mentoring can help educators negotiate situations that cannot be fully anticipated through formal guidelines (Van Den Borre et al., 2021).

The distinction between induction and mentoring is also important because the terms are not always used consistently in educational research. Luong (2025), in a scoping review of induction, mentoring, and coaching for early-career teachers, identifies inconsistencies in terminology and program practices, indicating that the effectiveness of professional support cannot be evaluated adequately without considering what the programs actually involve. Consequently, the presence of a formal program does not necessarily demonstrate that meaningful professional support is available. A program may provide orientation documents and introductory meetings but offer limited opportunities for classroom observation, individualized feedback, or continuing dialogue. Conversely, informal mentoring may provide emotional encouragement without sufficiently addressing institutional expectations or pedagogical development (Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia et al., 2021).

The findings therefore point toward a complementarity principle: induction establishes the structural conditions for professional entry, whereas mentoring activates those conditions through relational and practice-oriented support. This principle also helps explain why program design should be assessed through the quality, continuity, and relevance of its activities rather than through its formal existence alone. For example, a beginning educator who receives a detailed explanation of classroom management procedures may still struggle to apply them when facing heterogeneous student needs. Access to an experienced mentor who can observe a lesson, discuss classroom interactions, and help the educator consider alternative strategies provides a bridge between procedural knowledge and situated professional judgment (Schaap et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, induction and mentoring should not be treated as universally effective interventions regardless of context. Keese et al. (2023), in their meta-analysis of novice-teacher induction research, report overall positive effects on teacher and student outcomes, including retention and efficacy, while also showing that program comprehensiveness did not independently predict larger effects in their analysis. This finding cautions against assuming that adding more program components automatically produces better outcomes. The relevance, implementation, and alignment of support activities with educators' actual needs remain important considerations. Taken together, the present synthesis positions induction and mentoring as complementary forms of professional socialization whose value depends on the meaningful integration of institutional guidance, instructional support, and professional

relationships.

Professional Adaptation through Self-Efficacy, Reflective Practice, and Adaptive Expertise

The second major theme concerns the role of induction and mentoring in supporting early-career educators' professional adaptation. Adaptation should not be reduced to the ability to follow school regulations or complete assigned duties. It also involves learning to manage classrooms, respond to diverse student characteristics, plan and evaluate instruction, communicate with colleagues and parents, and exercise professional judgment under conditions of uncertainty. The reviewed findings indicate that pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies are interrelated dimensions of this process. Difficulties in one dimension can influence others: for instance, limited classroom-management skills may reduce confidence, while weak collegial relationships may restrict access to practical knowledge and feedback (H. Hilalludin, 2024, 2025).

Social cognitive theory, particularly Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy, offers an important explanation for this relationship. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to organize and carry out actions required to achieve particular outcomes. In the early stages of an educator's career, this belief can influence how challenges are interpreted, how much effort is invested in solving problems, and whether setbacks are approached as opportunities for learning or as evidence of professional inadequacy. Mentoring can support the development of self-efficacy by providing opportunities to observe experienced practitioners, undertake guided practice, receive constructive feedback, and interpret teaching experiences through professional dialogue. These activities can help beginning educators develop more realistic judgments of their capabilities while identifying specific areas for improvement (Fadhilah & Wasliman, 2026; Fathurrohman & Mirza, 2025).

However, self-efficacy should not be interpreted as a substitute for competence or as an individual characteristic that can resolve structural problems. An educator may become more confident while still lacking sufficient teaching resources, manageable workloads, or appropriate institutional support. Equally, persistent organizational barriers may undermine confidence even among educators who possess strong initial preparation. The implication is that self-efficacy is best understood as one mechanism within a broader adaptation process. Effective mentoring should therefore combine encouragement with evidence-based feedback, practical demonstration, and opportunities for educators to assess their own performance. Such an approach avoids both excessive criticism, which may discourage learning, and uncritical reassurance, which may leave important professional weaknesses unaddressed (Rakhmi F et al., 2026; Ramadan & Soro, 2025).

A second relevant perspective is reflective practice, associated with Schön (1983). From this perspective, professional learning occurs not only through the application of previously acquired knowledge but also through reflection on complex situations encountered in practice. Early-career educators frequently face situations in which established lesson plans or theoretical principles do not produce the expected outcomes. Students may respond differently than anticipated, classroom interactions may become difficult to manage, or instructional activities may fail to achieve their learning objectives. These situations require educators to reconsider their assumptions, interpret the causes of difficulties, and modify subsequent actions. Mentoring can facilitate this process by creating a structured space in which teaching experiences are examined rather than simply judged (Sakka et al., 2026; Sari, 2025a).

The concept of adaptive expertise further extends this argument. Hatano and Inagaki (1986) distinguish routine expertise, which supports efficient performance in familiar situations, from adaptive expertise, which involves the capacity to respond flexibly to unfamiliar problems. Although educators need established routines to manage everyday teaching responsibilities, they

must also learn to adapt those routines to changing student needs, curriculum demands, and classroom circumstances. Induction programs that focus exclusively on procedural compliance may support routine performance but provide insufficient preparation for complex professional situations. By contrast, mentoring that encourages questioning, experimentation, reflection, and the evaluation of alternative strategies can help beginning educators develop more flexible professional judgment (Ramadan & Soro, 2025; Silalahi et al., 2026a).

These theoretical perspectives illuminate the relationship among guided practice, feedback, and professional adaptation. Self-efficacy helps explain educators' willingness to engage with difficult tasks; reflective practice explains how experiences can be transformed into professional learning; and adaptive expertise explains why learning must extend beyond reproducing established procedures. Together, they suggest that mentoring should not make beginning educators dependent on experienced colleagues. Its deeper purpose is to develop their capacity to make increasingly independent, reasoned, and context-sensitive professional decisions (Nugroho et al., 2026; Nuraini, 2026).

This interpretation also clarifies the importance of the four competency dimensions identified in the results. Pedagogical adaptation concerns instructional planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment. Personal adaptation involves emotional regulation, confidence, resilience, and professional responsibility. Social adaptation concerns communication, collaboration, and relationships with students and colleagues. Professional adaptation includes understanding institutional expectations, ethical responsibilities, and the broader purposes of education. These dimensions should be treated as mutually reinforcing rather than as separate outcomes. Consequently, induction and mentoring are most valuable when they connect instructional improvement with personal reflection and integration into the professional community. Adaptation, in this sense, is not simply becoming accustomed to an existing workplace; it is developing the capacity to participate competently and critically in its educational mission.

From Professional Adaptation to Organizational Belonging and Educator Retention

The third theme concerns the relationship between professional adaptation and early-career educator retention. The synthesis suggests that retention is better understood as a multidimensional organizational outcome than as a direct consequence of participation in an induction or mentoring program. Beginning educators may remain in a position because they feel increasingly capable of performing their work, experience supportive professional relationships, perceive opportunities for development, and identify with the institution's educational mission. Conversely, educators who experience persistent professional uncertainty, isolation, inadequate support, or unfavorable working conditions may consider leaving even when formal mentoring is available. Thus, the relationship between professional support and retention involves both the development of individual competence and the quality of the organizational environment (S. Hilalludin et al., 2025; Maryani & Hilalludin, 2025; Permadi et al., 2025).

Organizational socialization research provides a useful explanatory framework for this relationship. Bauer et al. (2007) identify role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance as important dimensions of newcomer adjustment that are associated with subsequent work-related outcomes, including organizational commitment and intentions to remain. In educational settings, role clarity enables beginning educators to understand their responsibilities, performance expectations, and professional boundaries. Self-efficacy supports their perceived ability to manage teaching demands, while social acceptance helps them feel recognized as legitimate members of the school community. Induction and mentoring can contribute to these dimensions, but their effects are likely to be limited when educators encounter contradictory expectations, exclusion from professional discussions, or insufficient institutional recognition.

Organizational commitment theory, particularly the framework developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), offers an additional lens for interpreting retention. Their model distinguishes affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment to and identification with an organization; continuance commitment concerns the perceived costs of leaving; and normative commitment involves a sense of obligation to remain. For early-career educators, a supportive mentoring relationship may contribute to affective commitment by helping them feel respected, connected, and valued within their professional environment. It may also strengthen professional identification by enabling them to recognize their progress and understand how their work contributes to educational goals. However, retention should not be interpreted as desirable simply because educators feel obligated to stay or perceive that leaving would be costly. Sustainable retention requires conditions that support professional growth, reasonable working arrangements, and meaningful participation (Istiqomah et al., 2026; Lorensius et al., 2022).

Recent empirical evidence offers support for examining these mechanisms together. A study published in the *Journal of Educational Administration* in 2025 found that participation in mentoring was associated with novice teachers' expected career length, with organizational commitment mediating the relationship, while job satisfaction did not function as a mediator in the same analysis. This finding is important because it indicates that different indicators of professional experience should not be treated as interchangeable. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to stay, and actual retention represent related but distinct constructs. An educator may be satisfied with particular aspects of a job without developing a strong attachment to the institution; similarly, an educator may intend to remain but subsequently leave because of changes in personal circumstances or employment conditions. Therefore, studies of induction and mentoring should specify which retention-related outcome is being examined rather than using the term *retention* to describe all positive employment experiences (Silalahi et al., 2026b; Widiyanti et al., 2026).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) similarly reported that many studies in their critical review found positive relationships between induction and outcomes such as teacher commitment and retention, while also identifying variation across studies. Keese et al. (2023) likewise found overall positive effects in their meta-analysis but did not establish that greater program comprehensiveness consistently produced stronger effects. Considered together, these reviews support the relevance of structured professional support while cautioning against a simplistic claim that induction or mentoring automatically prevents turnover. The present synthesis therefore interprets retention as a potential downstream outcome shaped by several interconnected processes rather than as an immediate or guaranteed program effect (Sari, 2025b; Shofiah & Macariola, 2025).

A central implication is the need to distinguish early professional adaptation from longer-term retention. Adaptation concerns how educators navigate the transition into professional practice, whereas retention concerns whether they continue working in a position, institution, or the profession over a defined period. Although successful adaptation may strengthen an educator's intention to stay, longer-term employment decisions are also influenced by compensation, workload, career progression, leadership, employment security, family circumstances, and alternative opportunities. Consequently, mentoring may help educators manage instructional difficulties but cannot, by itself, compensate for persistent organizational conditions that make continued employment unsustainable (Khoriah, 2026; Lorensius et al., 2022).

This distinction has implications for evaluating induction and mentoring programs. Evaluation should not rely solely on participants' satisfaction with mentoring sessions or their perceptions of improved competence. It should also examine changes in professional confidence,

role clarity, belonging, organizational commitment, intention to stay, and, where longitudinal data are available, actual retention. These indicators should be measured separately and interpreted in relation to the duration and context of the program. By connecting professional adaptation with organizational integration and retention, the present review advances an integrated explanatory perspective: induction and mentoring may contribute to retention when they help educators become more capable in their work and more meaningfully integrated into a supportive professional community. This is a theoretically informed interpretation of the reviewed literature, not a claim that the relationship is uniformly causal across all institutional settings.

Organizational and Policy Conditions for Sustainable Induction and Mentoring

The fourth theme emphasizes that the effectiveness of induction and mentoring depends on conditions operating at individual, school, and system levels. Individual motivation, openness to feedback, resilience, and willingness to reflect can influence how beginning educators engage with professional support. However, these characteristics do not operate independently of organizational arrangements. Mentor availability, leadership support, protected time for professional dialogue, collaborative school cultures, clear program guidelines, and adequate resources shape whether mentoring can be implemented meaningfully. At the policy level, funding, professional standards, mentor preparation, monitoring, and continuity of support influence the extent to which programs move beyond formal requirements toward sustained professional learning (Gates et al., 2019; Greany et al., 2026).

This multilevel perspective is consistent with organizational socialization theory, which emphasizes that newcomer adjustment develops through interactions between individuals and their organizational environments. It also aligns with evidence that teacher induction programs differ in their design, purposes, and implementation. Courtney et al. (2023), in their systematic review of international teacher induction literature, identify common recommendations across the jurisdictions they examined, including sustained induction, support and preparation for mentors, and reduced teaching loads for beginning educators. These recommendations suggest that meaningful induction requires organizational investment rather than an expectation that beginning educators will adapt through individual effort alone (Piodena et al., 2026).

One particularly important condition is the quality of the mentoring relationship. Assigning a mentor does not guarantee that mentoring will produce useful professional learning. Mentors require relevant expertise, interpersonal and communication skills, an understanding of adult learning, and the capacity to provide constructive feedback without undermining the confidence of beginning educators. They also need sufficient time to observe teaching, discuss classroom challenges, review professional goals, and follow up on agreed actions. When mentors are overburdened with teaching and administrative responsibilities, mentoring may become an occasional administrative task rather than a sustained developmental relationship. Consequently, mentor selection, preparation, workload allocation, and recognition should be treated as core elements of program design (Galvin Sim Siang Lin et al., 2026; Pendola, 2026).

Leadership is equally important because school leaders establish the conditions under which mentoring is valued and practiced. Leaders can protect time for professional dialogue, encourage collaboration among educators, clarify the responsibilities of mentors and beginning teachers, and ensure that feedback is used for development rather than solely for evaluation. A psychologically supportive environment is particularly important during the early stages of professional practice, when educators may hesitate to disclose difficulties for fear of being judged as incompetent. If beginning educators perceive that asking for assistance will threaten their professional standing, they may conceal problems rather than seek guidance. By contrast, an environment that combines accountability with respectful dialogue can make it easier to identify

difficulties early and respond to them constructively.

The synthesis also highlights the need to consider contextual differences in program implementation. Schools differ in their staffing levels, professional cultures, access to experienced mentors, geographical circumstances, and available resources. A model developed in a well-resourced school system may not be transferable without adaptation to institutions that face staffing shortages or limited infrastructure. Digital mentoring, for example, may extend access to professional dialogue and learning resources, especially when mentors and beginning educators work in different locations. Nevertheless, digital systems should complement rather than automatically replace context-sensitive professional relationships. Their value depends on accessibility, interaction quality, timely feedback, and the extent to which online support connects with actual classroom practice (Azukas et al., 2025;Egypt. & Abdellah, 2021).

At the policy level, induction and mentoring should be integrated into a broader framework of professional development and workforce sustainability. Policymakers and educational authorities can establish minimum standards for induction duration, mentor preparation, professional learning activities, and evaluation. However, implementation standards should allow institutions to respond to the specific needs of educators and their working environments. A rigid program may ensure procedural consistency while failing to address differences in subject area, student population, school culture, and previous professional experience. Therefore, effective policy should combine clear expectations with flexibility in implementation and provide the resources necessary to fulfil those expectations (Fuentes, 2020).

The findings further suggest that monitoring should extend beyond administrative compliance. Counting mentor meetings or documenting the completion of orientation activities may demonstrate that a program has been delivered, but these indicators do not necessarily show whether educators have benefited. A more informative evaluation framework would examine the quality of mentoring interactions, opportunities for guided practice, perceived role clarity, professional confidence, sense of belonging, and subsequent employment outcomes. Where feasible, longitudinal evaluation would help determine whether early improvements in adaptation are sustained and whether they correspond with actual retention. Such an approach would also make it possible to identify which program components work well under particular conditions and which require modification.

Taken together, these implications support a shared-responsibility approach to early-career educator development. Beginning educators remain active participants in their own professional learning, but their success should not depend exclusively on individual resilience or willingness to adapt. Mentors provide guidance and feedback; school leaders create supportive working conditions; institutions allocate time and resources; and policymakers establish enabling standards and monitoring mechanisms. The central argument is that sustainable induction and mentoring require alignment among professional learning, organizational culture, and workforce policy. Without this alignment, even well-intentioned programs may offer only temporary support. With it, induction and mentoring have greater potential to facilitate professional adaptation, strengthen organizational integration, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the education workforce.

Conclusion (خاتمة)

This systematic literature review concludes that induction and mentoring programs represent an important foundation for supporting early-career educators' professional development and sustainable integration into educational institutions. Their contribution extends beyond facilitating the initial transition into teaching to establishing the conditions necessary for

educators to develop professional autonomy, respond to complex instructional demands, and build meaningful relationships within their workplaces. The synthesis further indicates that the value of these programs should be assessed not merely by their availability or implementation, but by their capacity to provide relevant, continuous, and context-sensitive professional support. In this respect, induction and mentoring are best positioned as interconnected components of a broader professional development strategy rather than as short-term activities conducted at the beginning of employment.

The principal contribution of this review is an integrated perspective that connects professional support with adaptation, organizational integration, and early-career retention within a single analytical framework. This perspective highlights the importance of aligning individual learning needs with institutional support and wider workforce policies. Nevertheless, the conclusions should be interpreted in light of the methodological and contextual differences among the studies reviewed, which limit the extent to which uniform effects can be assumed across educational settings. Future research should prioritize longitudinal and comparative investigations that examine how specific program components influence actual retention over time, distinguish educators' intentions to remain from their continued employment, and identify which combinations of mentoring practices and organizational conditions produce sustainable outcomes. Such evidence would strengthen the basis for developing more responsive, equitable, and evidence-informed induction and mentoring policies for the education workforce.

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