

# Influences of mentoring functions on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of graduate employees

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**Abstract.** A significant percentage of the workforce, within the construction sector is nearing retirement age over the next ten years. These employees have acquired a tremendous amount of knowledge about how things work, how to get things done and who to go to when problems arise. Losing their expertise and experience could significantly reduce efficiency, resulting in costly mistakes, unexpected quality problems, or significant disruptions in services and or performance. The business world has long known and relied upon mentoring as a proven technique for developing in house talent. Previous studies proved that the implementation of mentoring programme is beneficial for enhancing employee skills and attitudes. Few researchers are devoted to exploring the impact. This paper is aimed at examining the effects of mentoring functions on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of new graduates in the South African construction industry. The study was mainly a literature review, with a special focus on the impact of mentoring functions on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees within organizations. The data used in the report was mainly qualitative, based on the content analysis, and historical data. The study indicated that career development and role modelling functions have a positive effect on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of new entry employees. However, the psychosocial support function was incapable of providing adequate explanation for these work outcomes. The study suggest that graduate managers should improve the career development and role modelling functions of mentoring in order to enhance the job satisfaction, organizational commitment of new entry graduates employees. The early success of the initiatives described provide useful lessons for the construction industry and executives who recognize that mentoring functions on job satisfaction and organizational commitment are critical for sustaining future organizational performance.

**Keywords:** Mentoring · Graduates · Employees · Construction · Job satisfaction  
· Organizational commitment

## 1 Introduction

South Africa's construction industries and their personnel are facing exceptional change in their work environments, namely rapid developments in technology and education, increases in competition and work force diversity, skills shortages and high employee turnover rates. These are the contributing factors compelling the industries to rely on their human capital for changes in their organisation structures and the method (Kleinman, Siegel & Eckstein, 2000) [1]. In reaction to the ever-changing environment, organisations have established mentoring programmes as human resource practice and as an individual strategy for career success (Bozionelos, 2002) [2]. Mentoring relationships and formal mentoring programs have received accumulative attention in HRD and related literature over the past several years. Studies examining mentoring involvement have showed that up to two-thirds of employees have engaged in some type of mentoring relationship and that mentoring functions may be especially beneficial for employees because of the greater barriers they often face. Participation in formal mentoring programs has a variety of benefits for participants (Wanberg et al., 2003) [3]. Two of the most emphasized developmental benefits have been psychosocial and career advancement (Kram, 1985) [4]. In spite of increasing activity, few empirical studies have been performed examining outcomes of formal mentoring programs (Wanberg et al., 2003) [3]. Because of the substantial investment of time and energy on the part of organizations and mentoring participants, a better understanding of the presence or absence of formal mentoring program benefits would be an important contribution (Ragins et al., 2000) [5]. With the high turnover incidence among new employees, it is imperative that retention strategies be effective and that these strategies be examined closely. When new employees perform their duties in organizations, they often have little or no experience in the work that they are doing on construction sites, but they are required to bear full responsibility. Owing to limited experience, and full responsibility, new employees would often bear heavy work pressure. Work pressure and new employee attitudes toward jobs have significant impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among new construction employees. Researches from various countries have confirmed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are statistically significant predictors of employee absenteeism or turnover, or their intent to quit (Lee et al., 2009) [6]. Thus, in order to reduce the new employee's intent to leave, site managers should urgently address the issue of improving the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of new employees.

Most companies have turnover reports that show how turnover has been trended over a period of time and this is a start. To better understand turnover, organizations will need to rely on more than an aggregate analysis. Organizations need to dissect it from a number of different vantage points. What types of employees are leaving? Losing high performers is far more damaging than average performers, and losing low performers may be seen as a good thing. What might appear to be an acceptable amount of turnover may

mushroom into a significant issue if those employees that are leaving are key performers. What does turnover look like by tenure? Losing employees in their first year may suggest issues with the staffing or on-boarding process. Losing employees after 3 and 10 years may indicate a compensation or career development issue. Losing employees after ten years may represent a leadership issue.

## **2 Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a broader understanding of mentoring , mentoring functions and their influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment on new construction employees.relationships and their impact on individual and organizational outcomes. Faster turnover among younger employees and more competitive recruiting and compensation packages add significantly to the mounting concern about the organization's ability to sustain acceptable levels of performance. The relationship between mentoring and HRD can be found in the functions of mentoring and how they link to the three realms of HRD. From an organization development standpoint, mentoring can serve as a function of planned change used to improve employee effectiveness (Hegstad, 2002) [7]. Mentoring can function as a form of on-the-job training to develop key competencies enhancing employees' abilities to perform their job functions, the defining component of training and development . In terms of career development, mentoring can be used as a strategy allowing employees to shape and perform their work to better achieve their professional goal (Cummings & Worley, 2001) [8]. This study will meaningfully contributes by sharing the wisdom and knowledge of transition to retirement employees to ensure corporate knowledge does not simply walk out the door, sharing the collective wisdom and knowledge of the build environment business.

### **2.1 Objectives of study**

- ✚ To examine the effects of mentoring functions on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
- ✚ To determine causes of job satisfaction.

## 2.2 Literature review

Human resource management meets the discouraging tasks of employing needed employees into the organizations to match the organization's requirements and anticipations. As a result, there is a formal need to create suitable ideas, develop appropriate strategies to enhance the collaborations between supervisors and new employees, and to complete a broad insight that can support managers of human resource, increase results and enhanced performance. According to Knippenberg and Steensma, (2003) [9] suggested that the expectation of a future interaction between the supervisors and juniors would decrease the usage of hard boldness tactics as this may jeopardize the relationship and make it less attractive. Previous research have evidenced the impact of mentoring in professional and personal development of young employees in the organizations. Existing research has shown that mentoring is one of the best ways in organizational learning and has proved positive results with support (Simmonds & Zammit Lupi, 2010) [10] and job satisfaction (Seibert, 1999) [11]. It was noted that protégés that received mentoring support were able to exhibit better job performance and career development (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997) [12] and decrease turnover intention among the employees in the organization mentorship (Beverly & Sharon, 2005) [13]. Mentoring programs in organizations can be helpful in improving performance and transferring knowledge, and lead to higher job satisfaction and retention of employees, resulting in higher business productivity.

Past studies have revealed that, the rapport between supervisors and subordinates could be strengthened through mentoring (Dawley, Andrews, & Bucklew, 2010) [14]. Researchers in the past have evidenced that committed protégé demonstrated high job satisfaction and hence unlikely to look for other jobs (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999) [15]. The use of mentoring relationships aimed at employee development is rapidly increasing in organizations (Noe, et al., 2002) [16]. Some benefits of mentoring relationships comprise career mobility and advancement, career satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992) [17], career commitment, and career advancement (Scandura et al., 1996) [1], more promotions and higher compensation (Chao et al., 1992) [17] and greater retention. Although beneficial to personal and professional development, only a portion of the current literature examines mentoring relationships that are situated at work or in job related contexts. It is necessary to better understand how to utilize mentoring in order to enhance the growth of individuals in organizations.

## 2.3 Functions of mentoring at the workplace

Scandura (1993) [18] did broad research on mentoring at the work environment and found that mentoring has proved that mentors provide certain functions to protégés, namely vocational support, psychosocial support and role modelling. *Vocational support* activates the protégé as an dependent, successful professional. The mentor attains this by providing job-related functions, such as career functions. *Psychological* support functions are more personal trusting on an emotional bond between the mentor and

protégé (Wanberg *et al.* 2006) [19]. *Career functions* include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2007) [20]. Sponsorship is where the mentor uses his or her influences to support the mentee's career advancement. In the work place, the mentee, new employee is publicly supported by his or her mentor and actively selected for promotions. The coaching functions include the mentor teaching the ropes to the mentees, for example how work is done in a construction site. The mentor gives the relevant and positive feedback, which is intended at improving the mentee's performance and potential. In the protection functions, the mentor purposes to provide the mentee with support in different situations. The mentor will yield full responsibility for the mistakes made outside the control of the mentee. The exposure functions are when the mentors construct opportunities for the mentees to validate their capabilities where it counts. The mentor improves the visibility of his or her mentees by taking them to important meetings and events, which permits the mentees to develop relationships with key personnel in the organization, permitting them to show their potential for future organizational progress. Challenging work is where the mentor will provide the assignments that spring the mentee's knowledge and skills in an endeavor to encourage growth and develop specific capabilities in preparation for the future .

Psychological support functions improve the protégé's sense of competence, identity and effectiveness in his or her role. Examples of psychosocial functions include *role-modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship* (Kreitner & Kinicki 2007) [20]. *Role modelling* comprises of the mentor indicating applicable behaviour and knowledge, therefore earning greater respect and admiration . According to Burgess and Dyer (2009) [21], the mentor exhibits valued behaviour, attitudes and skills that help the mentee in achieving capability, confidence and a professional identity. The mentor's standards, attitudes and behaviours provide an example for the mentee, who in turn recognizes with the mentor's desirable example and in turn respects and appreciates his or her mentor. In terms of the organizational context, the mentor leads by example. The counseling functions afford helpful and confident forums for exploring professional and personal dilemmas. The mentors advice their mentees, allowing them to talk openly about fears and concerns and to explore personal concerns that may inhibit or lessen productivity at work, where they are assigned. Acceptance and confirmation is where the mentor offers ongoing support, respect, and admiration, which permit the mentee to experiment with the new behaviour and self-differentiation. Friendship is where the mentor befriends the mentee through social communications, which will result in mutual caring and intimacy well further than the requirements of their daily work tasks.

#### **2.4 The effects of mentoring functions on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment**

Hansford, Ehrich, and Tennent (2003) [22], established that most of the organizations have moved towards institutionalizing mentoring not only because of the apparent benefits to those involved, but also as an affirmative action strategy intended at ensuring that the previously disadvantaged groups in society have access to the mentoring process. Therefore, mentoring can be viewed as human resource intervention aimed at the socializing of new employees, while at the same time permitting senior staff to pass

on their accumulated wisdom within an organizational setting (Burgess & Dyer, 2009) [21].

## **2.5 Benefits to the organization**

Mentoring benefits to the organization are mostly connected to the development of human resources. Mentoring benefits consist of the influences to employee's motivation, job performance (Wilson & Elman, 1990) [23] as well as enhanced organizational commitment. Mentoring enhances to the long-term health of the organization as a social system. This is attained by providing a structured system to strengthen and encourage the continuity of the organizational culture (Wilson & Elman, 1990) [23]. Organizational culture provides members with a common value base, with understood knowledge of what can be expected of them and what they can in turn expect from the organization.

## **2.6 Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment has enticed significant attention in theory and research because of its attempt to understand the strength and stability of employee commitment to work organizations. Rollison, Edwards and Broadfield (1998) [24] are of the opinion that organisational commitment is regarded as a global attitude to the organisation as a whole. They define attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. It is a broad vacillating concept that goes across many organizational and sociological spheres. However, the variety of definitions for organizational commitment with all its different processes shares a common notion that organizational commitment is a connection of the individual to his or her organization. One of the definition said that Organizational commitment is "the force that binds an individual to a course of action of significance to one or more targets" (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001) [25]. An employee's commitment is a concern to all organizations because it has been allied to reduced turnover, enhanced knowledge sharing, better organizational citizenship behaviors, greater acceptance of organizational change, decent behaviour and compressed absenteeism. Typically, higher or lower levels of commitment have been exposed to be a major driver of employees staying with or leaving an organization. People are more expected to leave their organization as the age and occupation of employees increase. Furthermore, those employees with higher levels of education display less commitment to their organization. In addition, job position, marital status, and length of service, also clearly effect employee commitment. The degree of employee commitment has been linked with the extent to which certain employee needs have been gratified by the organization.

## **3 Benefits to mentees and mentors**

There is considerable realistic evidence to suggest that mentoring through initiation and socialization has a number of positive effects on protégés' performance. In the re-

cent meta-analysis, they (Allen *et al* 2004.) [26] Established that the mentoring functions are positively associated with compensation, number of promotions, career satisfaction, expectation for advancement, career commitment, high level of job satisfaction and low turnover intent. The mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship. Mentors in the mentoring relationship can benefit in the following capabilities: they get a higher level of professional knowledge, expanded interconnected networks, raised levels of job motivation, improved capability and the gaining of much more psychological support, the mentors in return for the time and effort used up in providing support to protégés, achieve positive outcomes such as career transformation, personal recognition, personal satisfaction, organizational status and an increase in knowledge and power. Baranik, Roling and Eby (2009) [27] developed a model that explains the impact of mentoring functions on work-related outcomes. They found that as mentors provide more sponsorship and more exposure and visibility to their protégés, protégés perceive their organisation to be more supportive and more concerned with their well-being. When the protégés believe that their organisation cares about them, they experience higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their organisation. Lastly, as the employers feel more satisfied at work and show more commitment to their organisation, they tend to think less about leaving their current positions.

#### 4 Job Satisfaction

Junior employees in the current trend have been given substantial independence to establish their goals and assess outcome, the role that is traditionally held by supervisors. In fact, many companies have reinvented themselves in becoming more capable and retiring from the predictable corporate system by giving greater decision making to the lower level of the management. These new tendencies in the work environment underlines the implication of creating and increasing followers' roles in organizational leadership. These tendencies also developed the new concept of leaders' openness to the idea allocating power to their junior employees. When a minority opinion is known to a member from the outside of the group, this opinion could have an impact on the majority group. This view is in sequence with a comment that management and employees should share power in order for the employees to be effective in their jobs. Practical evidence had revealed communication is a strong mediator of job satisfaction and organizational commitment between executives at the junior level. Job satisfaction signifies to the feelings of positive emotional as a result of the job experiences that the employees faced. Locke (1976) [28] is of the opinion that job dissatisfaction is the result of a discrepancy between the amount of the facet desired and that which is received; but only for those who are important to the individuals. Job dissatisfaction is stressful; therefore individuals seek to reduce it by correcting the imbalance[29] (Lovett, Coyle and Adams, 2004). Lovett et al. (2004) [29] further state that that one possible way of correcting the perceived imbalance is to put less physical or psychological energy into a job or to reduce job commitment. Previous studies have demonstrated that there are several important causes of job satisfaction such as the reward systems in the organization, the dispersal of power,

individual differences, self-confidence, locus of control . It was also eminent that other aspect of job personalities such as salary, promotion opportunity, clearness of the assigned task, the use of skills are also noticeably contributing to employees' job satisfaction . Henceforth proper mentoring system should be in place to warrant employees' job satisfaction.

#### **4.1 Causes of job satisfaction**

Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) [30] directed extensive research on the causes of job satisfaction. They found that there are five major measurements to this, attitude that reflect affective responses to particular aspects of a job. *Work itself*, the degree to which the job offers the individual with stimulating tasks, opportunities for learning and personal growth, and the chances to be responsible and responsible for the results. *Remuneration*, as the wages, salaries, or compensation given to employees in exchange for the services the employees do for the organization. Job dissatisfaction can occur when there is too great a disproportion between what employees think they should be paid and what organizations spend on compensation. *Opportunities for promotion*, according to Porter and Steers (1973) [31] directed that the lack of promotional opportunities is a primary reason for pulling out from the job. However, promotion is not desired by everybody and so satisfaction in this respect is very strongly influenced by the match between expectation and receipts. Promotion brings an increase in remuneration, and for some people this is the major satisfaction obligatory, while for others it is more linked with self-image and individuality. *Supervision*: The competence of the supervisor to provide emotional and technical support and guidance to work-related tasks. *Relationships with co-workers*: teamwork is produced with the purpose and understanding that productivity and effectiveness progress as a result of processing work within organized groups of employees. Satisfaction in this regard replicates the extent to which members of an individual's workgroup are perceived to be socially supportive and capable in their own tasks.

**4.2 Performance:** The tenacity of knowledge transfer is to pass information from the more- experienced to the less-experienced employees so that the less-experienced employees can build the capabilities needed to assume future roles in the organization. Although mentoring research has focused on career-related outcomes that are important to protégés, there is a need to explicitly examine the mechanisms by which mentoring influences outcomes. Research at both the organizational and individual level of analysis appears to support the notion that knowledge transfer mediates the relationship between mentoring and performance. Kowtha and Tan (2008) [32] found that knowledge of the organization and profession mediated the relationship between career-related mentoring and the ability to perform. They suggested that task mastery is achieved by the transfer of tacit knowledge through interpersonal interaction. In addition, receipt of mentoring functions was related to the perceived positive influence on one's job performance. Based on these studies, one may infer that mentoring will positively influence a protégé's job performance through knowledge transfer.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

Understanding the influences of the mentoring functions on organizational commitment and job satisfaction, permits organizations to make available better formal mentoring experiences to employees. Further important in the formal mentoring programmes are individuals who are chosen as mentors to signify the organization. The results of this study suggest that the organizations should be careful about who they allow or encourage to be a mentor, as having a negative relationship will poorly disturb the organization. Though it was expected that a supportive mentoring function would positively affect the employee's organizational turnover intentions through job satisfaction and organization commitment, the study reveal that the role-modelling mentoring support function has a major impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study recommend that, stake holders and human resource managers in the construction industry should improve the career development and role modelling functions of mentoring in order to enhance the job satisfaction, organizational commitment of new employees. The early success of the initiatives described provide useful lessons for the construction industry and executives who recognize that mentoring functions on job satisfaction and organizational commitment are critical for sustaining future organizational performance. Retaining organizational knowledge in the face of changing workforce demographics is a complex challenge that requires simultaneously confronting the problems created by an aging workforce, a shrinking talent pool and increasingly restless employees. Attention must also be given to understanding the mentoring behavior's that foster a protégé's affective commitment and job satisfaction so as to mitigate the potentially negative effect of knowledge transfer on retention. The provision of mentoring functions to protégés in an organization may assist an organization in meeting two critical goals for ongoing effectiveness: knowledge sharing and retention.

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