
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Beyond the Classroom: The Role of Psychosocial Mentoring in the Career Development of Physical Education Student Teachers in Ghana

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| ABSTRACT

Mentoring programs influence the development of student teachers and their decision-making processes on their career path in the teaching profession. The paper examined the use of psychosocial mentoring in the career development of physical education student teachers in Ghana. Using a descriptive survey cross-sectional design, 122 level 400 intern students of a Ghanaian public university were sampled with the use of structured questionnaires that measured the attributes and practices of mentoring and the career preparation standards. The hierarchical regression analysis showed that mentoring knowledge had the highest contribution to the career development (24%), then mentoring practices (17%). Although Psychosocial mentoring was mentioned by the respondents as important, its contribution to the variance of career development was only 5 percent, assuming there is not much integration in an existing model of mentorship. The results indicate that psychological directions and emotional support are underutilized in the existing models of mentoring even though they have potential benefits. The results are indicative of the necessity of less formalised ways of psychosocial assistance in the teacher education programs. The implications of the findings on the development of holistic mentoring systems can be applied in supplementing the transmission of technical knowledge with emotional and psychological support, especially in physical education instructors that experience particular professional disappointments due to restrained resources in the learning setting.

| KEYWORDS

Psychosocial mentoring, career development, physical education, student teacher preparation, Ghana, teacher education.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The crisis of teacher shortage in the world must be solved immediately, and according to the UNESCO, it is estimated that approximately 44 million new teachers should be employed by 2030 to preserve the quality and the access to education (Park & Choi, 2025). The teachers of physical education are especially affected in sub-Saharan Africa, where the lack of resources and the absence of development opportunities cause the problem of retention (Taylor et al., 2019; Nketsia & Opoku, 2024). Ghana provides an example of such concerns, whereby rapid education expansion following the 2007 inclusion of preprimary education within free and compulsory public education created unheralded demand for physical education teachers (Wolf et al., 2019).

Mentoring emerges as a critical intervention for maintaining teacher development and retention in international contexts (Kram, 1983), and subsequent scholars identify two broad roles of mentoring: psychosocial support in the shape of role modelling and emotional support, and career or instrumental support in the shape of skill development and professional advancement (Eby et al., 2019); (Greenhaus et al., 2000). The literature bears witness to the influence of positive mentoring relationships on teacher retention, with Park & Choi (2025) stating that organisational commitment acts as a mediator in the influence of mentoring participation on novice teachers' projected career longevity. Similarly, (Maready et al., 2021) authored a report on longitudinal data showing fourteen of twenty-three mentoring practices as predictors of new teachers' retention in teaching roles.

The desire for psychosocial support appears particularly intense for early-career teachers who encounter professional challenges[9]. Determined that mentor emotional support has a beneficial effect on the development of career adaptability and professional identity among preservice teachers. Simon & Dan (2025) study established that kindergarten student-teachers perceived the dual influence of mentoring in school about their mentors as role models in the pedagogical and emotional development. These results are consistent with the general research findings that affect the career decision-making and identity development are strongly impacted by the emotional experiences of the mentoring interactions (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Peng et al., 2017).

Physical education teachers have specific professional issues that demand specific mentoring strategies. Physical education teachers have a higher rate of stress associated with poor facilities, insufficiency of resources, and isolation relative to other subject teachers, unlike those who teach classroom-based subjects that do not involve such issues (Cañabate et al., 2023; Latino et al., 2023). Ryskaliyev et al. (2024) suggest These obstacles seem to be especially severe in the African context, where physical education is lowly institutionalised and esteemed (Ocansey, 2025).

Teacher education system has experienced some major reforms in Ghana in an attempt to enhance the quality and retention of teachers. Fast-track Transformational Teacher Training programme, which was a promising experience in Africa according to the World Bank, focuses on the use of mentoring and in-classroom coaching of student teachers (UNESCO, 2019). Research however records the long-standing difficulties regarding mentoring practise which include insufficient preparation of school-based mentors and insufficient structured support systems as some of the greatest challenges facing mentees of teacher education programmes in Ghana. Those in Ghana have shown the same, with six out of ten preservice teachers in Ghana stating that they have been guided by teachers who have not been provided with formalised mentor education (Pedagogstudentene, 2021).

The stress and coping theory model comes in particularly handy in explaining the role of mentoring in teacher development. Transactional model postulates that people live in stressful situations when they observe a mismatch between situational needs and their resources to cope. This model seems to be especially applicable to the student teachers who have to undergo the shift of theoretical preparation into practise in the classroom. Herman et al. (2020) even suggested the Coping-Competence-Context Theory to support the explanations of the teacher stress citing pathways that are interrelated among coping resources, professional competence, and contextual demands. Research based on this framework has shown that mentoring relations are important coping resources, which allow novice teachers to find problem-oriented solutions to classroom problems, and emotion-oriented mechanisms of addressing professional stress (Berjot & Gillet, 2011; Obbarius et al., 2021).

Even though an increased awareness has been created about the need of psychosocial mentoring, there exist significant gaps in the literature about the contributions that psychosocial mentoring, specifically to the development of teachers in the area of physical education in African settings. Majority of the literature has concentrated on general groups of teachers in the Western countries that may not highlight specific issues of physical education student teachers who operate in resource-limited environments. Moreover, the ways in which the cultural issues and institutional settings influence the mentoring relations within the teacher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa have not been given enough attention. In such a manner, this research examined the levels of contribution of psychosocial mentoring to the career development of Ghana physical education student teachers with implication on enhancement of teacher preparation and retention policy in such settings.

2. Conceptual Framework

The theoretical basis that is used to explain the impact of the psychosocial mentoring on career development is based predominantly on Lazarus & Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping. According to this model, stress is not caused by environmental circumstances only but by transactions within the environment between the individual and the environment where the perceived needs are high and the availed coping resources are low (Biggs et al., 2017). The theory seems a rather fitting concept when applied to the area of teacher education because student teachers are going through the difficult stages of transition between theoretical and practical knowing and have to deal with numerous stressors, including performance assessment and classroom control over student behaviour and the formation of their professional identity (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

The critical point of this theoretical model is cognitive appraisal, which is made of two different processes, which influence stress response and shows the coping activity. Primary appraisal involves an evaluation of situations as threats, challenges or opportunities to self-improve and secondary appraisal is an evaluation of coping resources and capabilities to cope with perceived stressors(Lazarus, 1990; Lazarus, 1999). Such appraisal procedures have been revealed to contribute greatly to the well-being and the outcome of professional development of teachers. The paper by Skinner & Brewer (2002) and Berjot & Gillet

(2011) concluded that even though the threat and challenge appraisals are negatively related, they can co-exist and present complex emotional experiences, which involve complex responses.

The model describes two broad coping categories which have varying roles during the management of professional adversity. Problem-oriented coping is based on direct coping with stressor sources, i.e., planning, searching for information, and execution of coping responses, while emotion-oriented coping is about the regulation of emotions, i.e, through reframing, seeking support and controlling upset (Carver, 1997). According to meta-analyses, effective teachers flexibly use the two strategies according to the needs of the situation and available resources (Graven et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the efficacy of particular coping styles also seems to be culturally determined and collectivist situations favour more social support and harmony-seeking coping styles more than individualistic situations (Greenglass et al., 1999).

Mentorship relationships are assets in this process of stress and coping, which serve instrumental and emotional support in evaluating the demands of the profession. Mentors provide problem-oriented help in the form of pedagogical help, curriculum planning help, classroom management help and at the same time provide emotion-oriented help in the form of empathy listening, encouragement, and validation (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000; Knoll et al., 2005). It would seem especially significant in the teaching practicum experiences, when student teachers are exposed to multiple stressors at once that require various coping responses.

The theory of stress and coping in physical education settings outlines the characteristic considerations in the foundation of mentoring relations and their influence. There are unique stressors in physical educators such as coping with crowds in open areas, instruction in various bodies and fitness capabilities, and combating marginalisation of subjects in academic hierarchies ([33]). Alatzogoulou et al.'s (2022) research in Greece emphasises that effective management of physical education requires teachers to balance a number of roles as planners, organisers, transmitters of knowledge, and reactive interpersonal facilitators. This exacting complexity suggests that psychosocial mentoring may be particularly valuable for physical education student teachers in developing professional identities and coping strategies.

Individual and contextual factors moderate mentoring support and career development outcomes in this model. Personal variations in commitment, self-efficacy beliefs, and prior experiences determine how student teachers perceive challenges and utilise mentoring resources (Folkman, 1984; Rector & Roger, 1997). The culture of the school, resource availability, and institutional support systems are contextual variables that influence both stress levels and the presence of coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Studies in African educational contexts recognize additional moderating variables like cultural norms governing teacher-student relations, community involvement with schools, and resource constraints affecting teaching conditions (Mulkeen, 2006; Islam, 2011).

The positioning of mentoring in the stress and coping model suggests a range of mechanisms through which psychosocial support influences career development (*see figure 1*). Firstly, mentoring relationships enhance coping self-efficacy by virtue of successful models and learning experiences through vicarious means, solidifying beliefs about the handling of professional challenges (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Secondly, emotional support from mentors' buffers against stress impacts by legitimising experience and normalising challenges inherent in teaching transitions (Hochschild, 1983). Finally, mentoring promotes meaning-making processes that allow student teachers to reinterpret stressful situations as opportunities for development rather than threats (Folkman, 2008). These processes operate synergistically, with cumulative effects for career commitment and professional development.

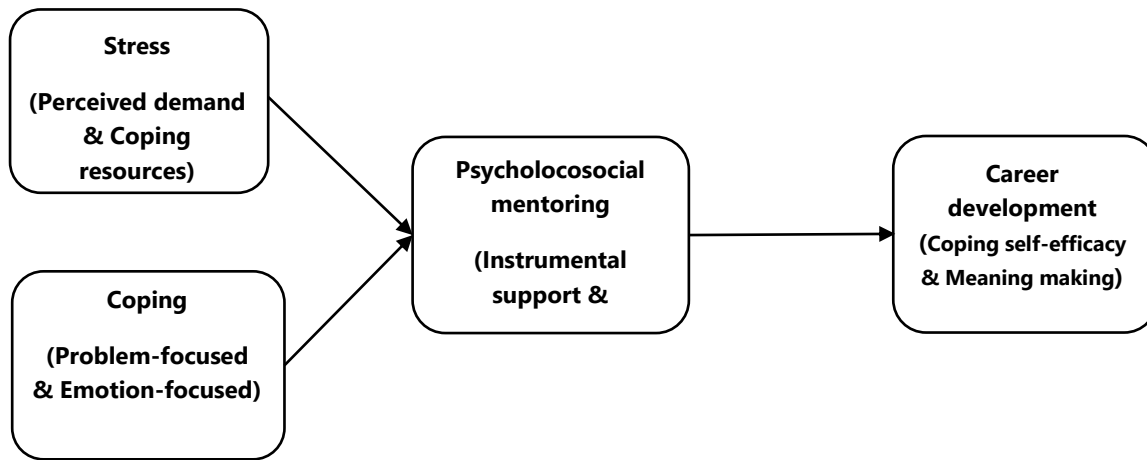


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Alt text:

A black-and-white conceptual framework diagram. On the left, two boxes are labelled: Stress (Perceived demands and Coping resources) and Coping (Problem-focused and Emotion-focused). An arrow pointing right to a box labelled Psychosocial mentoring, which includes Instrumental support and Emotional support. Another arrow leads to Career development, which includes Coping self-efficacy and Meaning-making.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

The research design used in this study was a cross-sectional survey to investigate the effect of mentoring on the career development of student-interns of Physical Education (PE). The cross-sectional type was considered suitable due to the ease with which it allows collecting data of a population at one point in time, and it allows the researcher to describe the current state, shape, and size of the phenomenon being examined (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ogah, 2013). This is another well-known survey in educational research due to its capability to measure the attitudes, practices and perceptions in the natural environment without controlling the variables (Cohen et al., 2018).

The study population was the entire PE mentor and student-interns of HPERS department of the 2019/2020 at the University of Education, + Winneba (UEW). To prevent sampling error, inclusivity and a fairly small population, a census sampling was used, given that the entire population was relatively small and manageable (Etikan and Bala, 2017). A total of 212 participants were involved in the study, and they were divided into 90 mentors (74 males and 16 females) and 122 student-interns (96 males and 26 females). The mentors were PE teachers in Senior High Schools in Ghana who met the minimum qualification requirement of a Bachelor of Education or a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and at least one years teaching experience. The student-interns were Level 400 undergraduates who had already had a one-semester internship in the partnership schools. This criterion of selection was consistent with the concept of purposive representativeness, so the participants who participated in the study were limited to individuals who had first-hand experience in mentoring practices (Palinkas et al., 2015).

A 63-item structured questionnaire was used to gather data, which was based on three large resources, namely the Student-Interns Teaching Evaluation Forms of the University of Education (2018), the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Standards of Beginning Physical Education Teachers (2003), and the National Teaching Council Standards (2017). The organisation of the instrument based on internationally and nationally agreed professional standards made it better constructed and meaningful to PE teacher preparation. The questionnaire was structured into five parts including: Section A, which included demographic data (5 items); Section B, which included mentoring attributes, including knowledge and psychosocial support (10 items); Section C, which included mentoring practises (9 items); Section D, which included barriers to mentoring (6 items); and Section E, which included the standards of preparing student teachers to their professional careers (28 items). Closed-ended format was used to permit systematic quantification of the responses and statistical analysis, in line with the guidelines of the educational research using a survey (Bryman, 2016).

In order to increase the validity of the instrument, it was put through a content expert review by curriculum experts in the College of Education Studies at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Face, construct, and content validity were tested by them to ensure that the questionnaire was in line with current mentoring models in teacher education. Pilot testing was then conducted on 24 PE student-interns of the 2019 cohort of the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER) of UCC. This has been essential in achieving clarity and situation-appropriateness of items, a method that has been suggested in enhancing accuracy in measurement of the survey research (Taherdoost, 2016).

SPSS version 22 was used in the reliability analysis. The pilot study was able to generate a general Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.73, exceeding the recommended general Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above used in social science tools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The primary research examination also revealed good reliability in all the parts: mentoring characteristics (0.702), mentoring practices (0.721), barriers to mentoring (0.717) and criteria to prepare student teachers (0.727). The overall internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .853$), which means that the instrument was stable and reliable to measure the constructs being investigated. This correlates with a recent methodological finding that supports the idea that reliability coefficients of more than .80 show strong stability in the instrument of educational research (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

Before data collection, ethical approval was granted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) with ID-UCCIRB/CES/2029/29. Permission to collect data was further sought from the registrar of UEW through the HOD of HPERS department. Consent form was completed by the participants after explaining the purpose and right to participate to them. All those who signed the consent form participated in the study.

4. Results

To conduct hierarchical regression analysis, descriptive statistics were employed to assess the assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, and the presence of outliers or influential data points. Upon confirming that these assumptions were met, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed, followed by an assessment of multicollinearity. The findings showed moderate positive association among knowledge and psychosocial characteristics ($r = 0.41$; $p < .05$), knowledge and common practices ($r = 0.56$; $p < .05$), as well as knowledge and career development ($r = 0.47$; $p < .05$). There was the highest correlation ($r = 0.63$) between mentoring practices and career development ($p < .05$).

Based on the results of the correlation, the knowledge, psychosocial features, and widespread mentoring practices are very much related to the career development of student interns. The positive (but moderate) correlations between knowledge and psychosocial characteristics ($r = 0.41$), knowledge and common practices ($r = 0.56$), and knowledge and career development ($r = 0.47$) indicate that the better the student interns and mentors are aware of the concept of mentoring, the more they may expect to undergo the supportive experience of psychosocial characteristics, effective practices, and better career development outcomes.

Significantly, the association between mentoring practices and career development ($r = 0.63$) was the strongest, and thus the manner in which mentoring is organised and executed is an important factor in determining the career trajectory of interns. This means that mentors who participate in successful mentoring activities, i.e. give guidance, feedback and role models to others, are the ones who have the most impact on the development of student interns.

Also, the findings highlight the importance of knowledge and psychosocial variables, but the most important is the practical implementation of mentoring in the development of a career. This observation reinforces the fact that institutions should intensify mentoring systems and empower the mentors with the knowledge and techniques in order to utilise student interns effectively. Additional details is found in Table 2.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Mentors' Mentoring Characteristics, Knowledge, Prevalent Practices and Interns' Career Development

Variables	Knowledge of Mentors	of Mentors	Psycho-social Practices	Mentors Prevalent Practice	Interns Career Development
Knowledge					
Psycho-social practice	.41**				
Prevalent Practice	.56**	.42			
Carrier Development	.47**	.41		.63	

N=212 Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed)

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2021

Additionally, a hierarchical regression analysis showed that mentoring characteristics (knowledge, psychosocial traits, and mentoring practices) collectively accounted for 46% of the variance in career development. Knowledge had the highest impact (24%), reinforcing the importance of content and pedagogical expertise in shaping interns' professional growth. Psychosocial features provided only 5%, underlining the fact that emotional intelligence and assistance have advanced importance, but it is unlikely to be used in the current mentoring frameworks to the full extent. The 17% reflected well on mentoring practices and pointed at the importance of the organised high-quality mentorship.

The results of the hierarchical regression show that the features of mentoring are important predictors of career development, with a total of 46% accounts of the variance. This implies that the variation in the outcomes of career development of interns can be almost entirely explained by the difference in the mentoring knowledge, the psychosocial support, and the mentoring practices which shows the importance of the concept of mentoring in the development of the professional world.

The fact that knowledge had the highest percentage (24) is an indicator that the content expertise, pedagogical guidance, and domain specific knowledge by mentors have the highest influence on the career trajectory of interns. This underlines the importance of professional knowledge transfer in the successful mentoring process and the importance of mentors to have effective subject and instructional knowledge.

The comparably lesser yet significant role of the psychosocial features (5%); this indicates that the importance of emotional support, encouragement and role modelling are not well internalised or highlighted in the existing mentoring models. This is indicative of poor use of psychosocial dimensions of mentoring, which, when enhanced, would make intern development holistic and assured of their career choices.

Lastly, the contribution of the mentoring practices is 17, which suggests the significant role of the structured, organised, and high-quality mentoring processes. It becomes evident that the practice of frequent feedback, setting goals, and regular interaction between mentor and intern are the key forces of career development. Refer to Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Showing the Incremental Impact of Mentoring Characteristics and Practices on PE Student Interns' Career Development

Model	Variables	B	T	R ²	ΔR ²	P
1	Knowledge characteristics	1.90	6.09	.24		.00
2	Knowledge characteristics					
	Psycho-social characteristics	.93	2.85	.29	.05	.01
3	Knowledge characteristics					
	Psycho-social characteristics					
	Mentoring practice	1.14	6.08	.46	.17	.00

Source: Fieldwork Data (2021).

5. Discussion

The data indicates that mentoring knowledge accounts for the majority of career development (24%), while psychosocial attributes contribute only 5%, highlighting significant imbalances in current mentoring practices for physical education student teachers. Such a trend can be explained by the recent international data according to which technical and pedagogical knowledge overtakes the teacher preparation programmes to the disadvantage of emotional support, although the advantages of psychosocial mentoring are increasingly recognised (Stanulis et al., 2019; Taylor, 2023). The low delivery of psychosocial support appears to be of particular interest in the view of the fact that emotional work is one of the key elements of the teaching process, and more so in early childhood and physical education environment where the relations between people and the management of motivation lies at the centre of the professional activity (Kruml & Geddes, 2000; Su et al., 2025).

The medium correlation between attributes of knowledge and psychosocial properties ($r = 0.41$) indicates that the two functions are connected but not identical as they provide support to the theoretical models of the separation of career and psychosocial mentoring functions. Eby et al. (2019) and Greenhaus et al. (2000) also discovered that although career and psychosocial support may co-exist in the context of mentoring relationships, they do not happen through the same mechanism and with different consequences. The fact that mentoring practises are more highly related to career development ($r = 0.63$) indicates that systematic and structured mentoring programmes may be more effective than simple support through knowledge or psychosocial means, with the hypothesis being that multidimensional mentoring strategies involving the combination of several facets of support may be even more successful.

These results are comparable to challenges reported through sub-Saharan African systems of teacher education. A survey of teacher preparation in 48 sub-Saharan African nations by Taylor et al. (2019) revealed that although most of the teacher preparation programmes have mentoring as formal elements, there is a wide range of practise with many student teachers having little systematic support. The same trends were registered in the UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust project evaluation which argued that although more than 10,000 teacher educators had been trained in Africa, emotional and psychosocial support areas had not been well developed as compared to the technical skill training (UNESCO, 2022). Such prioritisation of technical

overemotional competency might be due to the lack of resources and the need to instruct in the near future taking precedence over professional well-being in the long-term perspective.

Underuse of psychosocial support appears particularly troubling in light of physical education teachers' levels of stress in resource-constrained environments. Recent evidence demonstrates that physical education teachers in African contexts face a number of simultaneous stressors, including inadequate facilities, large class sizes, lack of equipment, and professional marginalization in school hierarchies (Ocansey, 2025; Ryskaliyev et al., 2024). Applications of [19] stress and coping process model with teacher populations confirm that emotional support and coping assistance are central influences on professional resilience and retention intentions (Herman et al., 2020). The limited psychosocial support found in this study can therefore represent a fundamental shortfall undermining student teachers' abilities to develop effective coping strategies for managing professional concerns.

Some studies have illustrated variation in the integration of psychosocial support into teacher mentoring programs. Hobson & Maxwell (2020) researching mentoring design across several countries, confirmed that programs with an explicit focus on emotional and psychological dimensions achieved better retention outcomes than those with a primary focus on pedagogical competence. Similarly, LoCasale-Crouch et al. (2012) study demonstrated that the mentoring quality, in particular emotional supportiveness and responsiveness to individual needs, was a more powerful predictor of beginning teacher self-efficacy and classroom interaction quality than mentoring frequency or mentoring longevity. These findings suggest that the quality and comprehensiveness of mentoring support matter more than the quantity of mentoring interactions.

The implications for physical education teacher preparation appear particularly significant in light of the unique challenges characterising this teaching speciality. Relative to classroom subjects, physical education requires the orchestration of multiple activity zones, serving diverse physical abilities, and motivating reluctant participants while often working in isolation from colleagues (Cañabate et al., 2023; Latino et al., 2023) study on physical education instructors revealed that holistic mentoring and emotional support had better classroom management, pupil engagement, and professional satisfaction compared to teachers who received predominantly technical guidance. The limited psychosocial support in Ghanaian programs would therefore compromise student teachers' preparation for such demanding professional demands.

Cultural factors can partially explain the emphasis on knowledge transfer at the expense of psychosocial support in Ghanaian mentoring programs. Studies examining mentoring across varying cultural contexts suggest that collectivist cultures are more likely to emphasise hierarchical knowledge transfer and respect for authority, which may inhibit emotional openness between mentors and mentees (Chaaban et al., 2021). That being said, Naami & Mort, (2024) study of Ghanaian teacher education found student teachers desired more space for reflection and emotional processing in practicum experiences, suggesting institutional rather than cultural limits may be at play. This is a good sign in the application of culturally responsive psychosocial mentoring strategies which avoids meddling with the local norms but meets the emotional support needs.

Current research in mentoring presents promising opportunities of the development of psychosocial support in physical education teacher training. Of particular promise is Vähäsantanen (2015) and Loughran & Menter, 2019. Future-Oriented Mentoring model is the one that tries to nurture intellectual virtues such as courage, open-mindedness, and persistence as well as the technical competence. The implementation studies point out that a total approach enhances the professional capacity and emotional strength especially when it comes to teaching professionals in the context of rapidly evolving learning environments [60]. Equally, studies of peer mentoring indicate that horizontal support relations can be used to supplement the traditional hierarchical mentoring relations in offering safer forums of emotional release and group problem solving (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000; Gehreke et al., 2024).

The high contribution of mentoring practises (17) to the career development variance is an indication that formal and deliberate mentoring processes can be of great importance in professional outcomes despite particular content in focus. This result is consistent with the results of large-scale mentoring programme studies which indicate that programme structure and the quality of programme implementation is more important than programme theory or philosophical orientation (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Among the structural factors relating to positive outcomes, regular schedule of meetings, clear expectations of the mentee, training of the mentor, and administrative support can be mentioned (Manning & Bouffard, 2020; Ceballos et al., 2024). This insignificant part of the mentoring practises in the study can be a reflection of inconsistent practise or a lack of order in existing programmes.

6. Future Research Directions and Limitations.

These findings are restricted by a number of limitations to the generalisability and interpretation. The cross-sectional design does not allow causal inferences on the relations between mentoring attributes and career development outcomes because the

reciprocal effects, as well as third variables, can account the relations obtained. Dependence on self-report measures also exposes avenues of response bias as the respondents may exaggerate the benefits of mentoring or give socially desirable descriptions of career intentions. The narrowness of the study area to one institution precludes the extrapolation of the findings to other institutions in Ghana or African settings in general where mentoring arrangements and cultural forces may be significantly varied. Moreover, the quantitative method though it enables a statistical analysis of relations does not provide detailed experience and sense of meaning that the student teachers have attached to mentoring relationships.

The next study ought to adopt the mixed-method designs that involve the use of surveys as well as interviews and observations to offer a deeper explanation of how psychosocial support functions in mentoring relationships and its influence on professional growth. Comparative studies in a variety of African nations would help determine the contextual influence on the effectiveness of mentoring and shape the development of culturally sensitive supportive strategies. Intervention studies can also strengthen psychosocial mentoring aspects in order to offer a causal explanation of their contribution on teacher retention and performance.

7. Conclusion

The study shows that there is a serious imbalance of mentoring of student physical education teachers in Ghana with psychosocial support having been grossly underutilised in spite of the well documented importance of psychosocial support as a means of professional development and retention. The idea that knowledge transfer outweighs emotional encouragement to career development is indicative of larger trends within the sub-Saharan African teacher education system that place technical skills over well-being issues that allow individuals to remain committed to their professions. Results have profound policy and practice implications of teacher education where education systems are grappling with teacher shortages and teacher retention that undermine educational quality and equity aspirations.

Combining the stress and coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman with mentoring research enlightenments can inform the processes by which comprehensive psychosocial mentoring can lead to better teacher preparation and teacher retention. Comprehensive mentoring relationships help the student teachers with their resilience and formation of professional identity necessary to succeed in challenging teaching conditions by offering emotional support, coping assistance, and providing opportunities to create a sense of meaning. Specific issues of physical education teachers, such as limitations of resources, the professional marginalisation of the profession, and the requirements of the diversity of pupils, stress the aspects of mentoring which involve both technical and emotional perspectives of the professional activity. Student teachers start to develop maladaptive coping mechanisms or burnout without psychosocial support, which supports the patterns of attrition, sabotaging the educational development programmes.

In the perspective, professional and personal development dimensions have to be conceptualised in teacher education programmes as mentoring and emotional support and coping skills development should have a specific focus. This necessitates the systematic mentor training with special focus on responsive and emotional supporting relationships as well as pedagogical mentoring. The institutional modifications, such as the guaranteed time of mentoring, valuing mentoring work, and the administrative support of intensive mentoring programmes seem to be the key factors of successful implementation. Although the resource limitation in African learning conditions is an issue. The literature suggests that quality rather than quantity is key, with well-structured, emotionally supportive mentoring relationships leading to considerable gains instead of a few contact hours. Lastly, investing in comprehensive mentoring approaches that integrate psychosocial support with knowledge transfer is a vital method of developing and retaining the qualified, resilient physical education teachers needed to achieve educational and developmental goals across sub-Saharan Africa and similar contexts globally.

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