

# Mentoring System- An Acuity of Urban Workforce

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** Mentoring describes a confidential relationship between two people in making improvement in work or knowledge and through this process enhancing their capacity. The objective of study is to find out the problems faced by mentor and mentees in extending the relationship and to suggest suitable measures to improve the relationship among the employees of AUTOLINKS, Chennai. **Methods and Analysis:** The primary data were collected from all employees of AUTOLINKS using census method. Primary data for the study was collected using interview schedule which had been analysed with the help of SPSS package by adopting statistical techniques like percentage analysis and ANOVA single factor. **Findings:** The results of the study highlighted that the mentoring facility enhanced the relationship between mentor and mentees. The age and gender of the mentor do not influence the relationship with mentees, as mentor's opinion was based on performance and behaviour of the mentees. As far as the opinion of mentees is concerned, the elder mentor had more experience than the younger mentor resulting in an influence of age of mentors towards the relationship. They also opined that male mentor have more knowledge than the female mentor resulting in an influence of gender of mentors in relation with the judgement of the behaviour of mentees. **Applications/Improvements:** This study can be applied to the institutions like education, hospitals, hospitality and other forms where the people need direction and motivation in performing the job.

**Keywords:** Mentor, Mentee, Opinion and Motivation, Relationship

## 1. Introduction

Mentoring dates back to the Stone Age period and as such is not a new word. It stems from the Greek mythology where the King of Odyssey, had left to fight the Trojan War entrusted his kingdom and all his responsibility to his friend including the responsibility of nurturing his son Odysseus. This very term mentoring since then found its utility in various fields including education and business, wherein more knowledgeable and person with experience performs an encouraging role of guiding, supervising and instilling reflection and ability to learn from new situation learning in individuals with less expertise and knowledge thereby facilitating the individual's personal, career and professional growth. This kind of guidance and support by experienced persons in the organisation enhances the

recipient employees to become successful contributors to themselves and the organisation. Hence, it is found that an individual in a superior position, accredited with special achievements and prestige provide instruction, counselling, guidance and facilitation to the intellectual, technical and career development to the allotted protégés.

The continuous innovations in instructional techniques and technology, seats of higher education need to think about creative ways of increasing student involvement and participation<sup>1</sup>. The mental health executives, organizational psychologists and policymakers are having an opportunity to play new roles, to ease and shape a transition in corporate consciousness to achieve greater parity for all women<sup>2</sup>.

Mentor-mentee pairs rated effectively the system and posted more messages overall and had well-structured

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working. The postings were similar to the topic coverage and message length, and had little overt “management” behaviour by mentors<sup>3</sup>. Mentoring plays a significant role in the success of academic and medical centres<sup>4</sup>.

Low retention rates of new teachers and low job satisfaction as the current concepts of professional development for early-career teachers are lacking on many levels<sup>5</sup>. Mentoring provides an opportunity to transfer cultural and organizational knowledge associated with the specific disciplines to develop the professionals<sup>6</sup>. Professional input programs enable the women folk to face the new world of public administration by bringing in more visibility in the curriculum<sup>7</sup>.

Through mentoring men benefit greatly and women when mentored by their own peers of the same gender are highly motivated to face the challenges as they tend to receive counselling and coaching from their female counterpart with whom they are comfortable<sup>8</sup>. The succession planning may make provision for the development and replacement of key people over time<sup>9</sup>. Respondents from higher socio-economic profiles and youngsters with high levels of work involvement have been benefitted from career-oriented mentoring<sup>10</sup>.

Nancy H. Kichak the Associate Director of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management and the Chief Human Capital in her testimony on April 2010 to Congress, had highlighted the importance of mentoring in developing a diverse federal workforce: She has expressed that mentoring is an important element in nurturing and retaining the diversified workforce. The need for having managers with talent and skills to mentor and manage people who in turn would empower the others in the organization creating an ambience to work with sensitivity to the interactions and understanding of leadership roles and that of subordinates are to be developed in the mentors. Mentoring efficiently is likely to include understanding the various learning styles and ways to problem solving which would enable the workforce to carry out the organization's mission. She has also added that mentoring is an essential tool to going beyond the organizational goal<sup>11</sup>.

The mentoring study program revealed that job retention rates were found to be high among mentors in the Sun Microsystems which sounds to be a good example of how participation affects mentors<sup>12,13</sup>. Generation Y were the group of people born between 1980 and 1995<sup>14</sup> and were the children of the Baby Boomers who were born between 1946 and 1961<sup>15</sup>. In their study they were

considered as the new entrants to the workplace and were to be responsible for assisting the Generation Xs which included people born between 1962 and 1979 to fill the void as the Baby Boomers exited the workplace. In connection to the above study, another finding revealed that a preconceived notion that Generation Ys do not aim to stay at one job for their entire life and often feel that regular pay increases and promotions need to be present in their job as well expect regular commend and feedback. Therefore it becomes crucial for mentors<sup>16</sup>.

The report of the Tertiary Education Commission's Literacy Language and Numeracy Action Plan 2008-2012 has highlighted the need for in house training and the role and value of mentors in organization in terms numeracy and literacy support. The scope for research in mentoring in work place has been very much recommended<sup>17</sup>.

The developmental model of Daloz suggests that maximum learning and acquisition happens in mentoring relationship when challenge and support constructs are apparent. He has come out with a combination of four key functions- stasis, retreat, confirmation and growth that can be performed by a mentor using these two constructs. His model clearly indicates that high challenge and high support is the best combination in which development occurs to a great extent and that he calls as growth<sup>18</sup>. Because of development and advancement of technology and electronic communication, web based technology could be thought of in assisting mentors and making themselves more available and informative<sup>19</sup>. Researchers around the world have started studying about mentoring in organizations. The study has identified four characteristics of mentoring viz. sincerity, commitment, skill and knowledge development which has an impact on organizational ascendancy. It has also clearly indicated the mentees view of the traits mentors need to possess in a business environment<sup>20</sup>. Organizations of all types have come to an understanding that more than physical assets the quality of human resource they house builds or shatters the organization. Hence mentors need to develop the workforce of an organization as talent managers who would be effective successors<sup>21</sup>.

The study on mentoring plays an important role in employee growth and advancement. Mentoring in organizations develop in the workforce the right kind of attitude and mindset to be accomplished in order to contribute to the growth of the organization. The employees are enabled to develop in them appropriate skill set from the experienced hands and professionals in the

form of guidance, counselling, support and appreciation. Organizations aim at aligning the mentoring programs to reach the goals of the company with the professional development of its employees. This process is beneficial to both the mentor and mentee as well to the organization at large.

The study objective included finding out the problems faced by mentor and mentees in extending the relationship and to suggest suitable measures to improve the relationship among the employees of AUTOLINKS, Chennai. Hypotheses have been set to study the relationship between age and gender of mentors and mentees and their reciprocal opinion.

## 2. Methodology

The primary data were collected from all employees of Autolinks, Chennai using census method. An interview schedule has been administered to collect primary information from the employees of the organization. The collected primary data were analysed using the SPSS package with statistical tools like percentage analysis and ANOVA single factor.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Mentoring is a strategic devise which when correctly done in organizations contribute to the retention of its employees and consequently develop in the employees professional expertise and talent which in turn shapes the organizational culture and behaviour. Mentoring is visualized as an effective tool in closing engagement and filling up generational gaps. It involves two people talking with a purpose for the main benefit of one of the individual. The benefits of mentoring in evolving leaders in organizations are highly accepted and recognized by the present day employers. "Mentors" focus on the individual learner by developing their career or life. They act as friends, willing to play the part of adversary in challenging assumptions. To be a good mentor, mentor need to display certain characteristics. Although not all successful mentors will display all desired characteristics, but these characteristics are highly essential for all mentors in mentoring process.

According to the Table 1 it is found that, 66.6% of the respondents are in between the age of 31-50 years, 20% of them are in the age of below 30 and only 13.3% are above

50 years. 80% of the mentor respondents are male and the rest of them are female. 13.3% of respondents have finished Postgraduate degree, 40% of respondents have finished undergraduate degree and 46.7% of respondents have finished Schooling. 33.3% of the respondents are in between the salary of 15001-20000, 26.7% of them are earning a salary of above 20000, 40% are earning within a range of 10001-15000 and below 10000. 33.3% of the respondents are in production department, 20% of them are in the HR and Finance department, 39.9% are in quality, purchase and marketing department and the remaining respondents are in maintenance department. 80% of the mentors are having the experience of above 9 years and 20% are having the experience of 0-3 years (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the mentor respondents

Age (years)	No.	% to total	Monthly salary (Rs'000)	No.	% to total
< 30	3	20.0	< 10	3	20.0
31-40	5	33.3	10-15	3	20.0
41-50	5	33.3	15-20	5	33.3
>50	2	13.4	>20	4	26.7
Total	15	100	Total	15	100.0
Gender	No.	% to total	Work experience (years)	No.	% to total
Male	12	80.0	0-3	3	20.0
Female	3	20.0	9 and above	12	80.0
Total	15	100.0	Total	15	100.0
Educational qualification	No.	% to total	Department	No.	% to total
PG	2	13.3	Purchase	2	13.3
UG	6	40.0	Maintenance	1	6.7
Schooling	7	46.7	Quality	2	13.4
Total	15	100.0	HR and Finance	3	20.0
			Marketing	2	13.3
			Production	5	33.3
			Total	15	100.0

Source- Primary Data

According to the Table 2, it is inferred that 46.4% of the respondents are in between the age of 31-40 years, 40.9% of them are in the age of below 30years, 10% are in 41-50 years and 2.7% are above 50 years. 54.5% of the mentor respondents are male and the rest of them are female. 16.4% of respondents have finished undergraduate degree and 83.6% of respondents have finished Schooling. 86.4% of the respondents are earning below Rs.10000, 12.7% of them are earning a salary of Rs. 10001-15000. 90.9%

of the respondents are in production department, 5.5% of them are in the store department and the remaining respondents are in quality department. 30.9% of the mentees are having the experience of 0-3 years, 29.1% have 3-6 years experience, 22.7% have 6-9 years experience and 17.3% are having above 9 years experience (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Demographic profile of the mentee respondents

Age (years)	No.	% to total	Work experience (years)	No.	% to total
<30	45	40.9	0-3	34	30.9
31-40	51	46.4	3-6	32	29.1
41-50	11	10.0	6-9	25	22.7
>50	3	2.7	9 and above	19	17.3
Total	110	100.0	Total	110	100.0
Gender	No.	% to total	Educational qualification	No.	% to total
Male	60	54.5	UG	18	16.4
Female	50	45.5	Schooling	92	83.6
Total	110	100.0	Total	110	100.0
Monthly salary (Rs'000)	No.	% to total	Department	No.	% to total
< 10	95	86.4	Store	6	5.5
10-15	14	12.7	Quality	4	3.6
15-20	1	0.9	Production	100	90.9
Total	110	100.0	Total	110	100.0

Source- Primary Data

An attempt is made to study the relationship between age and gender of mentors with others factors of motivation using ANOVA single factor. The opinions expressed by the respondents may differ depending upon their demographic variables. The opinion of the mentors towards mentees includes the perception and values towards mentoring system and support they extend to the system. It also includes the maintenance of personal relationship, self determination and the guidance they provide to the mentees.

The following hypothesis is framed to test the relationship between age and gender of the mentor and their opinion towards mentees.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) – Age and gender has no influence on opinion on mentees by mentors (Table 3).

The Table 3 shows that P value is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore age has no influence on opinion of the mentor as the mentor opinion is based on performance and behavior of the mentees. The table shows that P value is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore gender has no influence

on opinion of the mentors. Irrespective of the gender, the mentors behave and perform in a similar manner towards mentees.

**Table 3.** Relationship between age and gender of the mentor and their opinion towards mentees – ANOVA single factor

Opinion of mentor	Age		Gender	
	P value	Result	P value	Result
Perception	.052	Accepted	.006	Rejected
Values	.718	Accepted	.452	Accepted
Support	.222	Accepted	.091	Accepted
Personal relationship	.618	Accepted	.092	Accepted
Self determination	.344	Accepted	.656	Accepted
Guidance	.360	Accepted	.960	Accepted
Overall opinion	.402	Accepted	.112	Accepted

Source- Primary data (at 5% level of significance)

An attempt is made to study the relationship between age and gender of mentees with others factors of motivation using ANOVA single factor. The opinions expressed by the respondents may differ depending upon their demographic variables. The opinion of the mentees towards mentors includes the perception and availability of towards mentoring system and goals. It also includes the maintenance of professional qualities, professional involvement and the personal qualities.

The following hypothesis is framed to test the relationship between age and gender of the mentees and their opinion towards mentors.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) – Age and gender has no influence on opinion on mentors by mentees (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Relationship between age and gender of the mentee and their opinion towards mentors – ANOVA single factor

Opinion of mentee	Age		Gender	
	P value	Result	P value	Result
Perception	.156	Accepted	.005	Rejected
Availability	.390	Accepted	.347	Accepted
Values and goals	.005	Rejected	.001	Rejected
Professional qualities	.035	Rejected	.000	Rejected
Professional involvement	.003	Rejected	.001	Rejected
Personal qualities	.067	Accepted	.053	Accepted
Overall opinion	.013	Rejected	.001	Rejected

Source- Primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The Table 4 clearly indicates that P value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore age has an

influence on opinion of the mentees. Elder mentor have more experience than the younger mentor. The degree of experience plays a significant role in influencing the behavior of mentors. The Table 5 shows that P value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore gender has an influence on opinion of the mentees. Male mentor have more knowledge than the female mentor. The degree of gender plays a significant role in influencing the behavior of the mentors (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Development activities profile of the mentor respondents

Development activities profile	Number of respondents	Percentage to total
Career workshop	1	6.7
Long term career plan	1	6.7
Decision on promotion	5	33.3
Succeed in present organization	7	46.7
Ample opportunity to develop professional competencies	1	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source- Primary Data

According to the Table 6, it is inferred that 46.7% of the know about job succession in this organization, 33.3% are aiming for promotion, and 20.1% are planning for career workshop, long term career plan and creating opportunity to develop professional competency (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Development activities profile of the mentor respondents

Development activities profile	Number of respondents	Percentage to total
Career workshop	12	10.9
Upgrade of skills	4	3.6
Long term career plan	8	7.3
Decision on promotion	17	15.5
Succeed in this organization	56	50.9
Ample opportunity to develop my professional competencies	1	0.9
Degree or certification program	12	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source- Primary Data

According to Table 6, it is inferred that 50.9% of the know about job succession in present organization, 15.5% are in aiming for promotion, 10.9% are in planning for

degree or certification program and career workshop, 7.3% are in long term career plan, 3.6% are in upgrade of skills and 0.9% are in creating opportunity to develop my professional competencies. Success in mentoring relationship comes when there is trust and confidentiality maintained by the mentor. Mentoring is effective when the line of communication between the mentor and mentee is encouraging, open, without any ulterior motive and supportive. Mentoring should take place at its own pace with no pressure and force on the employee because only then the mentee feels comfortable and develops within the individual a willingness to learn and contribute to the success of the organization. Mentoring should take into account the short term and long term goals of both the individuals involved in the mentoring process and then dovetailing the goals to the overall organizational goal accomplishment. It is mentoring that the partners are mutually benefitted and grow professionally soaring to great heights recognising and complimenting each other for the benefits accrued.

## 4. Conclusion

Mentoring is defined as a human interaction which depends on an intended purpose of the relationship between the individuals. Mentoring also is a term that describes a confidential relationship between two people in making improvement in work or knowledge and through this process enhancing their capacity. It is important that mentoring relationships need to be focused on the accomplishment and growth of the individual receiving it along with many other forms of help and assistance. It is also significant that these relationships are personal and with some degree of reciprocity. In organisations, it is found that this mentoring to be formal/informal, short/long termed, spontaneous/planned depending the content it happens. This study can be applied to the institutions like education, hospitals, hospitality and other forms where the people need direction and motivation in performing the job.

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