

The Institution of Mentoring in Greek Vocational Education: Challenges, Benefits, and Evaluation of Collaboration

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Abstract

Introduction: The role of the Mentor in education is to support, guide, and advise newly appointed, substitute, or hourly-paid teachers, with the aim of facilitating their professional development and ultimately ensuring the smooth operation of the school unit. The present research investigated the institution of mentoring in Greece, focusing on the experiences of newly appointed and substitute teachers. The study explored the difficulties in implementing the institution, the opportunities offered by structured induction programs, the benefits of the mentoring relationship, and the evaluation of the collaboration between mentor and mentee.

Method: The questionnaire was developed entirely with the aid of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, which drafted and refined the survey questions in accordance with the study objectives. Each question was subsequently validated using a different AI tool to ensure its consistency and reliability. Data were collected electronically. A purposive sampling method was applied, specifically criterion sampling. This sampling method is considered the most appropriate, consistent with the information provided to the A.I. tools. The sampling procedure was non-probability, as the participants were not selected randomly but based on the criterion of professional experience. Teachers with less than five years of service, who fall under the provisions of the mentoring legislation, were selected. The research was conducted at the **Sivitanidios School**, one of the largest

technical schools in Greece. Across its four schools and one laboratory center, out of 59 teachers supported by the mentoring scheme, 20 completed the questionnaire.

Results: The results were compared with those of the international literature through the application of artificial intelligence (A.I.) techniques. Although the results cannot be statistically generalized, they revealed that **65% of the teachers** found it very difficult to accept the mentoring institution due to stereotypes and prejudices; **85%** considered the existence of an organized induction program highly important; **50%** believed that the quality of education in their school significantly improved through the mentoring relationship; and **60%** expressed great satisfaction with their collaboration with the mentor.

Conclusions: Although most teachers initially viewed the mentoring institution with skepticism, they ultimately benefited from it and improved their professional skills. They expressed the desire for every school to implement an induction program for new teachers and emphasized that mentoring contributes to improving the overall quality of education. The research demonstrates that AI-supported tools can effectively contribute to the study and rigorous evaluation of mentoring practices, thereby linking technological innovation directly to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4: Quality Education).

Keywords: Mentor, Mentee, Mentoring, Guidance, Quality of education, Interpersonal relationship

Introduction

The role of the mentor is to guide, support, and advise newly appointed, substitute, or hourly-paid teachers with up to five years of professional experience (Law 4823/2021). According to Ministerial Decision 102919/GD4/2022, a mentor is an experienced teacher with advanced qualifications, appointed by the school principal, whose purpose is to foster the professional development of new teachers and to ensure the effective functioning of the school unit.

Across Europe, the mentor's role in education is well established. However, both the nature of the role and the implementation of mentoring practices vary significantly between countries and educational levels, depending on national legislation and institutional structures (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Eby et al., 2008). **Table 1** presents a comparative overview of the mentoring institution in secondary education internationally.

Table 1: Comparative Overview of the Mentoring Institution in Secondary Education
(International Perspective)

Country	Reference	Programme	Mandatory for Early Career Teachers	Focus Areas
Germany	OECD (2023)	<i>Referendariat</i> (Pre-service training programme)	Mandatory in all <i>Länder</i> (federal states)	Intensive practicum, co-teaching, final evaluation (<i>Zweite Staatsprüfung</i>)
United Kingdom	Department for Education (2024)	<i>Early Career Framework (ECF)</i> & statutory induction	Mandatory for <i>Early Career Teachers (ECTs)</i> for two years	Retention, systematic skill development, structured feedback
France	European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice (2021)	<i>Titulaires Stagiaires</i> (New Teacher Guidance)	Mandatory during the first induction year (<i>stagiairisation</i>)	Pedagogical and psychological support, classroom management, integration into the system
Spain	OECD (2019a)	Local Induction Programmes (<i>Inducción Docente</i>)	Not universally mandatory (varies by Autonomous Community)	In-school collaboration, new teacher support, social mentoring (e.g., students)
Sweden	European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice (2024)	Mentoring for New Teachers	Strongly recommended and institutionally supported, but not legally mandatory at the national level	Pedagogical guidance, psychosocial support, classroom management
Italy	INDIRE (2024)	<i>Anno di Prova</i> (Year of Trial)	Mandatory during the trial year (before permanent appointment)	Support for new teachers, VET connections, student mentoring (<i>Alternanza Scuola-Lavoro</i>)
Portugal	OECD (2019b)	<i>Novos Docentes</i> (New Teacher Guidance)	Mandatory during the first 1–2 years of service	Classroom observation, feedback, adaptation evaluation
USA	National Education Association (2020)	Induction Programs	Mandatory in many States or School Districts	Teacher retention, pedagogical guidance, alignment with educational standards
China	Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2023); Zhang, X. (2025)	<i>Master Teacher / Apprentice Model (Shītúzhì)</i>	Widely practiced and supported, often required in large schools and programmes	Knowledge transfer, lesson observation, development of social and professional skills

In Greece, the mentoring institution faces significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness or render it inactive. These difficulties relate both to systemic and cultural aspects of education, as well as to other structural factors that perpetuate long-standing barriers to implementation (Smyrniou et al., 2023).

Until recently, the mentor's role had not been clearly defined by the state, leading to fragmented or non-existent implementation (Papadimitriou, 2014; Fotiou, 2017). The first official reference to mentoring appeared in Law 3848/19-05-2010. However, the Greek educational system—and particularly teachers themselves—were not ready to accept the institution, primarily due to the absence of a mentoring culture. This lack of readiness delayed its systematic implementation. More recent and detailed regulations were introduced under Law 4823/2021, which aimed to establish a clear framework for its application.

The **insufficient training of mentors** has been repeatedly highlighted in the literature as a major issue requiring immediate attention (Zacharopoulou, 2019; Evangelou, 2020; European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021; Smyrniou et al., 2023). Despite formal legislation, experienced teachers are often asked to assume a critical role without adequate preparation—to inspire, guide, and empower new colleagues so that they can successfully meet the professional demands of the teaching vocation.

Reluctance toward new institutional practices—especially when perceived as potential “evaluation mechanisms”—intensifies the hesitation and resistance to their implementation (Koutsoukos, 2019). Over time, such prejudices become entrenched and difficult to overcome, largely due to insufficient communication with the educational community, which often misinterprets mentoring as an evaluative rather than a developmental process.

Moreover, experienced teachers often struggle to dedicate time outside of teaching hours to support novice colleagues, due to professional and personal obligations (Vasileiadis, 2012). The **lack of incentives** to sustain the mentoring institution further impedes its effectiveness (INE-GSEE, 2022).

The Greek educational system often operates on the basis of individual effort, while collaboration and structured guidance have yet to be fully integrated into the educational culture (Georgiou, 2021). Even today, awareness regarding the mentoring institution—its potential, and its benefits—remains limited (Zacharopoulou, 2019; Evangelou, 2020).

The present study seeks to examine the mentoring institution from the perspective of **new teachers**, through a specific **case study** approach.

Research Methodology

Study Sample

The study sample consisted of a mixed group of teachers (permanent and substitute, male and female), selected to ensure a balanced and homogeneous composition, thereby enhancing the validity of the research (Farmakis, 2015).

The research population was drawn from the **Sivitanidios Public School of Arts & Vocations**, one of the largest and most representative institutions of Technical and Vocational Education in Greece. The choice of this setting makes the case particularly significant for understanding issues affecting new teachers within the framework of the Pedagogical Advisor–Mentor institution, allowing for an in-depth exploration of their experiences.

In total, across the four schools and the Laboratory Centre of the Sivitanidios complex, **20 out of 59 teachers** who met the criterion of having less than five years of professional experience completed the questionnaire. During the sampling design, efforts were made to involve as many eligible teachers as possible to ensure greater reliability in the research results.

Sampling Method

A **purposive sampling** strategy was adopted, specifically **criterion sampling**, with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of groups of teachers who met certain predefined criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015).

This specific method was also selected as the most appropriate by the A.I. tools.

The criterion established was that participants should have less than five years of teaching experience, thereby falling within the provisions of the law concerning mentors.

This type of sampling is classified as **non-probability sampling**, as participants were not chosen randomly but according to the specific criterion of professional experience. Consequently, while the results are valid for this particular sample, they cannot be statistically generalized with the same precision as those obtained through random sampling.

Questionnaire Design

A **quantitative research approach** was employed using a structured questionnaire (Iseris, 2016).

The questionnaire was developed entirely with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which drafted and refined the research questions in accordance with the study's objectives. Furthermore, each question was validated using an additional AI tool to ensure the internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument.

Questionnaires were distributed to new teachers in each school unit. During its design, clear and concise closed-ended questions were used, written in accessible language and accompanied by necessary clarifications. The questionnaire comprised **four sections**, corresponding to the four research questions:

- a) the difficulties faced in implementing the mentoring institution,
- b) the opportunities offered through organized induction programs for new teachers,
- c) the benefits of the mentoring relationship, and
- d) the evaluation of the collaboration between mentor and mentee.

Responses were measured using a **three-point Likert scale** (“little”, “fairly”, “very”). The completion time for each questionnaire was approximately ten minutes. **Table 2** presents the structure of the questionnaire and the corresponding research questions.

Table 2: Structure of the Questionnaire and Research Questions

Section	Type of Questions / Focus	Research Question	Number of Questions
First	Difficulties in implementing the institution	What challenges does the mentoring institution face?	9
Second	Induction program for new teachers	How important is a structured induction program?	7
Third	Benefits of the mentoring relationship	What are the benefits of the mentoring relationship?	6
Fourth	Collaboration between mentor and mentee	How is the cooperation between mentor and mentee evaluated?	11

The questionnaire was first tested in a **pilot phase** by two teachers—one mentor and one newly appointed teacher—to ensure clarity and coherence.

Statistical Data Analysis

The statistical analysis included:

- **Descriptive statistics**,
- **Reliability testing** of the questionnaire using **Cronbach’s Alpha**, and
- **Chi-square tests** to investigate the most significant correlations between the variables corresponding to the research questions.

Study Limitations

Certain methodological limitations were identified, particularly regarding the sample size, as well as temporal constraints and potential bias or apprehension concerning the mentoring institution (Alex, 2023).

A key limitation was **non-response bias**. Of the 59 teachers meeting the five-year experience criterion, only 20 responded—representing roughly one-third of the population. Consequently, the opinions of respondents may differ significantly from those who did not participate.

Research Results

Descriptive Statistics

Female teachers represented **60%** of the study participants, outnumbering male teachers (**40%**). The **mean scores** of participants' responses on the three-point Likert scale are presented in Tables 4, 6, 8, and 10.

Reliability Testing

The **Cronbach's Alpha coefficient** was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire (Markos, 2012). The overall reliability coefficient was $\alpha = 0.906$, indicating a very high level of reliability. Specifically:

- Section A: $\alpha = 0.743$ (after removing variables 1, 3, 7 related to policy issues and variables 8, 9 designed to strengthen interpretative conclusions),
- Section B: $\alpha = 0.831$,
- Section C: $\alpha = 0.927$, and
- Section D: $\alpha = 0.963$.

These results confirm that the scale demonstrates **strong internal coherence and reliability** across all sections.

Application of the Chi-Square Test

A. *Investigation of the Difficulties and Barriers Encountered in the Implementation of the Mentoring Institution*

The relationship between the variable "*Teachers' stereotypes hindering acceptance of the mentoring institution*" and each variable of the corresponding research question was examined. Separate contingency tables were constructed for each pair of variables, one of which is presented below (Table 3).

Table 3: Association between the Level of Difficulty in Accepting the Mentoring Institution and the Level of Awareness about the Mentor's Role

Degree of difficulty in accepting the mentoring institution due to teachers' stereotypes (suspicion, fear)	Little	Quite	Very	Total Responses
Lack of information about the mentoring institution				
Little	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Quite	5.0%	15.0%	25.0%	45.0%
Very	0.0%	15.0%	40.0%	55.0%
Total Responses	5.0%	30.0%	65.0%	100.0%

Table 4 demonstrates that **65%** of teachers reported difficulty accepting the mentoring institution due to stereotypes and prejudices. Additionally, **40%** associated this difficulty with both stereotypes and insufficient information regarding the institution. Table 4 was compiled from the synthesis of the corresponding analytical tables.

Table 4: Teachers' Responses to the Research Question: "What is the Degree of Difficulty in Accepting the Institution Due to Teachers' Stereotypes and Prejudices?"

No.	Research Question Variables	Degree of Difficulty in Accepting the Mentoring Institution Due to Teachers' Stereotypes and Prejudices				
		Scale	Little	Quite	Very	<i>p</i> -value
1	The contribution of the current legal framework strengthens the mentoring institution.	Little	0.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.511
		Quite	0.0%	20.0%	45.0%	
		Very	5.0%	0.0%	15.0%	
2	Lack of mentor training constitutes a barrier to the institution.	Little	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	<0.001
		Quite	5.0%	25.0%	20.0%	
		Very	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	
3	Bureaucracy affects the implementation of the institution.	Little	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.923
		Quite	0.0%	15.0%	20.0%	
		Very	5.0%	15.0%	40.0%	
4	Teachers' stereotypes and prejudices hinder acceptance of the institution.	Research Question	—	—	—	—
5	Lack of incentives for mentors constitutes an obstacle to implementation.	Little	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	5.0%	25.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	65.0%	
6	The absence of information and publicity about the institution limits its implementation.	Little	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.348
		Quite	0.5%	15.0%	25.0%	
		Very	0.0%	15.0%	40.0%	

7	Educational policies underestimate the role of professional guidance.	Little	5.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.938
		Quite	0.0%	15.0%	30.0%	
		Very	0.0%	15.0%	25.0%	
8	The role of the Mentor–Pedagogical Advisor is distinct from that of the Field Coordinator or Subject Advisor.	Little	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.847
		Quite	0.0%	15.0%	45.0%	
		Very	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	
9	The mentor’s role is to evaluate the teacher.	Little	5.0%	10.0%	45.0%	0.456
		Quite	0.0%	20.0%	15.0%	
		Very	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	

p-values correspond to the **Kendall’s tau-b correlation coefficient**

(continues with Section B – *Investigation of the Significance of an Organized Induction Program for New Teachers*)

B. *Investigation of the Significance of an Organized Induction Program for New Teachers*

The relationship between the variable “*Significance of an organized induction program for new teachers*” and each variable of the research question was examined. Separate contingency tables were constructed for each pair of variables, one of which is presented below (Table 5).

Table 5: Association Between the Perceived Significance of an Organized Induction Program for New Teachers and the Usefulness of Orientation Regarding School Facilities and Functions

Level of perceived significance of an organized induction program for new teachers	Little	Quite	Very	Total Responses
Usefulness of the new teacher’s orientation to school facilities and functions				
Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Quite	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Very	0.0%	5.0%	85.0%	90.0%
Total Responses	5.0%	10.0%	85.0%	100.0%

Table 5 reveals that the **vast majority (85%)** of teachers considered the existence of an organized induction program for new teachers to be highly important, while simultaneously recognizing the usefulness of providing information and guidance about the school’s facilities and operational procedures. Through similar pairwise analyses, Table 6 was created.

Table 6: Teachers' Responses to the Research Question: "What is the Degree of Importance of Having an Organized Induction Program for New Teachers?"

No.	Research Question Variables	Degree of Importance of an Organized Induction Program for New Teachers				
		Scale	Little	Quite	Very	<i>p</i> -value
10	The existence of an organized induction program for new teachers is important.	Research Question	—	—	—	—
11	Having a stable mentor for each new teacher assists throughout the first year of teaching.	Little	5.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.036
		Quite	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	
12	Orientation of the new teacher to school facilities and functions is useful.	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.106
		Quite	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	85.0%	
13	Orientation of the novice teacher to pedagogical and administrative practices of the school is important.	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.279
		Quite	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	85.0%	
14	Regular meetings for feedback and guidance from the mentor are useful.	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.192
		Quite	0.0%	5.0%	20.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	65.0%	
15	The presence of a printed or digital welcome guide with basic information helps the new teacher.	Little	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.135
		Quite	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	75.0%	
16	Participation of novice teachers in collaborative groups serves a supplementary function.	Little	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.892
		Quite	5.0%	0.0%	15.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	60.0%	

p-values correspond to **Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient**

The **Chi-square analysis** indicated that only **5%** of teachers regarded the existence of an organized induction program as minimally important, whereas **85%** considered it *highly important* (Table 5).

C. Investigation of the Benefits of the Mentoring Relationship

The relationship between the variable *“The mentoring relationship positively influences the quality of education in the school”* and each variable of the corresponding research question was examined. Separate contingency tables were constructed for each pair of variables, one of which is presented below (Table 7).

Table 7: Association Between the Degree to Which the Mentoring Relationship Affects School Education Quality and the Degree to Which It Promotes Professional Development for Both Mentee and Mentor

Degree of influence of the mentoring relationship on school education quality	Little	Quite	Very	Total Responses
The relationship with the mentor assists in the professional development of both the new teacher and the mentor				
Little	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Quite	0.0%	35.0%	10.0%	45.0%
Very	0.0%	5.0%	40.0%	45.0%
Total Responses	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 7 illustrates that **40%** of the teachers believe the mentoring relationship substantially improves the **quality of education** in schools and simultaneously supports the **professional growth of both mentor and mentee**. Using similar analyses, Table 8 was developed.

Table 8: Teachers' Responses to the Research Question: “To What Extent Does the Mentoring Relationship Influence the Quality of Education in the School?”

No.	Research Question Variables	Degree to Which the Mentoring Relationship Influences School Education Quality				
		Scale	Little	Quite	Very	p-value
17	The novice teacher's self-confidence is strengthened through mentor support.	Little	5.0%	10.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	5.0%	20.0%	15.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	35.0%	
18	The relationship with the mentor contributes to the professional development of both the novice and the mentor.	Little	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	<0.001

		Quite	0.0%	30.0%	5.0%	
		Very	5.0%	5.0%	45.0%	
19	The mentoring relationship contributes to the mentor's reflection and teaching improvement.	Little	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	25.0%	5.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	45.0%	
20	The mentoring relationship improves the collaborative climate within the school.	Little	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	35.0%	10.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	40.0%	
21	The mentoring relationship fosters a culture of support and solidarity among teachers.	Little	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	5.0%	25.0%	15.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	35.0%	
22	The mentoring relationship positively affects the quality of education in the school.	Research Question	—	—	—	—

p-values correspond to **Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient**

D. *Evaluation of the Collaboration with the Mentor*

The relationship between the variable “*Level of satisfaction with collaboration with the mentor*” and each variable of the research question was examined. Separate contingency tables were created for each pair of variables, one of which is shown below (Table 9).

Table 9: Association Between the Level of Satisfaction with the Mentor Collaboration and the Degree of Support Received from the Mentor

Level of satisfaction with collaboration with the mentor	Little	Quite	Very	Total Responses
Degree of support received from the mentor				
Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Quite	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Very	0.0%	10.0%	60.0%	70.0%
Total Responses	5.0%	35.0%	60.0%	100.0%

Table 9 indicates that **60%** of the teachers were *very satisfied* with their collaboration with the mentor and simultaneously reported receiving a *high degree of support*. Similar analyses produced Table 10.

Table 10: Teachers' Responses to the Research Question: "How Satisfied Are You with Your Collaboration with the Mentor?"

No.	Research Question Variables	Degree of Satisfaction with Mentor Collaboration				
		Scale	Little	Quite	Very	p-value
23	How satisfied are you with your collaboration with the mentor?	Research Question	—	—	—	—
24	How easily could you express your questions to the mentor?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	15.0%	60.0%	
25	How frequently did you receive support from your mentor?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	60.0%	
26	How useful were the mentor's suggestions?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	60.0%	
27	To what extent has your teaching quality improved with mentor assistance?	Little	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	0.018
		Quite	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	45.0%	
28	How supportive was your mentor in your integration into the school community?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	25.0%	5.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	55.0%	
29	How well organized were your mentor's meetings or interventions?	Little	5.0%	5.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	25.0%	5.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	55.0%	
30	How much trust did you feel in your relationship with the mentor?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	35.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	
31	Did the mentor respect your personality and instructional choices?	Little	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	30.0%	0.0%	
		Very	0.0%	5.0%	60.0%	
32	Would you like this mentoring relationship to continue in the future?	Little	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	20.0%	5.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	45.0%	
33	Did the required co-teaching sessions between Mentor and Teacher improve your teaching and classroom behavior?	Little	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	<0.001
		Quite	0.0%	15.0%	5.0%	
		Very	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	

p-values correspond to **Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient**

Conclusions

The results were compared with those presented in the international literature through the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques.

A. *Difficulties in Implementing the Mentoring Institution in Greece*

Sixty-five percent (65%) of teachers reported difficulties in accepting the mentoring institution due to stereotypes and prejudices such as suspicion or fear of evaluation (Table 3). About 20% believed the mentor's role was primarily evaluative ($p = 0.456$).

While 60% stated that current legislation reinforces the institution ($p = 0.511$), 55% thought that national education policies undervalue professional guidance ($p = 0.938$). Bureaucracy was also seen by 60% as a significant barrier ($p = 0.923$).

Insufficient mentor training was noted by 60% ($p < 0.001$), and lack of incentives by 65% ($p < 0.001$). Sixty-five percent mentioned inadequate information about the institution ($p = 0.348$). These findings mirror international literature emphasizing that structured mentor preparation and clearly defined roles are prerequisites for success (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wang & Odell, 2019).

B. *Induction Program for New Teachers*

Eighty-five percent (85%) of teachers considered an organized induction program essential. Eighty percent (80%) emphasized the need for a stable mentor during the first year of teaching ($p = 0.036$). Regular meetings, feedback, and even simple digital "welcome packs" were recognized as highly beneficial ($p < 0.192$). Participation in collaborative groups, such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), was also viewed as supportive ($p = 0.892$).

C. *Benefits of the Mentoring Relationship*

Half of the respondents (50%) acknowledged that the mentoring relationship substantially improved teaching quality and promoted the professional growth of both participants. Teachers reported enhanced self-confidence ($p < 0.001$), reflective practice ($p < 0.001$), and a stronger culture of collaboration within schools ($p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that mentoring serves as a *mutual learning process* and a catalyst for continuous professional development (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009).

D. *Mentor–Mentee Collaboration*

Sixty percent (60%) of participants expressed high satisfaction with their mentors, citing open communication, trust, and consistent support as critical factors. They reported improvements in teaching quality ($p = 0.018$).

and expressed willingness to maintain the relationship beyond the formal program period. These findings highlight the importance of reflective, trust-based mentoring that fosters teacher autonomy and self-efficacy (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012).

Discussion

Across Europe, mentoring in secondary education has evolved into a structured, institutionalized practice crucial for teacher quality assurance and retention. In Greece, despite lingering skepticism and stereotypes, the study's findings demonstrate clear benefits for mentors, mentees, and the broader school community.

The institution's effectiveness depends less on legal mandates and more on *professional culture*—namely, the willingness of experienced teachers to guide newcomers. The results underscore major challenges, such as unclear role definitions and insufficient training, that must be addressed for successful implementation.

Teachers' endorsement of an induction program and a stable mentor aligns with best practices recommended by the OECD and Eurydice. The positive outcomes in collaboration, professional growth, and educational quality reinforce the mentoring institution's transformative potential in Greek vocational education.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the manuscript preparation process

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used GEMINI in order to create the questionnaire and compare the results of the research with that of the international bibliography. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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