Impact of Gender, Qualification and Experience on Mentoring Practices in Public Sector Universities of Islamabad

Quratul Ain Hina*, Abdul Qayyum Chaudhary**, Saira Nudrat***
and Mahek Arshad****

Abstract

This research was primarily designed to assess the difference in mentoring practices used by the management of universities on the basis of gender, academic qualification, professional qualification and job experience. The research has also focused on the development of a plan of action to implement mentoring programme for the universities of Islamabad. The population of the study was consisted on the 13 public sector universities of Islamabad. 5323 faculty members were serving in these 13 universities. By using convenient sampling technique 95 faculty members were selected for data collection. Data was collected through the use of a questionnaire based on 14 items. The data revealed that there was no statistically significant difference related to mentoring practices on the basis of gender, academic qualification and professional qualification. However there was significant difference in mentoring practices on the basis of job experience. The data shows that the employees having experience from 4 to 6 years were more responsive towards the mentoring practices as compared to the employees having more than 6 years of experience or having less than 4 years of experience. It was revealed that new employees were not getting assistance in developing research article, research activities, formal presentations, and locating teaching aids. It was recommended that the university management may allocate special week, days or hours specifically for the guidance of the newcomers in which they may interact with each other and with the senior members at a tea party or in an informal get together.

Keywords: Mentoring and new comers.

^{*}Assistant Professor, Department of Education, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. Email: drquratulainhina@gmail.com

^{**} Assistant Professor, IER, University of the Punjab, Lahore

^{***} Assistant Professor, Department of Education National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

^{****} Lecturer, Department of Education, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

Introduction

Mentoring is one of the most recent concepts in the field of education. Although in management sciences this term is not a new one. However the field of education in Pakistan is always ignored with reference to the new innovations. When the organizations hire the employees they demand high level of motivation and loyalty from them. While the motivation, socialization and loyalty is not something that is produced in one day. We need to do effort for this. Mentoring is actually a name of such effort from the organization to make the employees comfortable at the workplace. Anybody new in any situation needs help and guidance to learn and understand the organizational culture. Mentoring is actually that helping hand that enables the newcomer to stay and adjust within the situation. This helping hand can be provided by the senior employees formally as well as informally. Unfortunately in Pakistan the system of education is the most ignored one. We try to apply such innovative ideas in other fields but the field of education remains silent in this regard. The educational organizations also need such type of practices for its teachers as employees. Especially at higher level of education it is very important to develop our human resource by a proper planning. As the nation and the government has invested a huge amount for the education of its current and future generations.

According to Bozeman and Feeney (2007) "Mentoring is a process for the formal and informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé)". "The focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person and so the techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately" (Daloz, 1990). It is a helping hand provided to a newcomer in an organization that facilitates a person to learn and adjust in a given situation. Although formal youth mentoring is often perceived as a simple and inexpensive intervention, its success is likely to depend upon the degree of infrastructure and expertise that programs bring to the difficult task of creating strong, long-lasting relationships between two strangers (Freedman, 1993; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Mentoring is a process in which a mentor guides and instructs the mentee in a planned manner. In mentoring the new employee, seeks, observes, and perceives the things about the new organization, to which he is going to join. It is a systematic process and has great positive effects on the mentee's personality. It is a process of social relationship with new inductees. Mentoring requires the guidance for the mentee. It gives the protégée a depth, support wisdom and knowledge about his field. A mentor should possess some abilities and qualities like leadership, reflect his own eloquent skills. Mentor can better view the policies, rules and regulations, functions, procedures, values and norms of the organizations (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Unfortunately the field of education was ignored to be addressed from the point of view of Human Resource Development and Organizational Behavior. Educational institutions are required to be more concerned about the mentoring and socializing of the teachers as teachers are the individuals who are dealing with the character, values and attitudes of future generation. So it is very important to provide mentoring service to the teaching faculty to increase their output and socialization. In this way their work efficiency will increase and ultimately it will affect the future generation.

It becomes more important while discussing about educational organizations of Pakistan, especially the organizations responsible for higher education. The current research was designed to assess the mentoring services availability and to draw a comparison on the basis of gender, qualification and experience related to mentoring services provided to the newly hired faculty members at university level. Pakistan being an under developing country is facing so many problems. Education system and its quality is one of such major issues. In fact, the higher education in Pakistan is facing serious challenges such as unavailability of resources, funding, teacher training, management skills, lack of adequate leadership abilities, lack of co-worker support and socialization challenges. Thus form the area of Human Resource Management a key component "mentoring" had been taken to be discussed in the current research. As it had been observed that the new employees in organizations and especially in educational organization take enough time to get adjusted with the internal environment. That effects on the work efficiency as well. Thus an effort has been made to explore the status of mentoring programme being used at universities of Pakistan and to propose some measure to overcome this problem.

Literature review

Mentoring is a process by which a novice individual gets assistance from senior person. According to Ward and Tikunoff (1989) to provide the mentoring services at organization level multiple strategies are followed such as assistance technical support is provided to the newly employed teachers for an early setting in the new environment. An orientation session and training is provided to the novice. There are some other strategies for mentoring of teachers. These strategies include trainings, assistance, workshops and seminars etc. (Mickler, 1984; Varah, Theune, & Packer 1986). In the area of instruction, administrator takes different steps e.g assigning novices the easier classes or school (Rosenhold, 1989). The newly employed teacher can be assigned the subject areas for which he is prepared well and with those student whose behavior is less difficult to manage. Novice teachers are given opportunities to observe the demonstration of effective teaching practices by more experienced teachers. Monitoring is another strategy to assess the novice proficiency in the classroom (Hulig-Austin, 1990; Moffett & Isken, 1987; Varah & Packer 1986). The purpose for this is to provide constructive feedback. Different researches have recommended that monitoring and confidential coaching should be made frequently but this must be separate from evaluation. Team-building is the strategy which is utilized to help the beginners "fit into" the new working environment. By this, the mentee will be able to adjust him more speedily and to overcome the feelings of isolation and insecurity. Moreover encouragement from educational administrators or peers and acknowledgment of their efforts are also used as to improve the selfconfidence of novices (Moffett & Isken, 1987).

These are some potential benefit of mentoring must also be known for a researcher. These are some potential benefit of mentoring for mentees, mentors, schools and educational system. According to some researches mentoring is an important and effective form of supporting instrument for the professional development of beginning teachers (Carter & Francies, 2001). Mentoring is beneficial for newly employed teachers in reducing feeling of isolation, increasing confidence and self esteem professional growth and better problem solving capacities.

Wong and Premkumar (2007) explained the process of mentoring by discussing three models the apprentice, competency and reflective models. In the "apprentice model", the mentee observes the mentor and learns. That is also known as the traditional approach to learn job related skills. This approach is best where the mentee has a strong proactive behavior that can cover the limitations of this approach. While in general this is regarded as one way communication that certainly develops

some communication gaps. In the "competency model", the mentor gives the mentee systematic feedback about performance and progress. The addition of feedback improves the quality of work on both sides. In the "reflective model", the mentor helps the mentee become a reflective practitioner. That is the true spirit of the approach. In the reflective model mentoring is seen as an intentional, nurturing and insightful process that provides a powerful growth experience for both the mentor and mentee.

Wong and Premkumar (2007) reports that mentoring has certain key characteristics. The first and the most important thing in this regard is that it is an "intentional process". Second, mentoring is a "nurturing process" that fosters the development of the protégé towards his full potential. Third, mentoring is an "insightful process" in which the wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the mentee.

Zachary (2000) has divided the process of mentoring into four stages. These stages are Preparing, Negotiating, Enabling and Coming to closure. Zachary (2000) also suggested the Process skills that are needed as the skills of mentor. These skills are as follows:

- a. Asking questions
- b. Reformulating statements
- c. Summarizing
- d. Listening for silence
- e. Providing feedback

Although the process of mentoring and the mentoring programmes offered to the new entrants is the current topic of discussion in management and administration sciences, however it has been ignored with reference to the education as a complete system but It is equally important for the employees hired by any educational organizations. Olmstead (1993) reports that at the beginning of the new faculty's career, a mentor should advocate on their behalf to get the best possible starting conditions in terms of salary, research equipment and funding, and teaching load. According to Olmstead (1993) and National Academy of Sciences (1997). The mentor helps the new faculty understand departmental structures and processes and articulates the requirements and expectations for progress toward tenure, including the official and non-official requirements. Mentors and protégées should schedule frequent feedback sessions to track progression toward tenure. The mentor also has a crucial role in protecting the new faculty's research time in order to make tenure, such as by protecting women and minority faculty from being asked to be on too many departmental and school committees or teaching too many classes (National Academy of Sciences, 1997). While explaining the role of mentor Olmstead (1993) said that Mentors should also guide new faculty in becoming better teachers, for example by introducing them to the last person who taught the class they are assigned to or encouraging them to consult the most successful teachers in the department. Cuny (2000) stated additionally that at the junior faculty level, another key mentoring need is encouragement and advice on balancing work and family responsibilities.

Another important thing to be considered in this regard is that the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, which has to be friendly. Brown (1990) states "that 'forced pairing' violates the true spirit of mentoring", thus the authorities has to consider the mutual understanding and willingness while attaching mentors with mentees.

Research Objectives

- 1. To assess the difference in perceptions between male and female employees with reference to the mentoring practices.
- 2. To assess the difference in perceptions on the basis of the Academic (Field of Study) qualification of employees with reference to the mentoring practices.
- 3. To assess the difference in perceptions on the basis of the professional (Field of Teaching) qualification of employees with reference to the mentoring practices.
- 4. To assess the difference in perceptions on the basis of work experience with reference to the mentoring practices.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho 1 There is no difference in perceptions between male and female employees with reference to the mentoring.
- Ho 2 There is no difference in perceptions on the basis of the academic (Field of Study) qualification of employees with reference to the mentoring.
- Ho3 There is no difference in perceptions on the basis of the professional (Field of teaching) qualification of employees with reference to the mentoring.
- Ho4 There is no difference in perceptions on the basis of work experience with reference to the mentoring.

Significance of the Study

The research in hand would be beneficial particularly for all educational institutions and generally for employees of other departments of Pakistan. Process of mentoring and socialization in Pakistan is not old. The concept of mentoring and orientation program is now common to private sector and is also in vogue in some public sectors organizations. Particularly in educational institutions, the process of mentoring and socialization of the teachers is a dire need of the time (Cuny, 2000).

The finding of this study would guide the educational management and administration for further better mentoring programs of teachers. Moreover this study would also benefit the new employees (teachers) of the educational organizations.

The profession of teaching in Pakistan remained an unattractive due to some reasons. The issues of income and social status remained at top level. This is because of these reasons that attraction for this profession remained low. So this study would be hopefully beneficial for the teachers and the persons who like to join this profession. As the findings of the research will provide a guideline to help newly hired teachers to understand the importance and the system of teaching.

By using the findings of this research the educational organizations can attract the teachers towards their workplace. It will lead to the less rate of turn over as well.

Its findings will also help the organizations to develop a productive and well socialized environment. That would lead to the innovation and creativity in teacher's performance and students' learning.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research was based on the survey based descriptive design. The research furthers was a combination of co-relational and comparative type of research. The research was based on the objective to draw differences in mentoring services and socialization level on the basis of gender, qualification and experience. That provides a base for the comparative research design.

Population

The research population was based on 5323 faculty members serving in 13 public sector universities of Islamabad in the year 2013.

Sample

Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample of the research. due to the shortage of time and resources this technique was applied. In order to draw the sample 100 faculty members were selected. However the 95 faculty members returned the questionnaire while five faculty members were not available to give the response. In doing so the return rate was 95%.

Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire based on three major sections was developed. The starting portion was based on demographic information. 7 items (Rated on Likert Scale) were developed in the second section of the questionnaire related to the mentoring practices and the third section was related to the areas where the teacher feel that there is a need for assistance.

Data Collection

The data was collected with the use of multiple methods. In this regard personal visits was made by the researcher herself to the targeted respondents.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). For the purpose of analysis t test and ANOVA tests were mainly applied to the data collected.

Results

Table 1 *Reliability of Mentoring assessment scale*

Scale	Items	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability
Mentoring Practices	07	.84

The above table 1 explains that the scale used for the research was found reliable (.84) and can be used in future researches.

 Table 2

 Correlation between the items of the scale

	M	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	Mentoring
M1	1							-
M2	.478**	1						
M3	.381**	.640**	1					
M4	427**	.571**	.350**	1				
M5	.382**	.446**	.474**	.407**	1			
M6	.330**	.385**	.374**	.366**	.539**	1		
M7	.370**	.638**	.471**	.355**	.405**	.510**	1	
Mentoring	.656**	.826**	.725**	.702**	.718**	.687**	.745**	1

^{*}p <0.05, **p <0.01

M = items included in the scale

The table 2 shows that the items that were used in the scale were internally statistically significantly correlated with each other. The item M2 was having the highest (.826**) correlation with the overall strength of the scale.

Table 3Demographic Description

Gender Gescription	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	41.1
Female	56	58.9
Total	95	100.0
Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Master	34	35.8
M.Phil	46	48.4
Ph.D	11	11.6
Post Doctorate	1	1.1
Any Other	3	3.2
Total	95	100.0
Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percent
B.Ed	11	11.6
M.Ed	21	22.1
FDP by HEC	1	1.1
None	62	65.3
Total	95	100.0
Total Teaching Experience at University level	Frequency	Percent
0-3	22	23.2
4-6	32	33.7
7-9	21	22.1
10-12	12	12.6
13-15	6	6.3
15+	2	2.1
Total	95	100.0

Table 3 explain the demographic characteristics of the sample. It shows that 41.1 % of the respondents were male and 58.9 were female. Majority of the respondents were having M.Phil level (48.4%) of qualification. However alarmingly majority of the respondents were having (65.3 %) no professional qualification. While majority (33.7%) were having 4-6 years of experience that shows they were new in the field and quite appropriate for the topic of the research.

Table 4 *Gender wise comparison*

Variable		N	Mean	t value	df	Sig
Gender	Male	39	23.10	.09	93	.92
	Female	56	23.00			

^{*}p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table 4 explains that there was statistically no significant difference (t=0.09) found between male and female respondents related to their perceptions about mentoring practices.

Thus hypothesis No 1 is accepted.

 Table 5

 Academic Qualification wise comparison

Variable		N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Academic Qualification	Master	34	23.59	1.32	90	.26
	M.Phil	46	22.89			
	Ph.D	11	21.91			
	Post Doctorate	1	14.00			
	Any Other	3	26.33			
	Total	95	23.04			

^{*}p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table 5 explains that no statistically significant difference (F=1.32) found in the perceptions of the teachers on the basis of academic qualifications. Thus hypothesis No 2 is also accepted.

Table 6Professional Qualification wise comparison

Variable		N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Professional Qualification	B.Ed	11	23.45	.46	91	.70
	M.Ed	21	23.67			
	FDP by HEC	1	18.00			
	None	62	22.84			
	Total	95	23.04			

^{*}p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table shows that no statistically significant difference (F= .46) found in the perceptions of the teachers on the basis of professional qualifications. Thus hypothesis No 3 is also accepted.

Table 7 *Experience wise comparison*

Variable		N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Experience	0-3	22	23.64	3.06	89	.01
	4-6	32	25.25			
	7-9	21	21.52			
	10-12	12	21.00			
	13-15	6	20.33			
	15+	2	17.50			
	Total	95	23.04			

^{*}p <0.05, **p <0.01

Table No. 7 shows that statistically significant difference (F= 3.06) found in the perceptions of the teachers on the basis of experience. The teacher having 4-6 years of experience were having more positive perception regarding mentoring and its need. Thus hypothesis No 4 is rejected.

Table 8Assistance Provided to New Comers

The	The senior members help the newcomers in which of the following things, Please specify									
		Yes		No			Total			
		R	%	R	%	R	%			
1.	Makin a course out line	67	70.52	28	29.47	95	100%			
2.	Publication of article	24	25.26	71	74.73	95	100%			
3.	Research activities	40	42.10	55	57.89	95	100%			
4.	Developing teaching methodology	60	63.15	35	36.84	95	100%			
5.	In presenting formal presentations	34	35.78	61	64.21	95	100%			
6.	Job promotions	43	45.26	52	54.73	95	100%			
7.	Locating teaching aids	45	47.36	50	52.63	95	100%			

Table 8 explains that majority of the respondents were having the need for guidance related to the article publication procedures, research activities, developing formal presentations, job promotions and in locating teaching aids.

Discussion

Dewey (1916) was the well renowned educationist who had about a century ago explained the importance of developing a positive learning environment by sharing the experiences and knowledge. Based on his concept of sharing and learning the concept of mentoring can be developed in a effective way. As the process of mentoring can never be successful without the development of such an environment where the employees can share their problems and view without any hesitation.

Caffarella (1992) defined mentoring as an "intense caring relationship development in which persons with more experience work with less experienced persons to promote both Professional and personal development" (p. 38). Mentoring may be especially important to first-generation university students, first-generation professionals, and those entering fields dominated by persons of a different gender or race (Stalker, 1996; Ragins, 1997; Gordon & Whelan, 1998). In higher education, Lyons, Scroggins, and Rule (1990) found that mentors not only transmitted formal academic knowledge and Provided socialization experiences into their chosen discipline, but also bolstered the students' confidence and professional identity, giving them a vision of the identity they might one day achieve.

The research revealed that there was no difference found in the provision of mentoring services on the basis of gender, experience and academic/professional qualification. However on the basis of experience there was significant difference found in the perceptions of the teachers. The teacher having 4-6 years of experience was supporting the need of mentoring services more than other respondents. Thus on the basis of the findings important measures were suggested for improving mentoring services for the teachers serving at higher level.

Recommendations

- 1. As mentoring is one of the key agents to socialize the new entrant in the organization. Thus a special care may be provided towards this issue. For this purpose the departments in universities may select any senior employee or the faculty member at the departmental level to guide and train the new entrant in the daily professional matters. If the university management face any financial issue in appointing any special person for this purpose. Then any senior employee may be assigned this task on the basis of special duty. The mentor may be rewarded with award of certificate, acknowledgement or relaxation in the routine work.
- 2. The university management may allocate special week, days or hours specifically for the guidance of the newcomers in which they may interact with each other and with the senior members at a tea party or in an informal get together.
- 3. Special training sessions are also required for the senior members as well. So that they may welcome the newcomers with the open arms. So periodically the universities may arrange in formal get-together or workshops to develop interpersonal and social skills among the employees.

- 4. Monday morning meetings may be arranged in each department of the universities by the head of the department. In such meeting the professional issues may be discussed.
- 5. The results show that the newcomers had the problem related to the understanding the procedure of research, article development, preparing formal presentations, locating teaching aids and job promotions. Thus the university may organize one day workshops by targeting such needs of the newcomers and to guide them in these issues. University magazines and the bulletins may also be used to guide in the procedure of research, publications, presentations etc.
- 6. On the basis of the findings it is recommended that there may be a comprehensive plan of action for the development of such an environment in which the employee may interact in an informal way to develop a friendly atmosphere to regulate socialization process.
- 7. There may be proper training programmes for the mentor to learn the skills of guiding and developing relationships.
- 8. Formally the mentors may be allotted to the new comers in the organization on regular basis.
- 9. It is further recommended that the mentoring service may be linked with any kind of service benefit. In this way the mentor may feel a sense of responsibility and will perform better.
- 10. There may be a continue check and balance process on the process of mentoring programme.
- 11. Mentoring programs needs to be linked with the daily workplace issues.
- 12. One mentor in each department of the university need to be appointed for the research related activities as the research is the backbone of the university activities and it is observed that many faculty members face difficulties in writing and publishing the research work.
- 13. In view of the findings, it is recommended that the university provide a complete plan for providing guidance services to its employees. The recommendations of the researchers are shown in Figure 1. The proposed model is based on seven main steps. Each step is interrelated and interdependent. From the selection of goals, the need to determine the development of mentors and mentors to accept the attitude between the mentee and mentor, the use of guidance tools, time to provide and end follow-up. Although the future requirements, personal skills and personal ability possess by a person also have an impact on this process.

Suggested Mentoring Plan

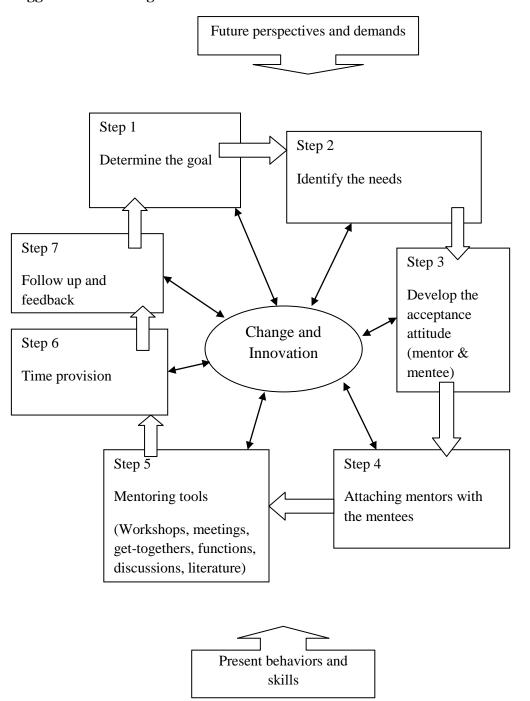


Figure 1 Suggested Mentoring Plan

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