Relationship between Psycho-social Support and Professional Conduct of Secondary School Teachers in Western Region, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

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| **Background: T**eachers are perceived most valuable resource to the achievement of the primary objectives in an educational institution. However, their work involves responsibilities and activities that can cause them challenges especially for beginning teachers. Therefore, need for new teachers struggling with transition to receive psychosocial support through mentorship to enhance their professional conduct.**Aims:** To establish the relationship between psycho-social support and professional conduct of public secondary school teachers in Western Region, Kenya. **Study design:** The study adopted mixed research design.**Place and Duration of Study:** Department of Educational Management Kibabii University, study done in Western Region of Kenya, between November 2024 and May 2025. **Methodology:** The target population was 1308 including 4 teachers service commission (TSC) county directors (CDs), principals and all teachers from all the 68 extra county secondary schools in Western region, Kenya. A sample size of 299 respondents was determined using Krecjcie and Morgan table (1970) with a slight oversampling of 4 respondents to 303. It comprised of 4 TSC CDs sampled through census; 23 principals purposely sampled from 23 schools selected by simple random sampling. 138 Heads of Departments (HoDs) mentors and 138 teacher mentees were also selected into the study through simple random sampling. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and interviews schedules to principals and TSC CDs**Results:** Findings revealed that, provision of psychosocial support has statistically significant effect on professional conduct of public secondary school teachers in Western Kenya (β=0.57*0*, t (243) =7.82 *and* *P*<.001). The standardized coefficient of β=0.57*0*, indicate that psychosocial support has a strong positive effect on professional conduct.**Conclusion:** The study concludes that psycho-social support was a good predictor of professional conduct of teachers. These findings highlight the need for integrating psycho-social support mechanisms into teacher development programs to foster better professional conduct. |

*Keywords:* ***Psychosocial support; Professional Conduct, Secondary Schools; Kenya***

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers are the most valuable resource that contributes to the success, satisfaction and achievement of educational goals of students in any school.  However, new teachers face challenges such as adapting to working conditions; dealing with experienced colleagues adopting more traditional teaching methods; confronting classroom management difficulties, and carrying out the didactic transposition, among others (Ren, 2016).Additionally, these teachers experience emotional tension, stress, and even psychological problems (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). These complexities make it even more difficult for new teachers and those newly appointed in administrative positions and/or are already struggling to adjust during transition. Maccombs & Bhat (2020) emphasizes the need for proper socialization strategies to help new teachers adapt to their roles, improve their teaching skills, and navigate the challenges of the education system.

Mentoring relationship is a vital tool that can support people during orientation or to develop leadership abilities at work (Arnesson & Albinsson, 2021). Nkomo, Thwala, & Algavboa (2018) explains that mentorship is a one-on one relationship between competent and experienced teacher (mentor) and a novice teacher (mentee). Kutsyuruba & Godden (2019) on the other hand view mentorship as professional development of younger teachers that promote the continuous and lifelong development of teachers. The success of developing a teacher, while experiencing all phases of education, relies on the support the teacher gets (ÇOBANOĞLU1 & Ayvaz-Tuncel, 2018).

 Mentorship functions according to Farquhar (2018) include both the psychosocial support and career development support which generally enhance experiences of the newly recruited teachers. Mentors provide counselling, guidance, instructions, modelling, sponsorship and professional networking (Akpan, et al., 2017). Further, Ford (2017) suggests that psychosocial functions of the mentor involve encouragement and friendship. (Kamper (2023) asserts that unsupported teachers create an environment of instability and distrust which distracts the working. Further Gavan, et al (2021) argues that self-efficacy of teachers is greatly undermined by inadequate support. The mentors share their own experiences and challenges which help teachers to navigate the complexities of the profession with empathy and understanding. Floody (2021) adds that psychosocial support enhance professionalism, improves teacher retention and job performance and keeps novice teachers abreast of the ever-changing teaching and learning trends. However, there seems to be less or no emphasis on the psychosocial role of the mentor

The Kenyan government and various educational organizations recognize the importance of induction mentorship and coaching program in improving the quality of education. Cognizant of the place of teacher induction and mentorship on professional conduct, the TSC came up with a teacher induction mentorship and coaching policy for the teaching workforce to support teachers cope with challenges in the teaching as a career (TSC, 2020). The Teacher Induction Mentorship and Coaching (TIMEC) program is part of a broader strategy to develop teachers’ professional ethics and practices. This entails capacity building in; knowledge, skills and competences with the aim of improving teacher conduct, performance as well as prevent occurrence of discipline. The program focuses on induction of newly recruited teachers, capacity building of newly appointed school administrators and teachers experiencing challenges in professional conduct and performance (TSC, 2020).

The program was informed by the need to engage on preventive strategies and a corrective approach in the management of teacher professional conduct. In mentoring relationship mentors are expected to form personal bonds with their mentees based on mutual trust that facilitate reciprocally benefits collegial relations (Orsin, 2023). This bond facilitates psycho-social development of a mentee by providing required professional support which will help to prevent occurrence of professional misconduct. This is expected to result to improved performance in the teaching service leading to overall improved learning outcomes.

However, Pandey &Sharma (2022) argues that this type of caring support has been positively related to employee engagement though little is known on the effects of psycho-social support on professionalism. Professional conduct of a teacher refers to explicit set of attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics deemed desirable in a teacher which defines the teaching profession and its relationship to its members and to society. Promoting professional conduct among qualified teachers through provision of psychosocial support, enables them to acquire skills that makes them more effective in their new work environment (Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019). Teachers who conduct themselves professionally in their work environment are more effective in ensuring their learners' academic progression. Through mentorship, teachers can uphold professionalism in their roles within their schools. It is, therefore, important and relevant to investigate the determinants of professional conduct, since it is a determinant and leading indicator for student achievement, teacher turnover and retention. This study examined the influence of psycho-social support to mentee teachers on professional conduct of public secondary school teachers.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Teacher performance is widely believed to be influenced by teacher professional conduct. The TSC in its Strategic Plan 2019 -2023, committed to implement Teacher Induction Mentorship and Coaching (TIMEC) program as a preventive strategy that pre-empts indiscipline among teachers. The program was to enable mentees get adequate guidance on their rights and obligations as enshrined in the Code of Regulations for Teachers (CORT). With the right information teachers were expected to comply with professional conduct and ethics consequently reducing cases of indiscipline due to professional misconduct. However, the issue of teacher professional misconduct in public secondary schools in Kenya is still prevalent. Concerns from stakeholders over the trends in cases of teacher gross misconduct is alarming. It’s against this background that the researcher seeks to investigate the effect of psycho-social support on professional conduct of teachers in public secondary schools in Western, Kenya.

**1.2 Purpose of the Study**

This study aim objective was to establish the influence of psycho-social support to mentee teachers on professional conduct of public secondary school teachers in Western, Kenya.

**1.3 significance of the study**

The study findings provide principals of secondary schools with insights into how to effectively implement psychosocial support programs for teachers with the aim of enhancing the professional conduct of their staff. The findings have uncovered the dynamics and relationships between mentors and mentees, and explore the perceptions of newly recruited teachers regarding the psychosocial support relationship in their schools. Such understanding will empower principals to design mentorship initiatives that effectively support teacher professional conduct and performance

**2. Literature Review**

Mwele, (2022) assessed psycho-social correlates of deviant behavior among teachers in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted mixed method embedded research design. Stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used. Data was collected using questionnaires, modified workplace deviance tool and interview guides. The study found out that psycho-social correlates such as mental wellness, recognition, control over others, competition and career development contributed to deviant behavior among respondents but the relationship was not significant.

Shettaam (2021) explored novice teachers’ experiences regarding psycho-social support provision as an aspect of their situated professional development at selected western cape primary schools. Qualitative case study methodology was employed. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. The study findings revealed that teacher attrition resulted from burnout and low morale due to insufficient psycho-social support received by novice teachers from the school management and education department.

 Pillay *et*.*al* (2023) assessed the psychosocial interventions that schools had implemented and the teachers were aware of. The study was done in five under resourced primary schools. The researcher employed descriptive design and with sample size of only 50 teachers. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics; frequencies, percentages and graphs; comparison between schools was done using these statistics. The study found that ability to support teachers varied per school and concluded that a gap in educator’s observation of mental health concerns.

A study by Oriwo & Barasa (2021) on psycho-social support for newly recruited teachers of English language in Kenya, sought to report findings on support strategies employed by school managements to get NRTs acclimatize to schools. Qualitative approach was used with data collected from NRTs of English form Uasin Gishu County by use of semi- structured interviews, focused group discussions and document analysis. Participants drawn from all categories of schools were identified through purposive, stratified and simple sampling techniques. Findings of the study indicated schools hardly offered any organized support of whichever manner. This study focused on psycho-social support and professional conduct of public secondary school teachers in Western Region, Kenya. The study involved 23 extra county schools: comprising of 23 principals, 138 HODs, 138 teacher mentees and 4 TSC CDs,

2. methodology

2.1 **Study Design**

The study adopted mixed methods research design; incorporating both elements of qualitative and quantitative research methods within a single study that allowed for triangulation of data findings. The study was grounded in pragmatism research paradigm; qualitative data was used to strengthen and/or supplement the quantitative data (George, 2023). This strategy minimizes biasness (Panke, 2018).

**2.2 Study Area**

The study was carried out in public extra county secondary schools in western region, Kenya. Extra county schools have fairly similar characteristics; the schools admit learners with same entry behavior, are well-staffed and they enjoy adequate and quality facilities. This helped mitigate the intervening effect of type of school hence reducing bias.

**2.3. Target Population**

The target population was 1308. It included 4 TSC CDs and all teachers in 68 extra county schools in Western, Kenya including principals.

**2.4. Sampling Techniques**

Simple random sampling was used to select 23 extra county schools. Principals of the selected schools were purposely sampled into the study. 138 HOD’s /teacher mentors and 138 novice/teacher mentees were recruited through simple random sampling. Census was used for sampling 4 TSC CDs.

 **2.4. Sample Size**

To get the sample size, the study used Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) to determine a sample of 299 with an oversampling of 4 to improve the statistical power. Vaughan, (2017) that surveys usually oversample certain groups to better estimate attributes of that group and then use sampling weights in analyses to avoid unintended biases associated with oversampling. The study sample size therefore was 303 respondents that comprised 4 TSC CD, 23 principals, 138 teacher mentors who were heads of departments; and 138 teacher mentees who were novice teachers with less than five years in teaching in the sampled schools. Principals were purposively sampled, to represent their institutions in the study. Simple random sampling was used to recruit HODs as teacher mentors and similarly mentee teachers who were paired up with HODs. An equal number of teacher mentors and mentee teachers was ensured to helped promote fairness and equity, that allowed for deeper and more meaningful connections, collaboration between the HODs, novice teachers and principal was key to this study. A summary of the Sampling Framework of the categories of respondents in the study are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. *Summary of Sampling Framework***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category of Respondent | Target Population (N) | Sample Size (n) | Sampling Procedure |
| County directors (TSC) |  4  |  4 | Census |
| Principals  |  68 | 23 | Purposive  |
| HODs |  279 | 138 | Simple random |
| Novice teachers  |  957 | 138 | Simple Random |
| Total |  1308 | 303 |  |

**Source:** Researcher, 2025.

3. results and discussion

3**.1 Descriptive Analysis**

Data from table 2 and 3 show that majority of the mentees reported that seeing their mentor as a real friend enhanced their professional relationships (Mean = 4.083, SD=.853), with 83.5 % of the mentee teachers strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. 34 (28.1 %) mentee teachers agreed while 67 (55.4 %) strongly agreed. Similarly, mentors acknowledged developing real friendships with their mentees (Mean = 3.595, SD=.965), with 63.6 % agreeing or strongly agreeing. This mutual sense of friendship and trust creates a safe space for open communication, which was instrumental in addressing personal and professional challenges.

This indicate that when a mentee teacher sees their mentor as a real friend professional relationships are enhanced. This is in agreement with who asserts that mentors play a pivotal role in facilitating professional socialization of the new teachers in the work place to transition into the work place social culture that makes them feel welcome,

***Table 2: Mentees response on Psycho-social Support***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement**  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **Mean**  | **Std.**  |
| Seeing my mentor as a real friend enhanced my professional relationships | 0 | 4 | 16 | 67 | 34 | 4.083 | .854 |
| 0.0% | 3.3% | 13.2% | 55.4% | 28.1% |  |  |
| Support and guidance received while sharing my personal concerns and problems with my Mentor has enhanced my self- efficacy | 13 | 29 | 8 | 43 | 28 | 3.364 | .6325 |
| 10.7% | 24.0% | 6.6% | 35.5% | 23.1% |  |  |
| keeping in touch with my mentor even after work we still enhanced my collaboration with colleagues | 24 | 37 | 12 | 29 | 19 | 2.851 | .992 |
| 19.8% | 30.6% | 9.9% | 24.0% | 15.7% |  |  |
| The trust created by my mentor during our meetings increased my commitment to teaching practices | 23 | 37 | 13 | 34 | 14 | 2.826 | .625 |
| 19.0% | 30.6% | 10.7% | 28.1% | 11.6% |  |  |
| Situations created by my mentor for critical analysis of self-image helped me develop new skills and competencies. | 1 | 9 | 19 | 59 | 33 | 3.942 | .856 |
| 0.8% | 7.4% | 15.7% | 48.8% | 27.3% |  |  |
| Reflection on personal experiences during meetings my mentor enhanced my professional performance.  | 11 | 19 | 13 | 37 | 41 | 3.645 | 1.254 |
| 9.1% | 15.7% | 10.7% | 30.6% | 33.9% |  |  |
| Talking openly about anxiety and feelings that cause work distractions with my mentor improved my emotional well- being  | 6 | 13 | 17 | 47 | 38 | 3.810 | 1.032 |
| 5.0% | 10.7% | 14.0% | 38.8% | 31.4% |  |  |
| Addressing my concerns and feelings regarding my competency with my mentor increased my performance | 9 | 2 | 18 | 34 | 58 | 4.074 | 1.324 |
| 7.4% | 1.7% | 14.9% | 28.1% | 47.9% |  |  |

**Source: Field data**

***Table 3 mentor response on Psycho-social Support in public secondary school teachers***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement**  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **Mean**  | **Std.**  |
|  I have developed real friendship with the mentee | 17 | 14 | 13 | 34 | 43 | 3.595 | .965 |
| 0.0% | 11.6% | 10.7% | 28.1% | 35.5% |  |  |
| We shared concerns and doubts of mentee in confidence | 24 | 36 | 18 | 31 | 12 | 2.760 | .582 |
| 1.6% | 29.8% | 14.9% | 25.6% | 9.9% |  |  |
|  I shared personal experiences with beginning teachers as an alternative perspective to problems  | 9 | 4 | 14 | 43 | 51 | 4.017 | .693 |
| 1.6% | 3.3% | 11.6% | 35.5% | 42.1% |  |  |
| After work we still keep in touch with the mentee | 27 | 31 | 19 | 25 | 19 | 2.818 | 1.365 |
| 1.6% | 25.6% | 15.7% | 20.7% | 15.7% |  |  |
| I created situations for the mentee to trust me during our meetings | 15 | 27 | 6 | 42 | 31 | 3.388 | .895 |
| 12.4% | 22.3% | 5.0% | 34.7% | 25.6% |  |  |
| Counselling the mentee created situations that encouraged critical analysis of self-image | 9 | 11 | 16 | 36 | 49 | 3.868 | .695 |
| 7.4% | 9.1% | 13.2% | 29.8% | 40.5% |  |  |
|  meetings encouraged mentee to reflect on personal experiences which motivated and increased professional identity | 1 | 21 | 11 | 34 | 54 | 3.983 | 1.235 |
| 0.8% | 17.4% | 9.1% | 28.1% | 44.6% |  |  |
| We talked openly about anxiety and feelings that cause work distractions during our meetings.  | 0 | 34 | 13 | 61 | 13 | 3.438 | 1.012 |
| 0.0% | 28.1% | 10.7% | 50.4% | 10.7% |  |  |
| I addressed mentees concerns regarding feelings of competency.  | 12 | 31 | 7 | 34 | 37 | 3.438 | .887 |
| 9.9% | 25.6% | 5.8% | 28.1% | 30.6% |  |  |

**Source: Field data**

Psycho-social support played a critical role in improving mentees' emotional well-being and self-efficacy. Mentees expressed that the support received from mentors when they shared personal concerns and problems with their mentors enhanced their self-efficacy (Mean = 3.364, SD=.632), with 58.6 % agreeing or strongly agreeing. 28 (23.1 %) teacher mentees strongly agreed while 43 (35.5 %) teachers agreed. Among the mentors there was relatively divided opinion on this statement with almost a half of the mentor teachers (Mean = 2.760, SD=.582), with 49.6 % disagreeing that there they shared concerns and doubts of mentee in confidence. This emphasizes the importance of sharing concerns and doubts in confidence in order to enhanced mentee teachers’ self- efficacy.

 Baranik et al. (2010) argues that employees with mentors may be able to cope with the stress and demands of the organization and therefore more likely to develop positive attitude about their job. This enhances self-efficacy of the protégé. Stressful environments and burn-outs can lead to increased absenteeism and reduced teaching capacity. This is in agreement with Hassan (2014) who assert that high stress levels in employees can negatively impact their conduct leading to counterproductive behavior’s in the institution.

More than three quarters of the mentor teachers (77.6 %) strongly agreed or agreed that the mentors shared personal experiences with beginning teachers as an alternative perspective to problems. 51 (42.1 %) teachers strongly agreed while 43 (35.5 %) teachers agreed. This implied that the mentors shared personal experiences with beginning teachers as an alternative perspective to problems.

On the statement *“keeping in touch with my mentor even after work enhanced my collaboration with colleagues”* registered a mean score of 2.851, (SD=.992)with 50.4% of mentee teachers strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with this statement. 24 (19.8 %) mentee teachers strongly disagreed while 37 (30.6 %) teachers disagreed. Mentors echoed this sentiment, with 47.9 % strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that they maintained contact with mentees after work (Mean = 2.818, SD=1.365). 27 (22.3 %) mentors strongly disagreed while 31 (25.6%) disagreed. The study indicated that mentee teachers did not keep in touch with their mentor after work and therefore mentorship relationship did not extend beyond formal work settings, to enhance collaboration and commitment.

A majority of mentee teachers 49.6 % (mean=2.826, SD=.625) strongly disagreed or disagreed that the trust created by their mentor during their meetings increased their commitment to teaching practices. 23 (19.0 %) mentee teachers strongly disagreed while 37 (30.6 %) teachers disagreed. On the other hand, findings of mentors conflicted with mentee responses, who indicated with a majority teachers (60.3 %) responding that they actively created situations for mentees to build trust with the mentor during their meetings. 31 (26.7 %) mentors strongly agreed while 42 (34.7 %) agreed. The study found out that the mentors created situations for the mentee to trust the mentor during their meetings. Though mutual sense of friendship and trust can create a safe space for open communication, which is instrumental in addressing personal and professional challenges.

The study findings indicated trust was not established during mentorship meetings that could have led to increased mentees' commitment to teaching practices. This conflicts with the Australian Youth Mentoring Network (2017) that emphasize that mentorship should be build on trust for it to achieve its goals.

Mentees acknowledged that situations created by their mentors for critical self-analysis helped them develop new skills and competencies (Mean = 3.942, SD=.856), with 76.1 % of the mentee teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that situations created by their mentors for critical analysis of self-image helped them develop new skills and competencies. 33 (27.3 %) mentee teachers strongly agreeing while 59 (48.8 %) agreed. Mentors confirmed this by emphasizing the importance of counselling and reflection in their sessions with 70.3% mentors agreed that that counselling mentees created situations that encouraged critical analysis of self-image. 49 (40.5 %) teachers strongly agreed and 36 (29.8 %) teachers agreed respectively.

This strongly implied that mentors play a pivotal role in encouraging mentees to critically reflect on their self-image and personal experiences, which contributes to skill development and professional growth. Guiding mentees through complex situations and helping them through critical self-analysis to develop strategies for addressing issues and conflicts enhances positive relationship with colleagues and students.

A majority of the mentee teachers 64.5 % strongly agreed or agreed that reflection on personal experiences during meetings with their mentors enhanced their professional performance. 41 (33.9 %) teachers strongly agreed while 37 (30.6 %) teachers agreed, a view shared by mentors who noted that such reflections motivated mentees and strengthened their professional identity with 72.9% (Mean = 3.983) in agreement. The study revealed that teacher’s reflection on personal experiences during meetings with their mentor enhanced their professional performance. The findings concur with sentiments of a principal suggested that;

***“Mentors need to guide mentees in understanding their strengths, Weaknesses and values that would help them balance between work and personal life”***

Another principal remarked that;

***“Mentors should encourage mentees to think about past successes and how they were achieved, this will help mentees identify strategies that worked for them, view failures as learning opportunities, emphasizing the importance of resilience and adaptability. This promotes Promote self-awareness that helps build confidence”.***

A majority of the mentee teachers 70.2 % (Mean = 3.81, SD=1.302) also agreed that talking openly about anxiety and feelings that cause work distractions with their mentor improved their emotional well- being. 38 (31.4 %) mentee teachers strongly agreed while 47 (38.8%) agreed. Mentors also highlighted the importance of discussing anxiety and work-related distractions during meetings (Mean = 3.438), with 61.17% agreeing or strongly agreeing. This open dialogue not only addressed immediate concerns but also contributed to long-term professional development.

These findings highlight the role of emotional support in reducing stress and fostering resilience. This current finding corroborates with Oddone Paolucci et al (2021) who found that mentorship support programs enhanced student well-being by promoting social connectedness, sense of belonging, increased emotional support and improved motivation. Emotional support is crucial for managing stress. It creates a sense of safety, validation, and reduced loneliness. With strong and supportive social network, the mental and physical well-being of a mentee is improved. Consequently, resilience and the ability to bounce back from difficult situations, making it easier to cope with stress.

Majority 76.0% of the mentee teachers agreed on the statement that addressing their concerns and feelings regarding their competency with their mentor increased their performance (mean=4.074, SD=1.324). 58 (47.9%) teachers strongly agreed while 34 (28.1 %) agreed with this assertion. At the same a majority of the mentor teachers 58.7% strongly agreed or agreed (mean=3.438, SD=.887) that they addressed mentees concerns regarding feelings of competency. 37 (30.6 %) teachers strongly agreed and 34 (28.1 %) teachers agreed respectively. A clear indication that the mentors addressed mentees concerns regarding feelings of competency in the meetings.

This open dialogue not only addressed immediate concerns but also contributed to long-term professional development. Effective mentorship should provide meaningful psychosocial support that addresses enhance an individual’s sense of competence, identity and effectiveness in their professional role. When concerns and feelings regarding mentee competency are addressed by their mentors, the mentee performance increases.

Further results were drawn from interviews with principals and TSC CDs, provided valuable perspectives on psychosocial support programs that psychosocial support is crucial for effective teaching and help new teachers navigate the demands of the teaching profession. Most principals identified problem-solving skills as a key component of induction programs. A principal explained that:

***“Problem-solving components prepare teachers for the challenges they may encounter in the school environment.”***

Together, these components create a well-rounded induction program that lays the foundation for professional growth and development. The selection of mentor teachers is a critical aspect of any mentorship program. Principals emphasized that mentors are chosen based on several criteria, including experience, performance, role modelling, and duration of service. One principal stated that:

***“The ones with experience are selected because they know what to do.” Another principal added, “They are selected based on their performance.”***

The pairing of mentors and mentees was found to be a deliberate process that takes into account various factors. Principals noted that pairing is often done at the departmental level to address specific needs and performance gaps. One principal observed that:

***“Pairing is decided by looking at the shortfalls of the new/young teachers, then deciding their needs and identifying who can best help them.”***

Gender dynamics and the mentor’s experience are also considered during the pairing process. A principal explained, *“Pairing is based on gender and experience in the teaching profession.”* Additionally, character compatibility is crucial. One principal noted that:

***“Pairing is based on character. A mentee must feel comfortable with their mentor.”***

This careful matching process ensures that mentorship is effective and that mentees receive the guidance and support they need to succeed. One notable initiative is the TIMEC program, a TSC-led effort aimed at improving mentorship practices. A principal explained:

***“Through the TIMEC program of TSC, mentors receive structured training to enhance their skills.”***

These training programs ensure that mentors are well-prepared to support mentees and that the quality of mentorship remains high. Continuous training is essential for maintaining the effectiveness of mentorship programs and for adapting to the evolving needs of new teachers. Principals play an active role in overseeing mentor-mentee relationships to ensure their success. One principal stated that:

***“I check the records from the champion. If a mentee is unhappy, we can change the mentor.”***

Another principal explained that:

***“When the relationship is okay, it is often smooth. When the mentee is unhappy, another mentor is appointed.”***

Conflict resolution is another important aspect, where a principal remarked that:

***“Mentees may be unhappy with their mentor if the mentor does not observe the rule of confidentiality.”***

 Flexibility in pairing allows for adjustments when conflicts arise. One principal stated,

***“Where there is dissatisfaction, I take up the responsibility or have to handle the mentee directly.”***

By acting as facilitators, principals ensure that mentor-mentee relationships are positive and productive.

**3.2 Inferential Analysis**

**3.2.1. Correlation between Psychosocial Support and Professional Conduct**

In order to establish the relationship between psychosocial support and professional conduct, Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to find out if there existed a relationship. A correlation is a number between -1 and +1 that measures the degree of relationship between two variables. The correlation coefficient value (r) that ranges from 0.10 to 0.29 would be considered weak, from 0.30 to 0.49 would be considered moderate correlation and from 0.50 to 1.0 would be considered strong.

Therefore, a positive value for the correlation would imply a positive relationship and a negative value for the correlation would imply an inverse or negative association. The study findings are shown on table 4.

***Table 4: Pearson correlation of psychosocial support and professional conduct***

|  | Pearson’s Correlation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 professional conduct | Correlation | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sig.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Seeing my mentor as a real friend enhanced my professional relationships | Correlation | .542\*\* | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sig.  | .033 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Keeping in touch with my mentor even after work we still enhanced my collaboration with colleagues | Correlation | .612\*\* | .452\*\* | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sig.  | .044 | .031 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. The trust created by my mentor during our meetings increased my commitment to teaching practices | Correlation | .487\*\* | .348\*\* | .483\*\* | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Sig.  | .012 | .038 | .043 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Situations created by my mentor for critical analysis of self-image helped me develop new skills and competencies. | Correlation | .542\*\* | .386\*\* | .485\*\* | .652\*\* | 1 |  |  |  |
| Sig.  | .031 | .041 | .028 | .000 |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Reflection on personal experiences during meetings my mentor enhanced my professional performance. | Correlation | .489\*\* | .625\*\* | .485\*\* | .468\*\* | .385\*\* | 1 |  |  |
| Sig.  | .012 | .000 | .031 | .042 | .039 |  |  |  |
| 7. Talking openly about anxiety and feelings that cause work distractions with my mentor improved my emotional well- being  | Correlation | .124 | .256 | -.124 | .101 | -.023 | .395\*\* |  1 |  |
| Sig.  | .214 | .089 | .356 | .096 | .854 | .038 |  |  |
| 8. Addressing my concerns and feelings regarding my competency with my mentor increased my performance. | Correlation | .532\*\* | .396\*\* | .425\*\* | .765\*\* | .389\*\* | .241 |  .235 | 1 |
| Sig.  | .002 | .035 | .042 | .000 | .034 | .965 | .365 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

**Source: Author 2025**

Based on the correlation matrix in Table 4, there exists a correlation between psychosocial support and professional conduct in public secondary school teachers in Western Region, Kenya. six out of the seven factors correlated with professional conduct, only one factors did not correlate and were therefore not used for further data analysis. The positive correlations were values which ranged from 0.487 to 0.612. Therefore, professional conduct was likely affected by psychosocial support.

The Pearson’s correlation index obtained on the first variable “*Seeing my mentor as a real friend enhanced my professional relationships”* is r= .542, it is positive with *Ρ*=.033. The first variable moderately correlated with professional conduct. The findings also suggest a strong positive correlation between the second variable “*keeping in touch with my mentor even after work we still enhanced my collaboration with colleagues*” and professional conduct ((r =.612, *Ρ*=.044) at α= .05)).

The third variable “*The trust created by my mentor during our meetings increased my commitment to teaching practices.*” ((r =.487*, Ρ*=.012) at α= .05)) moderately correlated with the depend variable professional conduct.

The fourth variable “*Situations created by my mentor for critical analysis of self-image helped me develop new skills and competencies.*” ((r =.542, *Ρ*=.031) at α= .05)) and the fifth variable” *Reflection on personal experiences during meetings with my mentor enhanced my professional performance.”* ((r =.489*, Ρ*=.012) at α= 0.05)) moderately correlated with professional conduct. The seventh variable “*Addressing my concerns and feelings regarding my competency with my mentor increased my performance.*” ((r =.532, *Ρ=.*002) at α= .05)) moderately correlated with professional conduct. The Pearson’s correlation between the sixth variable “*Talking openly about anxiety and feelings that cause work distractions with my mentor improved my emotional well-being”* and professional conduct was not statistically significant ((r =.124*, Ρ*=.214) at α= .05).

4.2. Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

This study carried out the diagnostic tests to ensure that the assumptions of regression model are met and proceeded to test the formulated null hypothesis which stated that; provision of psychosocial support has no statistically significant effect on professional conduct of teacher’s public secondary schools in Western Kenya. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels. Tables 5, 6, and 7 showed the information from the analysis*.*

***Table 5*** *model summary*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| .570a | 0.3249 | 0.3246 | 0.6247 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychosocial support |  |

Table 5 present the results of the model summary. The results show that the value of R, (r = .570), which indicate that there exists a strong positive relationship between the variables; psychosocial support and professional conduct. The coefficient of determination indicated R-Square, (R**2** = 0.3249), reveals the that psychosocial support accounted for 32.49% of the variance in professional conduct. This analysis indicate that 67.5% variability in professional conduct can be attributed to other factors not included in this model. The standard error of the estimate as .530. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.962 indicated no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, confirming the independence of errors.

The ANOVA results in table 6 show that the regression model is a significant predictor of professional (F (1, 244) = 23.915*, P* < .001). This confirms the goodness of fit of the model as a predictor of professional conduct. This indicates that psychosocial support significantly contributes to explaining variations in professional conduct.

***Table* 6 *ANOVA for Psycho-social Support***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 9.333 | 1 | 9.333 | 23.915 | .000b |
| Residual | 94.831 | 243 | 0.39 |  |  |
| Total | 104.164 | 244 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: Professional Conduct |  |  |  |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Psycho-social support |  |  |  |

Table 7 gives the regression coefficients. The regression analysis results indicate that psychosocial support is a statistically significant predictor of professional conduct. The standardized coefficient of β=.57*0*, t (243) =7.82 *and* *P*<.001 indicate that psychosocial support had a strong positive effect on professional conduct. The unstandardized coefficient (B=.553, SE=0.071) indicates that for each unit increase in psychosocial support, professional conduct is expected to increase by 0.553 units holding all other factors constant. The standard error of this coefficient is 0.071, suggests a relatively precise estimate. The intercept was also significant (B=1.904, SE=0.283, t (243) =6.72*2 and P*<.001), suggesting that the expected level of professional conduct was 1.90 units when psychosocial support was zero.

 **Table 7 Coefficients a Psychosocial support**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| B | Std. Error | Beta |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.904 | .283 |  | 6.722 | .000 |
| Psychosocial support | .553 | .071 | .570 | 7.816 | .000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Professional Conduct |

Based on these the regression model fitted as: 𝑌 = 𝛽 0 + 𝛽 2 𝑋 2 + έ therefore holds true.

The regression model was therefore postulated as;

***Y (professional conduct) = 1.904 + 0.553 X1 + ε (X1= psychosocial support)***

The results suggest that higher levels of psycho-social support are associated with improved professional conduct among teachers. Based on this evidence, the study rejected the null hypothesis:

*H0 2: Psycho-social support has no statistically significant influence on professional conduct of Public secondary school teachers in Western Region, Kenya.*

4. Conclusion

Psycho-social support in mentorship relationships emerges as a powerful tool for fostering trust, emotional well-being, collaboration, and professional growth of a teacher. Psychosocial support was found to be a significant predictor of professional conduct, explaining approximately 32.5% of its variance. These findings highlight the need for integrating psycho-social support mechanisms into teacher development programs to foster better professional conduct of teachers. The study recommends emphasis on the value of trust, friendship, and open communication in order to create a supportive environment that not only enhances mentees' self-efficacy and performance but also strengthened the overall mentorship dynamic to benefit both parties.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL and Consent:**

 The researcher followed required protocols and obtained approval from all relevant offices. Additionally, informed consent was sought from the respondents who were ensured of anonymity.

**Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence**)

Authors hereby declare that no generative AI technologies such as Language models (ChatGPT, COPILOT etc.) and text-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of the manuscript.

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