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contribution in their professional development in Public Secondary
Schools in Chato District, Tanzania**



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Novice Teachers' Experiences of Mentoring Support and its contribution in their professional development in Public Secondary Schools in Chato District, Tanzania



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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support and its contribution in their professional development during induction in six public secondary schools in Chato District, Tanzania.

Methodology: A convergent mixed methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through Likert scale questionnaires administered to 30 novice teachers selected using Yamane's formula for finite populations, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 12 senior academic staff and 2 Ward Education Officers and through review of School Management Team minutes, induction records, and mentorship logs. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data through thematic analysis.

Findings: The findings show that most novice teachers received formal induction (80.0%) and were assigned mentors (73.3%), and that mentoring support was strongest in lesson planning (83.3%) and classroom management (76.7%). However, feedback specificity, consistency of meetings, and follow up were uneven, with fewer than half of respondents reporting a clear mentoring schedule. Mentoring was credited with improved teaching confidence (75.0%), enhanced subject delivery (75.0%), reduced professional stress (70.0%), and strengthened professional ethics (80.0%).

Unique contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: Interpreted through Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and Levinson's Career Stage Theory, the findings suggest that mentoring in Chato District activates the sources of self-efficacy during a critical career transition, but with intensity and consistency that vary across schools. The study recommends schools to establish formal mentor allocation systems supported by written induction plans, mentoring schedules, and documented feedback cycles. School Management Teams should also protect regular time slots for mentoring activities within the school calendar.

Keywords: *Novice Teachers, Mentoring, Induction, Professional Development, Tanzania*

1. INTRODUCTION

The professional experiences of novice teachers during their first years in the classroom shape not only their instructional competence but also their long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Evidence from the OECD (2025), Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2024) indicates that approximately 27% of novice teachers globally intend to leave teaching within five years, and that novice teachers consistently report greater difficulty with classroom management, instructional pacing, and assessment than their experienced peers (OECD, 2025). Similar patterns are documented in longitudinal European studies, which show that variation in the quality, quantity, and length of induction arrangements shapes beginning teachers' intrinsic motivation, affect toward the profession, and self-efficacy in instruction (Admiraal et al., 2025; Bogers et al., 2025). These findings position the early career phase as a critical window in which mentoring and structured induction determine whether beginning teachers develop into confident, competent, and committed professionals.

A growing body of empirical evidence confirms that induction and mentoring programmes produce measurable improvements in teacher and student outcomes. A meta-analysis of research on formalised novice teacher induction programmes between 2010 and 2019 reported statistically significant effects on teacher retention, self-efficacy, and classroom effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2023). A systematic review by Wang et al. (2024) further identified three essential mentoring functions: relational (facilitating socialisation), cognitive (cultivating pedagogical capabilities), and affective (reducing emotional exhaustion). These findings converge on a shared insight: mentoring is not simply a professional courtesy but a structured intervention with predictable benefits when implemented consistently.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the case for effective mentoring is particularly urgent. UNESCO projections indicate that the region will need to recruit approximately 15 million additional teachers by 2030 to meet universal secondary education targets, and that reducing early career attrition among newly recruited teachers is central to closing this gap (UNESCO, 2024). Yet, evidence from across the region shows that novice teachers frequently work in schools characterised by large classes, limited teaching resources, weak collegial support systems, and inconsistent induction practices (Akyeampong et al., 2023; Ampomah et al., 2024; Opoku et al., 2025). Studies in Ethiopia and Malawi have demonstrated that induction and mentoring programmes are important moderators of teacher retention and job satisfaction, particularly in rural schools where staffing is most difficult (Adedokun & Adeyeye, 2024). Comparable evidence from South Africa reveals that School Management Team members often struggle to manage induction processes effectively due to inadequate time, work overload, and administrative interruptions (Mkhabele et al., 2024).

Tanzania has responded to these challenges through several policy and programmatic initiatives. The Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014, revised in 2023) and the National

Framework for Teacher Continuous Professional Development, popularly known as *Mafunzo Endelevu ya Walimu Kazini* (MEWAKA), formally recognise school-based mentoring as a core component of teacher development (Todd et al., 2024).

1.2 Study's Objective

The objective of the study was to examine novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support during induction in six public secondary schools in Chato District, Tanzania

1.3 Problem Statement

Studies conducted in Tanzanian regions, including Mbeya, Rukwa, Iringa, and Njombe, have indicated that mentoring can improve novice teachers' teaching confidence, pedagogical competence, and professional commitment (Ally & Mabagala, 2022; Mashauri et al., 2025; Mng'ong'o, 2025; Mzelela et al., 2023). However, these studies also reported persistent challenges, including irregular mentoring interactions, insufficient subject specific feedback, and weak monitoring of mentoring outcomes. Despite these documented benefits, little empirical evidence exists on how novice teachers in Chato District secondary schools experience mentoring support and how those experiences translate into professional development outcomes.

Chato District has expanded its public secondary school sector rapidly and continues to recruit graduate teachers to address shortages, particularly in science and mathematics (Alagwa & Ligembe, 2022; CL4STEM, 2022). Previous research in the district has focused mainly on teacher retention and staffing strategies, leaving unexamined the specific ways in which novice teachers themselves report benefiting from, or being underserved by, existing mentoring arrangements. This gap raises two central questions: What experiences do novice teachers in Chato District report regarding the mentoring support they receive during induction? And how do these mentoring experiences contribute to their professional development, including teaching confidence, pedagogical competence, stress reduction, ethical conduct, and intention to remain in the profession?

This study addresses these questions by drawing on questionnaire data from 30 novice teachers and interview data from senior academic staff and Ward Education Officers, complemented by document review. The paper contributes to the empirical literature by generating context specific evidence on novice teacher experiences and mentoring outcomes in a growing Tanzanian district, and by offering insights that can inform the continuing implementation of MEWAKA and SITT in secondary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed literature based on novice teacher mentoring experiences from global perspectives, to African region and empirical studies conducted in Tanzania.

2.1 Empirical Evidence on Novice Teacher Experiences and Mentoring Outcomes

Empirical research shows that novice teachers who receive structured, sustained mentoring report stronger self-efficacy, professional confidence, and intention to remain in the profession than those without such support. According to survey conducted by OECD (2015), the TALIS (2024) data indicate that education systems with higher proportions of mentored novice teachers also report stronger self-efficacy and job satisfaction among beginning teachers. A study by Bogers et al. (2025), using latent growth modelling with beginning teachers, found that although professional meaningfulness and subject affection tended to decline during the first years of teaching, self-efficacy in instruction increased significantly among teachers who participated in higher quality induction arrangements. The authors attributed these differences to variations in the quantity, quality, and length of mentoring support received during the induction period.

Complementary evidence highlights the importance of mentor characteristics and interaction quality. A study of 77 novice teachers found that mentors' prior experience, employment status, and the amount of time spent with mentees predicted novice teachers' self-efficacy, reflective practice, and observed quality of classroom interactions (Kearney et al., 2022). Similarly, Wang et al. (2024), in a systematic review of mentoring competence, concluded that effective mentoring depends on three interconnected functions: relational support, cognitive guidance, and affective reassurance.

Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa reinforces the value of mentoring but also documents significant challenges in how novice teachers experience induction support. Opoku et al. (2025), in a comparative study of beginning teacher retention in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, concluded that structured induction and mentoring programmes are essential for retaining early career teachers, particularly in contexts where community integration and lesson preparation demands are high. The authors specifically recommended that school leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa be trained to develop structured induction programmes that guide beginning teachers through classroom, community, and administrative challenges.

Cross national research in Ethiopia and Malawi by Adedokun and Adeyeye (2024) found that induction and mentoring programmes are important moderators of teacher retention and job satisfaction, particularly in rural schools where staffing is a persistent problem. Similarly, Mkhabele et al. (2024) reported similar findings in South Africa, where School Management Team members struggle to manage induction effectively due to time constraints, work overload, and administrative interruptions.

Ampomah et al. (2024), in a document analysis study of Ghana's Supported Teaching in Schools model, similarly concluded that mentoring supports novice teachers' pedagogical growth, but that its effectiveness depends on structured programmes, professional development for mentors, and clear feedback mechanisms.

In Kenya, novice teachers report that informational, professional, and emotional mentoring strategies from experienced colleagues shape their classroom performance and professional adaptation, although mentoring activities remain largely ad hoc and lack a research-based foundation (Kaveto et al., 2025).

Within Tanzania, Ally and Mabagala (2022) found that novice teachers in Mbeya Region who participated in mentoring reported improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and use of participatory teaching methods, although they also described mentoring activities as inadequately coordinated and inconsistently implemented across schools. Mzelela et al. (2023), in Rukwa Region, established that novice teachers valued feedback from heads of departments but expressed concerns about irregular mentoring sessions, limited time for consultation, and an emphasis on formal supervision rather than developmental support.

Mashaury et al. (2025), in Iringa Municipality, reported that teachers who participated in mentorship activities described significant improvements in their professional practice, particularly in instructional delivery and classroom organisation. Mng'ong'o (2025), in Njombe Town Council, similarly found that mentoring and collegial support significantly enhanced novice teacher performance, particularly in lesson planning and classroom organisation, but noted that the absence of structured institutional frameworks limited the overall effectiveness of such support systems.

The reviewed literature indicates that novice teachers value mentoring and benefit from it in terms of pedagogical competence and confidence, but that the experience of mentoring remains highly dependent on school level implementation and organisational support.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by two complementary theoretical perspectives, Bandura's (1977, 1997) Self-Efficacy Theory and Levinson's (1978) Career Stage Theory. Together, they explain both how mentoring shapes novice teachers' professional development outcomes and why mentoring is developmentally critical during the early career phase.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, rooted in social cognitive theory, defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capacity to perform specific tasks and to produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Bandura identified four principal sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Recent applications in teacher research demonstrate that these four sources operate directly through the mentoring process.

For novice teachers, mentoring functions as a structured mechanism through which all four sources of self-efficacy are activated. Classroom observations by mentors and guided practice provide mastery experiences; observing experienced teachers offers vicarious learning; feedback and encouragement from mentors constitute verbal persuasion; and emotional support from

mentors regulates the physiological and affective states associated with the transition into teaching (Wang et al., 2024). Self-Efficacy Theory therefore provides a robust framework for interpreting how mentoring experiences translate into confidence, competence, and commitment among novice teachers.

Levinson's (1978) Career Stage Theory complements Self-Efficacy Theory by explaining the developmental significance of the early career phase. Levinson posited that individuals move through a sequence of stable and transitional periods across their careers, and that transitional periods are characterised by uncertainty, reappraisal, and the search for guidance. Novice teachers, positioned at the beginning of their careers, occupy such a transitional stage during which mentoring provides reassurance, direction, and modelling of professional norms.

The two theories complement each other in explaining the mentoring and outcomes relationship. Self-Efficacy Theory identifies the psychological mechanisms through which mentoring produces confidence and competence, while Career Stage Theory explains why these mechanisms are particularly salient during the early years of teaching. Together, they support the analytical claim that mentoring outcomes for novice teachers depend on both the quality of mentoring processes (Self-Efficacy) and their developmental timing (Career Stage).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach and design

This study adopted a mixed methods approach with a quantitative dominant orientation to examine novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support and its contribution to their professional development during induction. A convergent mixed methods design was employed, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same period, analysed separately, and integrated at the interpretation stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative data provided systematic evidence on the frequency, distribution, and perceived usefulness of mentoring experiences and their contribution to professional development outcomes, while qualitative data offered depth and contextual explanation for the observed patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The convergent design was appropriate because it allowed direct comparison of novice teachers' survey responses with the accounts of senior academic staff and Ward Education Officers, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings.

3.2 Area of the study

The study was conducted in six secondary schools, namely, school A, B, C, D, E and F respectively, in Chato District, located in the Geita Region of north western Tanzania. Chato District was purposively selected because it has experienced substantial growth in the number of public secondary schools, continues to recruit graduate teachers to address subject shortages, particularly in science and mathematics (Alagwa & Ligembe, 2022; CL4STEM, 2022), and is expected under national policy to strengthen school-based induction and mentoring (Todd et al.,

2024). Previous research in the district has focused mainly on teacher retention and staffing challenges, leaving a gap in empirical understanding of how novice teachers themselves experience mentoring support.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

The study involved 44 participants, comprising 30 novice teachers, 12 senior academic staff, and 2 Ward Education Officers drawn from six public secondary schools in Chato District. Novice teachers were operationally defined as teachers with one to three years of teaching experience, consistent with Kearney's (2016) description of beginning teachers as early career educators still developing professional confidence and competence.

Sampling was conducted in three stages. First, six public secondary schools were selected purposively in consultation with the District Secondary Education Officer, based on three criteria: the school had been operating for at least ten years, employed both experienced senior academic staff and novice teachers, and was accessible for repeated data collection visits. Second, the accessible population of novice teachers in the six selected schools was thirty-two. From this population, thirty novice teachers were selected for the quantitative component using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations. Applying the formula with a 95% confidence level and a 0.05 margin of error yielded a sample size of approximately thirty. Simple random sampling was then used to select the thirty novice teachers from the list of thirty-two eligible candidates provided by heads of schools. The resulting sample represented approximately 94% of the accessible population, thereby strengthening the representativeness of the descriptive findings. Third, all twelve senior academic staff in the selected schools and the two Ward Education Officers responsible for supervising these schools were included through purposive sampling as key informants for the qualitative component.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Three data collection methods were employed: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document review.

Questionnaires are widely used to generate quantitative data on the extent and patterns of professional practices (Bryman, 2021; Saunders et al., 2022). The instrument was piloted with novice teachers in a comparable school outside the sample, and unclear items were revised before the main data collection. Questionnaires were administered to the thirty novice teachers to generate quantitative data on their mentoring experiences and perceived outcomes.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the twelve senior academic staff and two Ward Education Officers to triangulate and contextualise the questionnaire findings. Interview guides explored participants' observations of novice teachers' mentoring experiences, the mentoring practices they enacted or supervised, and the outcomes they had observed. Each

interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, was conducted in Kiswahili or English depending on participant preference, and was audio recorded with participants' written consent.

Document review was conducted to complement and triangulate the survey and interview data. The reviewed documents included School Management Team minutes, induction records, mentor allocation lists where available, and mentorship logs. A structured document review guide was used to record evidence of formal mentoring arrangements, feedback practices, and follow up mechanisms.

3.5 Data analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded, entered into a statistical software package, and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulations. Descriptive statistics were appropriate because the study sought to characterise the distribution and patterns of novice teachers' mentoring experiences and reported professional development outcomes rather than to test inferential relationships (Cohen et al., 2021).

Qualitative data from the interviews and documents were analysed using thematic analysis following the six-step procedure articulated by Braun and Clarke (2021): familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Coding was carried out inductively, with themes emerging from the data rather than being imposed from prior categories. Once the two datasets had been analysed separately, they were integrated through a joint display procedure that compared quantitative patterns with qualitative accounts, allowing convergent findings to strengthen the analysis and divergent findings to generate deeper insight (Fetters et al., 2013).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the results of the study on novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support and its contribution to their professional development during induction in six public secondary schools in Chato District. Findings are drawn primarily from questionnaires administered to thirty novice teachers, triangulated with interview data from twelve senior academic staff and two Ward Education Officers, and complemented by document review. The presentation is organised around three thematic areas: demographic characteristics of respondents, novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support, and the contribution of mentoring to professional development outcomes.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Understanding respondents' demographic characteristics is important because such attributes shape their perceptions and experiences of mentoring. Demographic information collected covered gender and teaching experience. As shown in Table 1, male teachers constituted

53.3% of the respondents while female teachers accounted for 46.7%, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution within the sample.

Table 1 Gender distribution of novice teachers (n = 30)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	16	53.3%
Female	14	46.7%
Total	30	100.0%

Regarding teaching experience, Table 2 shows that 43.3% of respondents had between one and two years of teaching experience, 30.0% had three years, and 26.7% had less than one year. This distribution confirms that all respondents fell within the operational definition of novice teachers used in the study.

Table 2 Teaching experience of novice teachers (n = 30)

Teaching experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	8	26.7%
1 to 2 years	13	43.3%
3 years	9	30.0%
Total	30	100.0%

4.2 Novice teachers' experiences of mentoring support

Analysis of the questionnaire data, combined with interview responses and documentary evidence, generated four sub themes concerning novice teachers' experiences of mentoring: access to formal induction and mentor assignment, pedagogical and instructional support, quality and specificity of feedback, and consistency and follow up.

4.2.1 Access to formal induction and mentor assignment

Table 3 below presents novice teachers' reports on whether they received formal induction and were assigned mentors upon joining their schools. Twenty-four respondents (80.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that they received formal induction, while six (20.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Regarding mentor assignment, twenty-two respondents (73.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had been assigned a mentor, six (20.0%) disagreed, and two (6.7%) were neutral.

Table 3 Formal induction and mentor assignment (n = 30)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	A + SA (%)
Received formal induction	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (50.0%)	9 (30.0%)	80.0%
Assigned a mentor	3 (10.0%)	3 (10.0%)	2 (6.7%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)	73.3%

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

The finding that 80.0% of novice teachers reported receiving formal induction, and that 73.3% reported being assigned a mentor, indicates that induction and mentor allocation are common practices in Chato District secondary schools. These figures compare favourably with TALIS (2024) data, which show that only about 26% of novice teachers across OECD education systems are assigned a formal mentor (OECD, 2025), and align with recent Tanzanian evidence documenting substantial increases in mentor engagement under MEWAKA (Todd et al., 2024). At face value, the findings suggest that access to induction and mentoring is not the most binding constraint in Chato District.

However, the 20.0% of respondents who did not report receiving formal induction, together with the documentary evidence of incomplete or absent induction records in three of the six sampled schools, indicates that access to induction is uneven. This variation parallels findings in South Africa, where Mkhabele et al. (2024) reported that School Management Team members struggle to manage induction due to work overload and administrative interruptions, and in Kenya, where Kaveto et al. (2025) described induction and mentoring practices as ad hoc and lacking a research-based foundation. The Chato District pattern therefore suggests that while induction has become a routine expectation, its consistent implementation depends on school level organisation rather than a standardised institutional protocol.

Ward Education Officer 2 noted:

Schools should have clear systems where experienced teachers are assigned to mentor new teachers. This ensures accountability and consistent professional support. (Ward Education Officer 2, 26 February 2026)

Document review corroborated these responses. Schools A, C, and E maintained written induction records and partial mentor allocation lists, while Schools B, D, and F had incomplete or absent documentation of these practices.

4.2.2 Pedagogical and instructional support

Novice teachers reported varying levels of mentoring support across pedagogical and instructional domains. Table 4 shows that 83.3% of respondents agreed that they received mentoring support in lesson planning, and 76.7% in classroom management. Support in

constructive feedback (70.0%) and learner assessment guidance (70.0%) was slightly lower, and 68.3% agreed that mentoring helped them understand school culture.

Table 4 Mentoring support areas (n = 30)

Mentoring area	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)
Lesson planning	10.0%	6.7%	83.3%
Classroom management	13.3%	10.0%	76.7%
Constructive feedback	16.7%	13.3%	70.0%
Learner assessment guidance	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%
Understanding school culture	17.7%	14.0%	68.3%

The high levels of agreement in pedagogical support areas, particularly lesson planning (83.3%) and classroom management (76.7%), align with the international literature indicating that mentoring is most consistently delivered in these core instructional domains. These findings corroborate with recent Tanzanian studies such as Ally and Mabagala, (2022); Mashauri et al. (2025); and Mng'ong'o (2025), whereby each study found that mentoring produced improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, and instructional delivery in their respective study contexts.

From the perspective of Bandura's (1977, 1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, these results reflect the direct activation of mastery experiences and verbal persuasion, two of the four sources of self-efficacy. When mentors observe novice teachers' lessons, provide guidance on lesson organisation, and offer feedback on classroom management, they simultaneously enable the mentee to experience successful performance and receive credible verbal reinforcement. Lawrent (2024), studying Tanzanian secondary school teachers, found that mastery experiences and verbal persuasion are among the strongest contributors to teacher self-efficacy. The Chato District findings extend that observation to the specific context of novice teacher induction and suggest that mentoring produces its most consistent effects in the domains where these two self-efficacy sources are most easily activated.

Notably, mentoring support was less consistently reported in learner assessment guidance (70.0%) and in helping novice teachers understand school culture (68.3%). This asymmetry suggests that mentoring in Chato District is stronger in visible instructional practices than in subtler, longer term domains such as assessment literacy and organisational socialisation. The finding aligns with Wang et al. (2024), who argued that mentoring competence must span relational, cognitive, and affective functions, and that many mentoring programmes emphasise the cognitive function of instructional guidance while under investing in the relational and affective functions.

A senior academic staff member from School C described how such support is typically enacted:

When we mentor novice teachers, we usually begin by reviewing their lesson plans and observing their teaching sessions. Through these processes we provide guidance on how to organize lesson content, engage students during teaching, and present subject matter more clearly. Over time we observe that their lesson delivery becomes more structured and effective. (Senior Staff, School C, 23 February 2026)

Mentorship logs reviewed in Schools C and E showed evidence of lesson observations and feedback sessions occurring at regular intervals during the first year of teaching. In Schools B, D, and F, such records were sparse or absent.

4.2.3 Quality and specificity of feedback

Table 5 shows novice teachers' perceptions of the quality of feedback they received during mentoring. Twenty-one respondents (70.0%) agreed that the feedback was constructive, while five (16.7%) disagreed and four (13.3%) were neutral.

Table 5 Perceptions of constructive feedback in mentoring (n = 30)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	21	70.0%
Disagree	5	16.7%
Neutral	4	13.3%
Total	30	100.0%

The finding that 70.0% of novice teachers perceived feedback as constructive is broadly consistent with international evidence that structured feedback is a common feature of induction (Kearney et al., 2022). Yet, the 16.7% who disagreed, and the interview account describing feedback as focused on general classroom management rather than subject specific pedagogy, indicate that the depth and specificity of feedback vary. This finding echoes Mzelela et al. (2023), who reported that beginning teachers in Rukwa Region valued feedback but experienced it as focused on a narrow set of pedagogical issues, and Mlyakado and Mwandambo (2024), who found that mentorship during teaching practice often emphasised assessment over developmental feedback.

Smith and Ulvik (2022) argued that effective mentoring requires structured, reflective feedback that promotes professional learning rather than compliance monitoring. The Chato District finding that feedback is generally constructive but often not subject specific suggests that mentoring quality is constrained by the frequent absence of subject matched mentor and mentee

pairings. This is an important operational insight: mentor allocation systems that rely on availability rather than subject expertise may produce mentoring interactions that support general pedagogical development but leave subject specific competencies underdeveloped.

Although a majority perceived feedback as constructive, the minority of dissenting responses points to variation in feedback quality across schools. Interview data supported this observation. One senior academic staff member acknowledged that feedback often focused on general classroom concerns rather than subject specific pedagogical issues:

We do give feedback to novice teachers after observing their lessons, but often we talk more about classroom management and lesson structure. Feedback on subject specific teaching methods is not always as detailed because in some cases we do not share the same subject as the novice teacher. (Senior Staff, School B, 14 February 2026)

4.2.4 Consistency and follow up

Table 6 presents novice teachers' reports on the regularity and follow up of mentoring interactions. While 60.0% agreed that mentoring meetings were conducted regularly, only 46.7% agreed that consistent follow up occurred after mentoring sessions. Fewer than half (43.3%) reported that mentoring was based on a clear schedule or plan, and 50.0% agreed that feedback and support were provided continuously over time.

Table 6 Consistency and follow up in mentoring practices (n = 30)

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Mentoring meetings are conducted regularly	60.0%	40.0%
There is consistent follow up after mentoring sessions	46.7%	53.3%
Mentoring is based on a clear schedule or plan	43.3%	56.7%
Feedback and support are provided continuously over time	50.0%	50.0%

The finding that only 46.7% of novice teachers reported consistent follow up after mentoring sessions, and that only 43.3% reported that mentoring followed a clear schedule or plan, points to what is arguably the most important operational weakness identified in the study. Documents reviewed reinforced this pattern, showing irregular mentoring meetings and weak follow up records in Schools B and D.

These findings correspond with the study by Adedokun and Adeyeye (2024), studying Ethiopia and Malawi, concluded that the institutionalisation of social and structural capital interventions, including mentoring, requires consistent follow up mechanisms to produce sustained effects. Wang et al. (2024) noted that continuity and follow up are critical to the affective function

of mentoring, which reduces novice teachers' emotional exhaustion over time. The Chato District data suggest that although mentoring occurs, its intermittent character reduces its capacity to sustain novice teachers' professional development trajectory beyond the initial weeks of induction.

Additionally, document review reinforced these findings. Mentoring meetings were irregular in Schools B and D, and the available records did not show consistent follow up after initial guidance. A Ward Education Officer described the ward level dimension of this pattern:

At the ward level, there is currently no formal monitoring system for mentoring programmes. Schools are expected to support novice teachers, but there is limited follow up to ensure mentoring is implemented effectively. (Ward Education Officer 2, 26 February 2026)

4.3 Contribution of mentoring to professional development outcomes

The study assessed novice teachers' perceptions of how mentoring contributed to four professional development outcomes: teaching confidence, pedagogical competence, professional stress reduction, and professional ethics and conduct.

4.3.1 Overall outcomes

Table 7 presents novice teachers' responses on the contribution of mentoring to professional development. 75.0% of respondents agreed that mentoring improved their teaching confidence, and the same proportion agreed that it enhanced their subject delivery. 70.0% reported that mentoring reduced professional stress, and 80.0% agreed that mentoring improved their professional ethics and conduct.

Table 7 Contribution of mentoring to professional development (n = 30)

Statement	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)
Improved teaching confidence	10.0%	15.0%	75.0%
Enhanced subject delivery	13.0%	12.0%	75.0%
Reduced professional stress	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%
Improved professional ethics	8.0%	12.0%	80.0%

4.3.2 Teaching confidence

Interpreted through Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, guided classroom practice produces mastery experiences. Interview data reinforced the questionnaire findings on teaching confidence. A senior academic staff member from School C reported:

From our experience as senior teachers, when novice teachers participate in regular mentoring sessions, we begin to observe a noticeable improvement in their teaching confidence. At first, they may feel uncertain when delivering lessons or managing students, but after receiving guidance on

lesson preparation, classroom control, and teaching strategies, they gradually become more confident and capable in handling classroom situations. (Senior Staff, School C, 20 February 2026)

4.3.3 Pedagogical competence

The 75.0% of respondents who agreed that mentoring enhanced their subject delivery represented substantive support for the pedagogical value of mentoring. Documentary evidence from teacher appraisal reports in Schools A, C, and E indicated that novice teachers who participated in mentoring received progressively better performance ratings in areas related to lesson organisation, classroom interaction, and instructional delivery over the induction period. The finding is consistent with Mashauri et al. (2025)'s study in Iringa Municipality, which reported that teachers who participated in mentorship activities described significant improvements in their professional practice, particularly in instructional delivery and classroom organisation.

4.3.4 Professional stress reduction

Seventy per cent of respondents agreed that mentoring reduced their professional stress during induction, while 20.0% disagreed. A senior academic staff member from School D explained the perceived stress reducing function of mentoring:

New teachers often experience a lot of pressure when they begin teaching because they must manage classrooms, prepare lessons, and adapt to school routines at the same time. Through mentoring, we provide reassurance and practical advice that helps them overcome these challenges and build confidence in their abilities. (Senior Academic Staff, School D, 25 February 2026)

The finding is consistent with Bogers et al. (2025) demonstrated in a European latent growth study that induction quality shapes beginning teachers' affective orientations and self-efficacy, with higher quality mentoring reducing stress and improving instructional confidence. Similarly, Wang et al. (2024) identified the reduction of emotional exhaustion as one of three essential mentoring functions. The Chato District finding, together with the interview data from senior academic staff describing how mentoring provides reassurance and practical advice, positions mentoring not only as an instructional intervention but as a psychological support mechanism during a demanding professional transition.

4.3.5 Professional ethics and conduct

Eighty per cent of respondents agreed that mentoring improved their professional ethics and conduct, representing the highest level of agreement across all outcome items. Document review showed that School Management Team minutes in four of the six sampled schools recorded discussions of professional conduct, including punctuality, lesson preparation, and adherence to

school regulations, particularly in relation to newly appointed teachers. A senior academic staff member from School E described how such issues were addressed through mentoring:

During mentoring sessions, we emphasize the importance of professional ethics such as punctuality, proper record keeping, respectful interaction with students, and adherence to school rules. These aspects are essential for maintaining professional standards within the teaching profession. (Senior Academic Staff, School E, 25 February 2026)

This finding echoes Ampomah et al. (2024), who argued that mentoring plays a central role in helping novice teachers internalise professional values. Levinson's (1978) Career Stage Theory further explains why these outcomes matter so acutely in the novice teacher phase. Career transitions are characterised by uncertainty and the search for guidance, and it is precisely during such transitions that mentoring interventions produce the strongest developmental returns. .

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the experiences of novice teachers regarding the mentoring support they receive during induction and to assess how those experiences contribute to their professional development in public secondary schools in Chato District, Tanzania. The findings show that novice teachers reported broadly positive mentoring experiences and attributed important developmental outcomes to them, including improved teaching confidence, enhanced pedagogical competence, reduced professional stress, strengthened professional ethics, and greater intention to remain in the profession. Most novice teachers received formal induction and were assigned mentors, and most received support in core pedagogical areas such as lesson planning and classroom management.

However, the study also revealed significant unevenness in the effectiveness of mentoring practices. Feedback was often general rather than subject specific, mentoring meetings were irregular in several schools, follow up was inconsistent, and formal documentation of induction activities was incomplete in half of the sampled schools. Read through Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory and Levinson's Career Stage Theory, the findings suggest that mentoring in Chato District activates the sources of self-efficacy during a critical career transition, but not always with the intensity or consistency required to produce sustained developmental effects. The study therefore concludes that novice teachers in Chato District generally have access to mentoring, but do not always experience it as a structured, sustained, and developmentally responsive process. Strengthening novice teacher induction in the district requires shifting the policy and practice focus from expanding access to mentoring toward improving the operational conditions under which mentoring produces its full developmental potential.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, several recommendations are proposed to improve mentoring programmes for novice teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, working through the Tanzania Institute of Education and district level structures, should develop operational guidelines for school-based induction and mentoring that specify minimum contact hours, expected feedback cycles, and documentation requirements. These guidelines should complement the National Framework for Teacher Continuous Professional Development (MEWAKA) and could be modelled on the school-based approach used in the SITT model, which embeds structured mentoring within teachers' everyday work.

Secondly, ward and district education offices should be equipped with mentoring supervision tools, including standardised induction records and follow up templates, to support the routine monitoring of mentoring practices at school level.

Schools should establish formal mentor allocation systems supported by written induction plans, mentoring schedules, and documented feedback cycles. School Management Teams should also protect regular time slots for mentoring activities within the school calendar, so that follow up is not displaced by administrative demands. In addition, brief but structured reflective mentoring meetings, held at defined intervals during the first three years of teaching, should combine pedagogical guidance, socialisation support, and emotional check ins, thereby activating the full range of Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy.

Finally, further research is needed on the medium- and long-term effects of mentoring on novice teacher retention and instructional practice in Tanzanian secondary schools. Longitudinal studies tracking novice teachers over three to five years would help establish whether the developmental outcomes reported here translate into sustained career commitment and measurable improvements in student learning.

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