

The Influence of Mentoring on Career Development of University Tutors: A Narrative Review

Chinegbonkpa Hope Nwakanma

Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT), University of Johannesburg,
Johannesburg, South Africa

cnwakanma@uj.ac.za

Abstract

Mentoring has long been recognized as a tool for professional development, particularly for university tutors. This research aims to examine the influence of mentoring on the career development of university tutors by emphasizing the benefits of mentoring relationships and their impacts on tutors' professional growth. The article presents a narrative analysis of the existing literature on tutor mentoring and career development. The findings demonstrate that mentoring programs have a significant impact on the career development of university tutors, as they provide guidance, support, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Moreover, mentoring helps tutors develop crucial skills such as effective communication, leadership, and research abilities. It also contributes to increased job satisfaction, retention rates, and teaching quality at their respective institutions. The author recommends establishing structured and well-supported mentoring programs to maximize the positive impact on the career progression of university tutors.

Keywords: Career Development, Mentoring, Personal Growth, Professional Skills, University Tutors

Introduction

Mentoring has recently emerged as a tool for career advancement in various industries and professions. Career development is crucial for university tutors to succeed in their chosen careers, encompassing personal development, individual mobility, and a lack of clarity about what constitutes career success (Fernández et al., 2023). It involves planning actions or behaviors required for professional advancement (Monteiro et al., 2021). Furthermore, career development refers to the stages of life and experiences individuals go through as they progress in their occupations and work roles (Burtnett, 2023). Employees who participate in effective career development programs report higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These explanations highlight the multifaceted nature of career development and the importance of addressing individual, organizational, and societal factors to achieve career success. Mentoring is a valuable but often overlooked resource in most academic settings (Yaghjian, 2013).

Mentoring, the process of assisting and guiding university tutors to reach their full potential, can have a significant positive impact on their professional development. The diverse responsibilities of university tutors are critical to student success and require ongoing support and development. University tutors play a vital role in helping students achieve academic success and professional growth. A university tutor's role is multifaceted, including personalized student support (Prowse et al., 2020), professional development to maintain academic standards (Boyd & Bloxham, 2013), and fostering teacher-student relationships (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). Tutors are crucial for student retention in distance learning (Arhin & Laryea, 2020), as well as student engagement and academic success (Duran, 2017). They also participate in

personalized learning and challenge the hidden curriculum (Partington, 2020). Tutors must possess a wide range of skills, including instructional design and social roles (Li et al., 2017).

Tutoring has been linked to improved student retention and a smooth transition to university life (Hayman et al., 2020). However, challenges such as financial constraints and a lack of necessary skills influences tutor responsibilities and performance (Lydster & Murray, 2019). Tutors utilize various tutoring techniques, including peer tutoring and online synchronous tutoring, to enhance student learning experiences (Topping, 1996). The quality of tutor support significantly impacts student satisfaction and academic performance (Konovalova and Rudenko, 2022). Personal tutoring has been shown to increase student retention rates (Hayman et al., 2020). Tutors' responsibilities include providing personalized and interactive educational support to prevent educational failure and promote student success (Burgalassi et al., 2019). In other words, university tutors are critical for increasing student engagement, academic success, and personal development.

The impact of mentoring on the professional development of university tutors has received considerable attention in recent years. Mentoring is a professional relationship in which an experienced individual guides and supports a less experienced individual to help them grow personally and professionally (Doyle et al., 2019). It is a long-term process that leads to the desired outcome (Doyle et al., 2019). Mentoring is relational and developmental, with instrumental and psychosocial functions, and includes phases and transitions in which mentoring roles shift (Stoeger et al., 2020). Mentoring has been shown to improve job performance, career advancement, and overall satisfaction among mentees (Friday et al., 2004). Mentoring is a recognized career-enhancing phenomenon essential for professional development (Alejandro et al., 2019). Successful mentoring requires the mentor to be willing and able to interact with the mentee regularly.

Mentoring is essentially a supportive and nurturing relationship between an experienced professional and a less experienced individual (Eseadi, 2022a). This relationship is typically designed to guide and empower the mentee in developing their skills, knowledge, and career prospects (Eseadi, 2022b). Mentoring can provide numerous benefits to university tutors, helping them advance in their careers. Mentors can offer academic career advice, shape perspectives, and provide mentees with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their chosen careers (Eseadi, 2022a). Professional learning and equity-driven guidance are critical for creating effective mentoring programs for university tutors (Novak et al., 2020; Mendoza et al., 2019). It is also crucial for universities to address tutor professional development to ensure students develop into professionals successfully (Retna et al., 2009). From the aforementioned perspectives, it is clear that mentoring is an important component in tutors' career development. Thus, the purpose of this article is to investigate the impact of mentoring on the career development of university tutors by emphasizing the benefits of mentoring relationships and their impact on tutors' professional growth.

Method

This paper adopted a narrative review research method to investigate the influence of mentoring on the career development of university tutors. Conducting a narrative literature review involves identifying, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing previous studies (Pugh et al., 2018). This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the topic by exploring a wide range of literature (Eseadi, 2023; Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Kalchos et al., 2022). The process involves conducting a search, identifying keywords, reviewing abstracts and articles, and documenting the findings (Diotallevi et al., 2022; Eseadi, 2024; Eseadi & Diale, 2023; Hallgren

& Hansson, 2021). It is important to note that the objective of a narrative review is to describe and synthesize the available literature on a topic before drawing conclusions based on the evidence (Green et al., 2006). The literature review was conducted by searching relevant databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and Web of Science, using keywords such as "mentorship of university tutors," "career development of university tutors," "university tutors and career mentorship," and "mentoring for university tutors." Data was collected from these online databases, including both quantitative and qualitative articles. The collected data was then analyzed using the narrative review method, which involves synthesizing and summarizing the findings of the reviewed studies.

Results and Discussion

Benefits of Mentoring for University Tutors

Literature analysis showed that mentoring has significant benefits for the professional development of university tutors. Mentoring provides a safe and supportive environment for tutors to discuss professional challenges and concerns (Portner, 2008). Mentors can listen and provide constructive feedback, helping tutors identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to overcome obstacles (Hudson, 2013). This encouragement and support can boost tutors' confidence and improve their overall performance. Mentoring has been linked to important career outcomes such as salary, promotion rate, and job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004). It also provides intangible benefits such as improved job and career satisfaction, professional networking, and confidence (Amaro et al., 2023). Effective mentoring also broadens professional networks, improves career development opportunities, boosts confidence and problem-solving abilities, and enhances resilience and well-being (Davey et al., 2020). Mentoring relationships also increase motivation and retention, improve self-efficacy and research productivity, and provide experiences and skills for future job opportunities (Lanzi et al., 2019). Mentoring also serves as a valuable buffer for diverse faculty, particularly in institutions dealing with racism and pandemics (South-Paul et al., 2021).

Mentoring for university tutors provides an opportunity to improve their teaching skills. Tutors can learn valuable lessons about effective pedagogical techniques, classroom management strategies, and student engagement methods from experienced mentors (Hudson, 2013). Mentoring programs have been shown to boost tutors' self-esteem, enjoyment of teaching, and professional knowledge and skills (Sin, 2023). Mentoring also provides support, reassurance, and feedback, which enhances a teacher's self-esteem in their ability to facilitate learning outcomes (Whipp & Pengelley, 2016). Mentoring has also been linked to higher satisfaction with teaching practices, which is critical for retaining highly skilled faculty members in academic programs and institutions (Dittmar & McCracken, 2012). Furthermore, mentoring programs that address learners' basic psychological needs may enhance their motivation and perceived competence in the classroom (Neufeld et al., 2021). Overall, mentoring has been shown to help university tutors develop and improve their teaching skills.

Mentoring also helps university tutors develop their professional networks. Mentors, who often have extensive networks in academia and related fields, can provide valuable connections and introduce tutors to relevant members of their professional communities (Ambler et al., 2016)). This exposure leads to new collaborations, research opportunities, and possible career advancements. Mentoring can help tutors establish a strong professional network, which can have a positive impact on their long-term career paths. Mentors help to advance careers and professional development, build and maintain professional networks, and boost competence and self-esteem (Maheshwari, 2023). Mentoring also has reciprocal benefits,

such as confidence building, reflection, learning mentoring knowledge and skills, and networking (Molitor et al., 2018). Furthermore, it results in the formation of new professional networks, which is an important outcome for mentoring program participants (Henshall et al., 2020). However, it is critical to consider mentors' well-being, as they often feel invisible when it comes to self-care support (Gillett-Swan & Grant-Smith, 2020). A successful mentor-mentee program can improve the overall academic experience and foster strong bonds among students (Shaikh et al., 2016).

Mentoring, in addition to skill development and networking, provides important emotional support and guidance for career advancement. University tutors often face various challenges in their roles, such as managing demanding workloads, work disengagement, and dealing with academic pressures (Ambler et al., 2016; Diale & Eseadi, 2022). Mentoring provides a trusted ally who can listen compassionately, share personal experiences, and offer advice on overcoming challenges (Cove et al., 2008). This emotional support can significantly improve tutors' confidence, resilience, and overall well-being, promoting career growth and satisfaction (Davey et al., 2020). Mentoring programs in universities offer emotional support and guidance to tutors, enhancing students' professional identity, motivation, and persistence (Hernandez et al., 2017). These programs provide emotional support to tutors, helping them adjust to the university environment and promoting positive academic progress (Burgalassi et al., 2019). Mentoring relationships offer psychological and emotional support, role modeling, academic support, and opportunities for career advancement (Bakar, 2016). Mentoring is a retention strategy that encourages mentees to continue their duties (Nimante & Baranova, 2019). Mentoring improves mentees' learning, sense of belonging, and career transitions (Cooper, 2018). Mentoring may mitigate the impact of the career transition, reducing the social trauma of moving to a larger and unfamiliar university environment (Collings et al., 2014). As a result, mentoring allows tutors to receive guidance and support from experienced professionals in their field. Mentors can share their knowledge and expertise, providing valuable insights and advice to help tutors navigate their careers more successfully. Mentoring allows tutors access to a wealth of experience that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

Mentoring is essential for improving the research and scholarly activities of university tutors. Mentors can help tutors formulate research questions, design studies, and find relevant resources (Trube et al. 2015). They can also offer constructive criticism and mentorship throughout the research process, leading to better research results. Engaging in research not only broadens the tutors' knowledge base but also improves their academic credentials and professional standing within the university setting (De Janasz & Sullivan, 2004). Online mentoring, for example, broadens mentoring opportunities, reduces demographic barriers, and promotes effective mentor-mentee relationships (Andersen & West, 2021). Providing non-tenured faculty with research time and resources, as well as access to collaborators and mentors, encourages scholarly activity (Braxton et al., 2020). Integrating the mentoring relationship and research outcome expectations improves the model of scholarly activity by enhancing research training and expectations (Kahn, 2001). Mentoring benefits mentors by broadening their networks and increasing opportunities for collaboration on research projects (Tran & Gibson, 2016). Mentoring helps mentors develop professionally while also encouraging personal growth and learning (Rekha & Ganesh, 2012). Furthermore, mentoring promotes collaborative scholarly activities, which are viewed as highly valuable and conducive to long-term relationships (Nottingham et al., 2017). As a result, mentoring is critical for creating a favorable environment for research and scholarly activities among university tutors.

Impacts of Mentoring on Career Development of University Tutors

According to the literature analysis, mentoring has a multifaceted impact on the career development of university tutors. Mentoring plays a critical role in developing tutors' professional skills and knowledge, enabling them to excel in their teaching and research roles (Hampton et al., 2004). Under the guidance of experienced mentors, tutors can learn best practices, innovative teaching methods, and effective research techniques. Continuous professional development has a significant impact on their career growth and success. Mentoring facilitates the development of professional competencies such as academic content knowledge, reflective ability, and self-awareness (Nel & Luneta, 2017; Molitor et al., 2018). It also promotes the development of technology integration knowledge, lesson preparation, and teaching abilities (Top et al., 2021; Nel & Luneta, 2017). Mentoring promotes confidence, reflection, and networking, ultimately increasing mentors' self-esteem, enjoyment of teaching, and professional knowledge and skills (Sin, 2023; Molitor et al., 2018). Mentoring can help overcome barriers, improve technology integration skills, and increase motivation and enthusiasm for student learning (Top et al., 2021; Maimunah & Haque, 2021). Mentor training increases the positive effects that mentoring can have on the development of mentees' skills and knowledge (Ambrosetti, 2014). Tutors' ability to communicate informally with students and create a less intimidating learning environment has been shown to have a greater impact on learning than tutors' subject matter expertise (Chng et al., 2011). Mentoring influences tutors' professional identity formation by providing a cognitive foundation of essential knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes (Toh et al., 2022). Tutors' pedagogical content knowledge has been shown to influence the advancement of trainees' pedagogical content knowledge (Bayuo et al., 2022). In other words, mentoring is an important tool for the professional development of tutors, providing assistance with various aspects of their teaching and research responsibilities.

Mentoring can also enhance tutors' personal development. Mentors can assist tutors in identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, enabling them to set realistic and attainable goals (Dennison, 2000). Mentors can help tutors develop the skills and competencies they need to achieve their objectives by providing regular guidance and support (Baker-Doyle, 2011). This self-improvement can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation, ultimately propelling tutors towards their desired career path. Mentoring promotes tutors' personal growth through a variety of mechanisms. Mentees experience personal growth, professional development, and improved teaching skills (Ekong, 2017; Beltman & Schaeben, 2012; Amaro-Jiménez et al., 2021). Mentoring promotes personal identification, trust, and information sharing, resulting in vicarious and empathetic connections between mentors and protégés (Ghitulescu et al., 2021; Humbert & Rouse, 2016). It improves mentee knowledge, well-being, social awareness, and socialization (Garcia-Molsosa et al., 2021). Mentoring exposes the mind to new ideas, allowing for personal and professional development (Filho et al., 2021). Mentoring relationships also promote personal and academic growth, psychological health, meaningful relationships, and skill development (Fike et al., 2019). Mentoring promotes personal growth and development (Mao et al., 2015). Mentoring has been shown to mediate and enhance personal learning and career development (Gong et al., 2011). Mentoring has a significant impact on tutors' emotional, cognitive, and psychological development (Eby et al., 2008). Mentoring experiences broaden one's perspective, allowing for personal and professional development (Filho et al., 2021). It also promotes lifelong learning and personal growth (Kaderli et al., 2015). Furthermore, mentoring has been linked to increased career satisfaction, promotion rates, and personal growth (Ramanan et al., 2006). It also promotes personal development, increases productivity, and reduces the risk of compassion fatigue (Cooke et al.,

2017). Mentoring has been shown to improve personal growth in terms of self-analysis, positive feelings, and social benefits (MacLeod et al., 2020).

Mentoring can improve tutors' understanding of the academic landscape. Mentors can provide insights into current trends and developments in their field, helping tutors stay updated with the latest research and teaching methods (Trube et al., 2015). This knowledge can enhance their credibility as educators and researchers, establishing them as experts in their respective fields. Mentoring helps tutors better understand the academic landscape by increasing their academic content knowledge, social connectedness, and sense of competence (Kraft & Falken, 2021). Mentoring also distinguishes itself from teaching, tutoring, role modeling, coaching, and supervision, which helps improve understanding of mentoring processes (Krishna et al., 2019). Workplace mentoring has the potential to improve learning, focusing on the mentor's actions (Billett 2003). To create effective teaching and learning environments for students, mentoring programs require ongoing collaboration among experienced academic staff, tutors, and staff development professionals (Frade, 2017). Effective tutor-student interactions promote learning engagement, academic performance, and achievement (Wang et al., 2023). Mentoring experiences are associated with students' academic success and perseverance (Morse, 2022). Mentoring improves the learning environment by instilling enthusiasm for learning (Maimunah & Haque, 2021). Mentoring addresses issues related to formal and epistemological access in higher education (Phiri, 2019). Collaboration between tutors, mentors, and students is an effective support mechanism for reflection and idea sharing (Pye et al., 2016). These findings highlight the importance of mentoring in improving tutors' understanding of the academic landscape.

Conclusion

This article emphasizes the role of mentoring in shaping the career development of university tutors. Mentoring is essential for the professional development of university tutors in that it provides guidance, support, and networking opportunities for them. Through mentoring, university tutors are equipped with the necessary tools to succeed in their roles and advance in their careers, including improving their teaching skills, expanding their professional networks, receiving emotional support, and being encouraged to conduct research. As universities increasingly recognize the value of mentoring, it is crucial to promote and support mentorship programs that foster the professional development of university tutors. To effectively support tutors' professional development and success, universities must increase their understanding of the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with mentoring programs. It is worth noting that mentoring has far-reaching benefits that extend beyond the individual tutor, contributing to the overall success and excellence of universities. The author suggests establishing structured and well-supported mentoring programs to maximize the positive impact on the career progression of university tutors. Further research is needed to understand the impact of mentoring on the career development of university tutors using systematic review approach and meta-analysis. Future research can explore the efficacy of various mentoring models, such as peer mentoring, online mentoring, and multi-mentoring, to identify the most effective strategies for different career stages and contexts among university tutors. Future research can investigate whether mentoring has a different impact on career development based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, or other diversity factors. Understanding these differences can help ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for all university tutors. Future research can examine the factors that influence successful mentoring outcomes, including mentor and mentee characteristics, as well as the nature of the mentoring relationship. This knowledge can

be utilized to create more effective mentoring programs for university tutors. Future research can also examine how mentoring affects university tutors' careers over time, shedding light on the long-term viability of mentoring relationships and their impact on professional success. Finally, further research can identify the barriers and challenges that prevent most university tutors from accessing or benefiting from mentoring, allowing researchers to develop strategies that increase the availability and effectiveness of mentoring programs for this university population.

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