Factors influencing mentors' learning from mentoring relationships: insights from a serial mediation study in India

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The primary objective of the present study is to understand mentoring relationships in Indian organizations from the mentors' perspective. In particular, the study examines whether the learning goal orientation of a mentor can significantly influence the mentoring process and outcomes for the mentor in a mentoring relationship. Two hundred and thirty-six participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered using standardized questionnaires. Mediating effects were investigated using the PROCESS model by Hayes, Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression Based Approach. *The results indicate high levels of support for several hypotheses examining the direct effects of learning goal orientation on willingness to engage by the mentor, mentoring functions provided and mentor outcomes (personal learning and self enhancement). The overall findings of the study suggest that mentors are not only 'providers' but also 'receivers of learning'. Limitations and directions for future research are also discussed in the paper.*

Introduction

The ability to learn, unlearn and relearn is now indispensable for employees in order to adapt to organizational and business uncertainties. Learning from training and books is not sufficient to keep pace with the demands of jobs and professions (Lankau and Scandura, 2007). Individuals must often look to other sources in order to learn new skills. Mentoring is a form of interpersonal relationship and organizations are striving to retain the experience and wisdom of senior employees by introducing mentoring programmes as a form of interpersonal knowledge management.

As an interpersonal learning tool, mentoring enhances workplace learning. It mostly is a relationship between a more-experienced and a less-experienced individual. It can

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play an essential role in transfer of organizational knowledge, much of which is tacit and is best shared through interactive conversations and imparted experiences.

Mentoring in India

Although the term 'mentoring' originated from Greek mythology, the practice of mentoring has existed in India in the form of the Guru-Shishya relationship. India is famous for its refined system of education known as Gurukuls (Guru- Teacher, Kul-domain) which was practised in ancient times, wherein the student was educated while residing with the teacher and his family. Life at Gurukul is simple but difficult, designed to make the students grow up to be responsible individuals who are learned and capable of facing the challenges of life (Sankhla, 2012).There are a few institutions which follow the Gurukul system. Notable examples in India include Shantiniketan near Calcutta founded by Rabindranath Tagore and Kalakshetra in Chennai founded by dancer Rukmini Arundale (Nachimuthu & Rekha, 2007). It is argued that mentoring will be a key to India's industrial success, sustaining it in sectors such as information technology, pharmaceutical research, manufacturing, automobiles, petroleum industry and telecommunications. Many organizations use mentoring as a strategy to achieve competitive edge in the market.

Mentoring and individual learning

Harris *et al.* (2013) regarded personal learning as the basis of organizational learning. Mentors create a learning organization (Kram, 1996; Lankau & Scandura, 2002) and an open culture where people are valued and are encouraged to learn and develop their potential.

Mentoring plays a crucial role in the individual learning (Allen & Eby, 2003; Higgins & Kram, 2001). Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which helps both mentors and mentees to grow, learn and develop their potential (Lankau & Scandura, 2007). Even though the primary goal of any mentoring relationship is mentee development, in most instances mentoring emerges as a learning partnership and hence mentors also benefit from these relationships (Haggard *et al.*, 2011). Research suggests that mentors seek mentoring relationships not only for mentees' development but also 'to serve their own developmental needs' (Allen & Eby, 2003).

Researchers so far have studied the benefits of mentoring relationships mostly from the perspective of mentees (Allen *et al.*, 2008; Chitranshi & Agarwal, 2016; Janssen *et al.*, 2015). A study conducted by Rekha and Ganesh (2012) of the benefits to mentors found that mentoring enhances mentors' interpersonal, leadership and communication skills. Such a relationship provides opportunity for the mentor to grow personally and professionally (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). When coaching a mentee, the mentor goes through the process of self-discovery that increases the awareness of his or her own competence. This process will require the mentor to improve himself or herself before teaching or guiding the mentee. This may lead to increased self-satisfaction, role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, and also friendship with the mentee enabling the mentor to satisfy the need to be productive (Levinson *et al.*, 1978). This helps the mentor to obtain a sense of purpose, fulfilment and confirmation of the value of the work experiences (Kram, 1985). This will also increase mentors' commitment and desire to engage in more developmental activities (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). Thus, the mentor may seek out more mentees and provide personal and professional guidance for their development. Making meaningful contributions to one's own and others' professional development may lead to life satisfaction, career satisfaction and career attainment. It might, also, have organizational benefits such as talent pool development, turnover costs and retirement costs (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). It is also suggested that mentoring behaviour reported by mentors themselves is important because not all the behaviour of mentors is perceived consciously by the mentees.

With this background, the current study investigates the chain of relations beginning with individual characteristic of willingness to participate in mentoring, then the

actual participation in mentoring functions and finally what is obtained by the mentor in terms of outcomes. Understanding this sequence provides a holistic perspective of the phenomenon of participating in mentoring relationship because antecedents, functions and outcomes are not separate elements but are dynamic and intertwined (Snoeren *et al.*, 2015).

In the above-mentioned conceptual model, individual characteristics are relevant determinants of the extent to which a person engages in mentoring, the quality of the exchange (Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1993; Ragins, 1997) and outcomes of the relationship (Scandura, 1992). An individual's characteristics will influence the range and quality of mentoring functions that are experienced in the relationship.

The cultural mindset of India is different from other countries and this can influence how mentoring is viewed by mentors. For example, India being a collectivistic country (Mitchell, 2018) elders/seniors are expected to help develop the younger people/juniors. On the contrary, India is also high in power distance, so mentor is usually seen as a parent figure (associated with patriarchy and power hierarchy) and thus reverse mentoring may not be desired. For example, in the Gurukul system, guru is almost always a male (in vedic system) and knowledge transfer strictly happens from the top down. But the situation is changing in this fast-paced environment where skills/knowledge need to get updated on a continuous basis. That will happen only when an individual is open minded and is willing to learn from the experienced or knowledgeable person irrespective of their age or professional hierarchy.

In terms of the mentor characteristics, learning goal orientation is chosen as a key personal attribute in this study, especially because earlier research indicates that individuals with learning goal orientation would be more willing to participate in developmental activities (Sosik, Godshalk, & Yammarino, 2004). As mentors with high learning goal orientation would value learning, they would have higher motivation to share the knowledge and wisdom with mentees (Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Sosik *et al.*, 2004).

Although research has extensively studied the factors that relate to willingness to mentor others, there is little research that focuses on intent-behaviour relationship (Allen *et al.*, 1997a). Studies that investigate process linkages do not link either mentoring functions to processes or processes to outcomes (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). The current study addresses this gap by studying this in its entirety.

Most mentoring relationships have both positive and negative aspects (Ensher & Murphy, 2011). The current research focuses on the positive outcomes of mentoring relationship for the mentor. Very few studies have looked at factors related to positive experiences of a mentor (Allen & Eby, 2003) and personal learning as a process or outcome in the mentoring literature (Lankau & Scandura, 2007; Rekha & Ganesh, 2012). Thus, we investigate personal learning and self-enhancement as outcomes for mentors in the current study.

Allen *et al.* (2008) conducted a qualitative review of research methods in mentoring and found that majority of the research was carried out in US and there was little relating to most of the other countries. There are only three studies (Baruch & Budhwar, 2006; Budhwar & Baruch, 2003; Gentry *et al.*, 2008) that refer to workplace mentoring in India (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010; Srivastava & Raj, 2014). In addition, these studies did not focus on mentoring relationships directly. They considered this as one of the many tools organizations use for employee development. Thus, the current study will be first on workplace mentoring in India and is a significant value addition for both theory and practice.

Conceptual framework and rationale

It seems likely that there are several factors (for example, relationship learning, relationship quality, mentorship duration, similarity between pairs, etc.) that influence effectiveness of mentoring relationship (Allen & Eby, 2003) to attain mentor outcomes. The variables in the current study were chosen based on an integration of relevant concepts, theories, and empirical research in mentoring, learning, and developmental

relationships. The present effort will provide a basis for further discussion, additional theory and model development. Figure 1 presents conceptual framework.

Learning goal orientation and mentor outcomes

Even though surface level characteristics such as age (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001; Kram, 1985), gender (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Ragins, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999) can enable mentor-mentee pairs to initiate the relationship they may not influence the mentoring functions provided. Very few studies (e.g. Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001; Harrison *et al.*, 1998) have used deep level characteristics in their study. Deep level characteristics such as learning goal orientation, self-regulation and locus of control might help to strengthen the relationship between mentor-mentee pairs.

According to Button *et al.* (1996) 'Learning goal orientation (LGO) is a relatively stable dispositional trait that individuals bring with them in to relationships with others' and thus the current research has considered LGO as a relatively stable trait. Button *et al.* (1996) have also noted that 'When a task is approached with a LGO, individuals strive to understand something new or strive to increase their level of competence in a given activity'. Learning goal-oriented individuals are motivated by competence development and choose challenging tasks that foster learning, even if their assessment of current skills is low (Dweck, 1986). Godshalk and Sosik (2003) found that mentees who were similar to their mentors in terms of learning goal orientation reported highest levels of psychosocial support and career development. There are two reasons for considering LGO. Firstly, studies (such as Godshalk & Sosik, 2003; Egan, 2005) examining LGO among mentors and mentees focused primarily on the benefits for mentees. Janssen *et al.* (2016) in their qualitative study found that mentoring enhances mentoring competencies and hence it is important to investigate mentor outcomes (MO).The role of mentors' LGO towards their personal learning (PL) and self-enhancement (SN) need to be examined. Secondly, it is crucial to investigate the intermediate processes between Mentors' LGO and Mentors' outcomes.

Earlier studies have conceptualized mentoring relationship as a mutually beneficial relationship involving reciprocity that helps both mentors and mentees grow, learn and develop together (Lankau & Scandura, 2007). Mentoring leads to personal skill development and acquisition of new skills and abilities that enable better working relationships. PL plays an important role in generating positive feeling among employees about their work making them content with their job (Lankau & Scandura, 2002).

Thus, our hypothesis,

H1. Learning goal orientation (LGO) has a positive impact on the personal learning (PL) of mentors

Apart from learning, researchers have also found that mentors attain greater internal satisfaction and fulfilment (Ragins & Scandura, 1994), sense of rejuvenation (Levinson *et al.*, 1978) and organizational recognition as a teacher and advisor (Kram, 1985). Research also indicates that mentoring others may lead to greater job satisfaction, increased motivation and enhancement of leadership skills (Smith, 1990).

Making meaningful contributions to self and others' development may lead to increased self enhancement (SN). Allen (2003) identified three outcomes for mentoring others namely self enhancement, intrinsic satisfaction and benefiting others. We propose that those individuals who are willing to engage in mentoring relationship
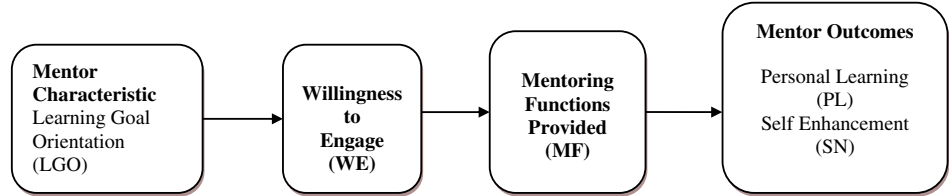

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

are those who would like to attain self-enhancement (SN) for visibility, reputation and support base in the organization.

Thus, our hypothesis,

H2. Learning goal orientation (LGO) has a positive impact on the self enhancement (SN) of mentors

The mediating role of willingness to engage

Many researchers have examined the intention to mentor (i.e. willingness to engage (WE)) (Allen, 2003; Allen *et al.*, 1997b; Aryee *et al.*, 1996; Ragins & Cotton, 1993). WE by mentor would be higher in mid-careerist (Allen *et al.*, 1997a) and also individuals at later ages (Feldman, 1988; Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994) because they find that mentoring others satisfies generativity needs (Arthur & Kram, 1989). 'Generativity is the concern for guiding and promoting the next generation through such creative behavior as parenting, teaching, mentoring, leading, and generating products and outcomes that benefit others' (Van De Water & McAdams, 1989). Generativity typically affects individuals who have reached middle-career and are concerned with making a contribution to future generation. However, as individuals move higher in the organizational hierarchy their willingness to mentor others will be higher, and as they are learning goal oriented, the desire to share the information, knowledge and wisdom that they possess to younger inexperienced individuals would also be higher.

The decision to participate in mentoring relationship is in essence a choice to engage in a developmental activity (Allen *et al.*, 1997b). Mentors' willingness to participate will influence the actual support behaviours provided. Serving as mentors to others can be viewed as a form of goal-directed behaviour (Allen, 2003). Individuals may mentor others because that action may satisfy certain needs or motives of the mentor. Motives behind mentoring others could be beneficial either towards others or to themselves. Other-focused include, desire to pass on the wisdom to others, desire to help others and desire to build a competent workforce. Self-focused include the desire to increase personal learning and to feel satisfied.

Thus, our Hypotheses,

H3. The relationship between mentor's learning goal orientation (LGO) and personal learning (PL) is mediated by willingness to engage by mentor (WE)

H4. The relationship between mentor's learning goal orientation (LGO) and self-enhancement (SN) is mediated by willingness to engage by mentor (WE)

Mediating role of mentoring functions provided

There are hardly any study which examine the extent to which intention to mentor relates to actual mentoring behaviour (Allen, 2007). An earlier study by Kram (1983) identified that mentors provide two different kinds of support, viz., career and psychosocial support. Since then numerous studies (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Noe, 1988; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Williams, 2001) have examined the different ways in which these two types of mentoring functions manifest in such relationships.

Kram (1986) explains career development functions as an element of the mentoring relationship which is related to the mentee's professional career. These functions enhance professional advancement through coaching, protection, exposure and visibility, sponsorship and challenging assignments. Kram (1986) explains psychosocial functions as the extent to which the mentor provides counselling, acceptance and confirmation, and serves as a role model to the mentee. Mentors may provide both types of mentoring functions or one of them depending on the situation. For example, individuals who desire to build a competent workforce may provide career related mentoring and those individuals who desire for self-satisfaction may provide psychosocial mentoring.

Zey (1984) theorized that mentoring provides four categories of benefits to the mentor: career enhancement, intelligence/information, advisory role and psychic rewards. Hunt and Michael (1983) suggested that mentors gain satisfaction, esteem among peers and superiors and self-confirmation by mentoring others. Mentoring primarily serves as an information exchange whereby mentees serve as a valuable source of information for their mentors (Mullen, 1994).

Role modelling, acceptance and confirmation and friendship with the mentee enable the mentor to satisfy the need for generativity (Levinson *et al.*, 1978) and obtain a sense of purpose, fulfilment, and confirmation of the value of the work experiences (Kram, 1985). This will increase mentors' commitment and desire to engage in more developmental activities (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007). In the process of guiding mentees, mentors keep updating their knowledge before sharing or passing on the latest developments to mentees and thus leading to self-enhancement.

Organizations are systematizing mentoring to ensure positive outcomes (Mullen, 1998). The more the mentoring functions (MF) provided by the mentor, more beneficial would be the relationship (Armstrong *et al.*, 2002). An increase in the number of functions provided will create more interactions between the mentor and mentee leading to better information sharing and other benefits. Thus mentor may also learn from the relationship. The provision of MF may enhance their visibility, recognition and support base in the organization (Armstrong *et al.*, 2002). Hence, our hypotheses,

> H5. The relationship between willingness to engage (WE) and personal learning (PL) is mediated by mentoring functions provided by mentor (MF).

> H6. The relationship between willingness to engage (WE) and self-enhancement (SN) is mediated by mentoring functions provided by mentor (MF).

Serial mediation effects

The Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1985) suggests that individuals' attitude towards a behaviour leads to intentions which in turn leads to actual behaviour. Thus, in the current study, we study the following chain of relationships: learning goal orientation (an attitude towards learning) leading to WE by mentor (intention), WE by mentor influencing mentoring functions (MF) provided (behaviour) and MF provided causing mentor outcome (MO) (outcome). Though mentor characteristics are considered to be vital for getting into the relationship, unless individuals are willing to participate in the relationship, they may not provide MF. According to social exchange theory, mentors provide certain resources like their network connections, skills, feedback or instrumental or psychosocial support to mentees and expect reciprocity from their mentees in the form of an appreciation or a new skill or a fresh perspective (Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Ragins, 1997; Ragins & Scandura, 1994). If mentors visualize the benefits that they obtain by being in the relationship, they would be more willing to participate and would provide mentoring functions (MF) to mentees. Hence, willingness to participate in the relationship is critical for any of it to function effectively. Hence, willingness to engage (WE) and MF provided are crucial for the outcomes of the mentor. Thus, WE by mentor and MF will serially mediate between mentor characteristics and MO such as personal learning (PL) and self-enhancement (SN).

> H7. The relationship between learning goal orientation (LGO) and personal learning (PL) is sequentially mediated by willingness to engage (WE) and mentoring functions provided (MF)

> H8. The relationship between learning goal orientation (LGO) and self enhancement (SN) is sequentially mediated by willingness to engage (WE) and mentoring functions provided (MF)

Method

Sample and procedure

A pilot study was conducted before finalizing the questionnaire. A structured questionnaire after pilot testing was administered to 350 respondents. Respondents were

selected using purposive sampling. The sample respondents were chosen based on the following rules of membership. Those individuals

- who belong to middle- or senior-level management;
- with more than five years of work experience;
- who have been a mentor earlier.

Data were collected using both online survey and hard copy of the questionnaire. The surveys were administered to the respondents who satisfied the rules of membership mentioned above. Respondents were chosen from the researchers' professional contacts, friends, colleagues and also few of them were participants of executive development programs in a business school. The respondents were from a varied range of industries such as IT, telecommunications, education, engineering, manufacturing and consulting that belonged to private sector and public sector. The majority of the respondents were from private sector organizations. For the online survey, an email was sent out to them by the researchers explaining the objective and rules of membership. In the first page of the survey, the participants were required to fill in their basic information and a statement asking about their experience as a mentor. If participants had prior experience as a mentor, the survey would take them to next page, if not, the survey is discontinued.

For paper and pencil surveys, where respondents were available, the researcher personally visited the respondents, explained the objective of the survey and the survey was administered only to the respondents who had experience of being a mentor. The researcher was available to answer the queries of the respondents if any.

Two hundred and fifty (71.42 per cent) respondents participated in the survey. After data cleaning, responses from 236 participants were chosen for the further analysis. As the data for both predictor and criterion variable are collected from the same person, Podsakoff *et al.*'s (2003) suggestions for controlling common method biases were considered for the current study. For example, predictor and criterion variables were mixed and were not measured in order.

Further, the hypotheses were tested using correlation analyses and PROCESS model by Hayes. In addition, the differences between the demographic groups on the study variables were tested using the t test and ANOVA method. t test and ANOVA were carried out to find out which demographic variables are to be include for further analyses.

Measures

Experience as a mentor

For informal relationships, participants have to respond yes or no to the following question: 'During your career has there been an individual whom you have taken a personal interest in; whom you have guided, had a significant and positive impact in his / her career / personal development?' This definition is similar to the one that used in the previous research (Allen & Eby, 2003; Allen & Poteet, 1999). If there are more than one mentee, they were instructed to consider the longest mentoring relationship. The first six months is the trust building phase which would take minimum of six months to build a rapport between the mentor and mentee. Personal learning happens only when there is free flow of communication between pairs. Hence, choosing a long-lasted relationship would be ideal for a reflection on what the mentor has gained.

Gender

Participants indicated male or female.

Type of mentorship

Participants indicated whether they have engaged in formal or informal mentoring relationship. Formal mentoring relationship was coded as '1' and informal mentoring

relationship was coded as '2'. Formal relationships are ones that are set, facilitated and controlled by an organization with a set of rules and procedures for mentor-mentee interaction.

Learning goal orientation

Eight items developed and validated by Button *et al.* (1996) ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were used. This scale is based on Button *et al.*'s (1996) definition which states that *LGO is a relatively stable dispositional trait that describes the extent to which individuals strive to understand something new or increase their level of competence in a given activity.* A sample of the items included is 'I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things'.

Mentoring functions provided

An 18-item scale developed by Dreher and Ash (1990) was used. This scale consists of 5-point responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and it was used to measure psychosocial and career development functions. According to Kram's mentor role theory (1985), mentor provides two types of mentoring support. One is career development which helps the mentees to learn the skills and techniques and facilitate mentees' advancement in the organization; and the other is psychosocial which provides interpersonal aspect of mentoring relationship enhancing mentees' sense of competence, self-efficacy, professional, and personal development. A sample item for career development includes, 'I give or recommend mentee, challenging assignments that present opportunities to learn new skills'. A sample item for psychosocial development includes, 'I show empathy for the concerns and feelings that mentee discusses with me'.

Personal learning

Kram (1996) defined 'PL' as knowledge acquisition, skills or competencies contributing to individual development, including the interpersonal competencies of self-reflection, self-disclosure, active listening, empathy and feedback. As majority of early research focused on mentoring functions and career outcomes, very little research attention was devoted to PL as a process or outcome in the mentoring literature (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Items for the construct were pooled from various sources and few items were added by the researcher based on the pilot study (Table 1).

Self-enhancement

A 5-item scale developed by Allen and Eby (2003) ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used. *SN could be defined as mentor's visibility, respect, reputation and increase in support base in an organization.* A sample item includes, 'Mentoring enhanced my visibility in the organization'.

Results

From correlation analyses results (Table 2), it was found that all main independent variables (except age) correlated with every other outcome variable. Study by Allen *et al.* (1997b) explains that as age increases, the maturity of the individual increases, thereby the interest to pass on the wisdom to mentees increases. But the results show that age did not correlate with any of the study variables. It is possible that in this global competitive era, individuals shift their careers rapidly looking for better opportunities and also they occupy top management position at a younger age. As, they have lesser experience and are also learners in the process they may not be in a position to guide others. The results from above tests provided a base for proceeding to serial mediation analysis.

Table 1: Items pooled for personal learning

	Statements	Source
PL1	Being a mentor provided me a new perspective on lower levels of the firm	Allen & Eby, 2003
PL2	I have become more aware of my strengths and weaknesses by being a mentor	Added by researcher based on pilot study
PL3	I strive to improve my expertise when I try to guide or provide expertise on areas my mentee needs	Added by researcher based on pilot study
PL5	My mentee shared a lot of information with me that helped my own professional development	Allen *et al.* (2003)
PL6	I have learned how to communicate effectively with others	Lankau and Scandura (2002)
PL7	I have improved my listening ability	Lankau and Scandura (2002)
PL8	I have developed new ideas about how to perform my job	Lankau and Scandura (2002)
PL10	I have gained new skills	Lankau and Scandura (2002)
PL11	I have expanded the way I think about things	Lankau and Scandura (2002)
PL12	Some of my behaviours have changed by being a mentor	Added by researcher based on pilot study

Table 2: Sample Profile of Mentors

Nature	Categories	Frequency (n = 236)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	76.27
	Female	56	23.73
Age	26-30	76	33.00
	31-35	62	26.00
	36-40	36	15.00
	41 and above	61	26.00
Education	Under graduate	55	23.00
	Post graduate	172	73
	MPhil and Doctorate	9	4
Level of management	Middle level	150	63.56
	Senior level	86	36.44
Sector	Private	197	83.47
	Public	39	16.53
Type of relationship	Formal	109	46.19
	Informal	127	53.81

From correlation analysis (Refer Table 2), it was found that every variable correlated with every other variable. LGO may nurture motivation to participate in mentoring relationship and also make the mentor appreciate the MF provided (Allen *et al.*, 1997b).

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Study Variables

	M	SD	Age	LGO	WE	MF	PL	SN
Age	36.09	8.17	–					
LGO	4.44	0.42	−0.004	–				
WE	4.13	0.56	0.039	.344**	–			
MF	4.10	0.45	0.052	.415**	.444**	–		
PL	2.10	0.48	−0.002	.337**	.410**	.481**	–	
SN	4.06	0.69	0.040	.197**	.229**	.368**	.421**	–

Note: n = 236. LGO = learning goal orientation, WE = willingness to engage, MF = mentoring functions provided, PL = personal learning, SN = self enhancement.
*$p < 0.05$;**$p < 0.01$;***$p < 0.001$.

The reliability of the questionnaires used for the study was established using the Cronbach's alpha, whereas the validity of the questionnaire was established using structural equation modelling on the AMOS 16 software. All the values were found to meet the required criteria. Prior to hypotheses testing, we assessed the construct validity of our measures using confirmatory factor analyses. Table 3 presents reliability, unidimensionality scores for the study variables.

Because these measures are self-reported, we tested for common method bias using Harman's Single Factor Test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and found that the items did not significantly load on to a single factor. Hence, we concluded that common method bias was not a major concern in our analysis.

In our analytical model, we tested for a three path mediated effect (Taylor *et al.*, 2008). The advantage of this approach is that it allowed us to investigate the indirect effect of LGO on mentor outcomes (MO) (PL, SN) passing through both the mediators (WE and MF) in a series. Figures 2 and 3 illustrates this model.

We tested the mediation hypothesis using an approach outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2004). The study examined mediating effects of WE by mentor and MF provided between LGO and MO (PL, SN) using model 6 in the PROCESS with bootstrap methods (Hayes, 2013). This mediation approach tests the indirect effect between the predictor and the criterion variables through the mediator via bootstrapping procedure. Bootstrapping procedure addresses some of the weaknesses associated with the Sobel test (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The advantage of this model is that it allowed us to investigate the indirect effect passing through both the mediators in a series. All paths for the model and their corresponding beta coefficients are represented in Table 4. The confidence intervals derived from bootstrap samples were used to test
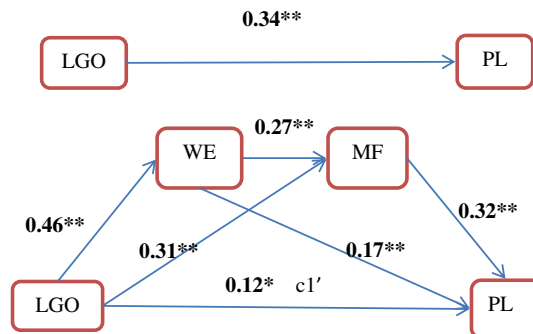

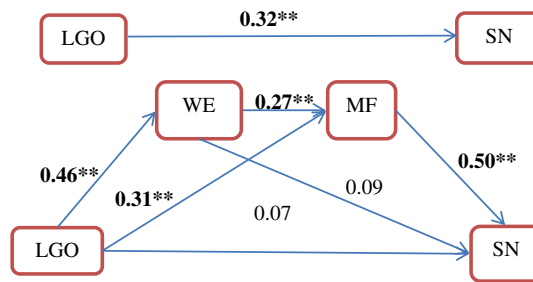Figure 2: Mediating effects of WE and MF between LGO and PL

Figure 3: Mediating effects of WE and MF between LGO and SN

indirect effects such that if the 99 per cent confidence interval excluded 0, then the quantity being tested was statistically significant (Preacher *et al.*, 2007).

Figure 2 shows that the total effect of the learning goal orientation (LGO) on personal learning (PL) ($\beta = 0.34$, $t = 5.47$, $p = 0.00$) was significant. LGO had direct effect on PL ($\beta = 0.12$, $t = 1.99$, $p = 0.05$) removing the effect of willingness to engage (WE) and mentoring functions provided (MF) as mediators ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 1.99$, $p = 0.00$).

The total effect of LGO on SN ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 3.08$, p=.0002) was significant (Figure 3) but total direct effect of LGO on SN ($\beta = 0.07$, $t = 0.59$, $p = 0.56$) was not significant, removing the effect of the mediators (WE and MF), respectively. Specific indirect effects (refer Table 4 paths 1 to 6 except path 4) can be interpreted as significantly positive because the bootstrap confidence interval is entirely above zero. Hence, hypotheses (H7, and H8) stating the mediation that LGO indirectly influences PL and self enhancement (SN) through serial mediators of WE and MF is supported. In addition, it is important to note that the only path which was not significant was WE to SN (refer Table 4, path 4) denoting that for indirect influence of LGO on SN, it is not enough that an individual is willing to participate but should also provide MF (mentoring support) to mentee.

Discussion

The current study extended earlier research by investigating mentoring from the perspective of the mentor. It examined the learning goal orientation (LGO) of mentor indirectly influencing personal learning (PL) and self-enhancement (SN) through serial mediators of willingness to engage (WE) and mentoring functions provided (MF). Mentoring programmes at organizations are not beneficial (Armstrong *et al.*, 2002), especially because mentors are not aware of the benefits that they can attain by participating in a mentoring relationship. The current study proposes that mentors do gain PL and increase in their SN by investing time and efforts in the mentoring relationships.

Firstly, LGO had a significant positive impact on PL and SN. LGO is the extent to which individuals focus on learning and developing their competency, which in turn leads to pursuing challenging tasks. Godshalk and Sosik (2003) investigated LGO and found that it promotes intrinsic motivation to continue in the relationship and provide mentoring functions. When mentors start sharing knowledge and their personal experiences with mentees, it builds trust which in turn result in mentees sharing some of the updated information (e.g. newer technologies or methodologies) with mentors resulting in reciprocity of learning (Godshalk & Sosik, 2003). Thus, individuals who are learning goal oriented would be willing to participate in the developmental activity with others. This also shows that individuals with LGO have felt that they have learnt (PL) by participating and contributing towards the development of mentees and have enhanced themselves (SN) through the increased visibility, reputation and

Table 4: Reliability and unidimensionality scores

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Learning Goal Orientation (LGO)	8	0.80	0.98	0.97	0.05
Self Enhancement (SN)	4	0.87	0.87	0.99	0.08
Mentoring Functions (MF)	18	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.06
Willingness to engage by mentor (WE)	4	0.85	1.00	1.00	0.00
Personal Learning (PL)	10	0.87	0.97	0.95	0.06

Note: n = 236. CFI = comparative fit index; GFI = goodness of fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, 90 per cent confidence interval.

respect in the organization. This further indicates that there is a clear link between their effort (participating in mentoring relationship) and outcomes (PL, SN).

Secondly, the results from Table 4 show that WE by mentor mediate the relationship between LGO and MO (PL, SN). For a successful mutually beneficial relationship, there should be some level of willingness to engage among both the parties to have meaningful interactions. Willingness to engage (WE) by mentor is an attitude that will precede the actual behaviour of a mentor (Young & Perrewe, 2000). WE by mentor is an important prerequisite for mentors to gain mutual benefits. This result shows that individuals with high learning goal orientation (LGO) see mentoring as an opportunity to achieve desired outcomes in their profession.

Thirdly, mentoring functions provided (MF) mediate the relationship between WE and mentor outcomes (MO) (PL, SN). MF has a significant impact on the PL and SN of the mentor. It can be inferred that when mentoring support is provided, the interaction between mentor and mentee strengthens. The interaction would help mentor to gain some information from the mentee leading to PL. Through the provision of mentoring support, mentees attain growth and success in the organization, thereby enhancing mentors' visibility, reputation and respect in the organization. This also shows that mere willingness to mentor is not sufficient, it has to be reflected in the actual behaviour to achieve the personal outcomes.

Serial mediation analyses revealed that LGO has an indirect influence on PL. High LGO denote that the individual seeks challenging work, is keen to try different approaches, learn new skills and improve performance. It could be inferred that mentors are not just the 'providers' but are also 'receivers of learning'. Learning leads to changes in perception, behaviour, values and attitudes (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Also, employees who experience PL may have more positive reactions to their work because they have greater confidence and skill (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). PL in the workplace may increase individuals' desire to stay in the current organization if they are acquiring new skills and competency through participating in mentoring activity. This phenomenon can be understood from the Vroom's expectancy theory (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). It explains the connection between the individuals' perception of the value of a desired goal (learning goal orientation) and presence of an effective mechanism (mentoring) in achieving the goal (personal learning).

Another key finding of the study is that LGO has an indirect influence on SN (visibility, reputation, respect and increase in support base) irrespective of the kind of mentoring support provided. The results from Table 4, path 4 shows that WE on its own do not mediate the relationship between LGO and SN. The possible explanation for this is that it is not enough if mentors are willing to participate in the relationship but also should provide mentoring support to gain SN. It could be inferred that learning goal-oriented mentors are task oriented and hence would be willing to participate in mentoring and provide mentoring support to gain SN.

The study helps to establish empirically how WE by mentor and MF mediate the relationship between LGO and SN. The use of WE by mentor and MF provided as serial mediators is a considerable value addition to the mentoring literature. This is one of the first few studies that examined mentoring relationship from the perspective of mentor in Indian organizations (Table 5).

The theoretical significance of this research is threefold. Firstly, it brings in a new perspective of PL where the results suggest that mentors do benefit from the relationship. They are not just playing the traditional role of providing guidance but are actively learning new insights from their mentees. Also, our results support the assertion of studies by Kram (1996), Eby and Lockwood (2005), Allen (2007), and Rekha and Ganesh (2012) that mentors do learn from the mentoring relationship. Secondly, the current study looks at the mentoring relationship from the perspective of antecedent to process variables to outcome variables whereas earlier studies have looked at them in isolation. Thirdly, Allen's, 2003 study reports that those individuals' whose outcomes are focused on others may provide career-related support and those whose outcomes are self-focused may provide psychosocial support. But our results suggest that those mentors who are self-focused may provide both career-related and

Table 5: Path coefficients and indirect effects for mediation models mediating effects of WE and MF between LGO and PL, SN

	Path coefficients				Indirect effect (unstandardized)	Boot LL 95% CI	Boot UL 95% CI
	To PL	To SN	To WE	To MF			
LGO	0.17*(0.06)	0.14(0.11)	0.46***(0.08)	0.31***(0.06)			
WE	0.17**(0.05)	0.09(0.09)		0.27***(0.05)			
MF	0.32**(0.06)	0.50**(0.11)					
MFC	0.23**(0.05)	0.38** (0.08)					
MFP	0.20**(0.06)	0.29**(0.10)					
Total effect (LGO on PL)				0.34**(0.06)			
Direct effect (LGO on PL)				0.12*(0.06)			
Total effect (LGO on SN)				0.32**(0.10)			
Direct effect (LGO on SN)				0.07(0.11)			
1.LGO → WE→PL					0.07	0.03	0.14
2.LGO → WE→MF → PL					0.04	0.02	0.08
3.LGO → MF→PL					010	0.04	0.18
4. LGO → WE→SN					0.07	−0.02	0.16
5. LGO → WE→MF → SN					0.04	0.01	0.10
6. LGO → MF→SN					0.08	0.02	0.17

Note: LGO = learning goal orientation, WE = willingness to engage, MF = mentoring functions, MFC = career mentoring functions, MFP = psychosocial mentoring functions, PL = personal learning, SN = self-enhancement.
*$p < 0.05$;**$p < 0.01$;***$p < 0.001$.

psychosocial-related support. This could be because those mentors who are learning goal oriented are also task oriented and performance oriented, hence would be willing to learn new insights from mentees and also gain SN through visibility, reputation and respect in the organization.

As mentioned in the earlier paragraphs, the results reconfirms the theory of planned behaviour that mentors' LGO (as an attitude towards learning) lead to WE (intention) which in turn lead to MF provided and MO (actual behaviour).

Conclusions

Practical implications

Mentoring relationships act as an effective way of building impactful careers. Research also reports benefits that extend beyond mentees and mentors, but to organizations as well (Armstrong *et al.*, 2002). Organizations' continued emphasis on formal systems for individual development suggests that systematic studies should be undertaken to understand the implications of such developmental process on employees. The greater the informality of the mentoring relationship, the greater the effectiveness of the relationship (Underhill, 2006). In informal relationships, pairing happens because of mutual attraction, common interests and similar personality. Organizations can consider implementing self-selection (mutual self-selection of mentors and mentees), which is an important aspect of informal mentoring to improve the success of formal mentoring programmes (Underhill, 2006).

The study helps to understand the mentor characteristic that influence the outcomes of their personal development. These results imply that it might help the organizations to choose learning goal-oriented individuals and motivate them to volunteer to be a mentor by explaining its benefits.

The findings of the current research will also help organizations to design effective formal mentoring programs. Organizations focus mentoring programs for the benefit of mentees and plan and organize interventions accordingly. Current results suggest that mentors also benefit from mentoring programs if they are chosen according to characteristics such as learning goal orientation.

The expectancy theory suggests that individuals will be motivated to involve in an activity if the following conditions are satisfied (1) perception that they are capable of performing their work; (2) belief that their efforts will result in a certain outcome; and (3) and perceive the payoffs for doing their work as worthwhile (Kimmel *et al.*, 2016). In short, individual's behaviour aids in achievement of certain desirable outcomes (Lewin, 1935; Mitchell, 1982; Vroom, 1964). Findings from the current study states that, organizations can motivate individuals with high LGO to mentor by educating them on the personal benefits and SN expected from the activity (expectancy). As, individuals with high LGO would value learning (valence) and this would in turn encourage them to provide mentoring support to gain benefits for them and for mentees (instrumentality). Thus, if the organizations can educate employees about the benefits that they can attain by participating in mentoring, more individuals would volunteer to participate.

Further, the research points out that some mentors are oriented towards gaining visibility, reputation and respect. These are crucial needs in work place and to encourage mentoring, organizations can actively build facilities to achieve these needs. For instance, public forums can be created where the mentees publicly acknowledge the valuable role that mentors played in their development.

The results of the study clearly suggest that when organizations identify and train a pool of mentors, it is important to identify the mentors' expectation of the outcome and developmental need of the mentee and match them accordingly. For example, if the outcome sought by the mentor is self-enhancement, organizations should look for mentees who need career guidance support rather than emotional support for an effective mentoring relationship.

Mentoring requires and demands 'openness' and 'mutual engagement' (Brewer, 2016) to learn from the relationship. Mentors need to step back from their pressurized work environment and reflect on their experiences during the mutual interaction that happens. Mentees could express their perspective on various departments and mentors communicate their knowledge gained from past experiences. Most importantly, mentees should also be aware of mentors' needs and should be prepared to share their experiences, insights and learning which are of interest to mentors (Clutterbuck, 2005). Constant interactions are important because it is through these that reflection, learning and growth occur. Ballantyne (2004) calls this process 'dialoguing'. Being mindful helps mentors to be completely engaged in the interactions to gain meaningful insights. Organizations should provide training on self-reflection and mindfulness for the 'potential mentors' to gain maximum benefits. Mentoring facilitates deeper contemplation either during or post conversation (Brewer, 2016). Hence, to further enable them to practice being mindful and reflective, organizations should develop the practice of a reflective session once in a week to encourage mentors and mentees to review the insights learnt from their mentoring experience. For example, both mentors and mentees can be encouraged to verbalize their experience and learning in the form of dairies, blogs, etc.

Organizations can also develop measures that capture how mentoring has accelerated individual and organizational learning. When such measures are publicized, interest of mentors to take up the mentoring work is augmented and the value they will achieve by the activity becomes obvious.

Potential limitations and future research

In this study, data were collected only from mentors. The current study collected data from various industries and did not focus on any of the specific organizations because it is the first of its kind in Indian organizations. Though the sample is adequate, given the criterion for SEM, future studies could include a larger sample. Future studies can investigate dyads (both mentor and mentee) for effective analysis. Secondly, further studies could conduct longitudinal design to obtain more effective results. Future research could include some of the pre-dispositional factors such as openness to learning, listening, self-reflection, etc in the research design. They could also focus on certain industries in specific to gain deeper insights. The study found no relation among age and other outcomes. Exploring the relationship of these variables in other settings might lead to valuable insights. It would also be interesting to study the underlying motives of a mentor to participate in the mentoring relationship.

A more detailed analysis on what happens during interactions (Snoeren et al., 2015) with an interpersonal theory lens would be an interesting issue to explore. For example, the relationship between mentoring effectiveness and variables like trust, interpersonal styles and mentee risk taking can add significant value to this domain of knowledge.

The results of current study are not generalizable for India because although the data have been collected from a broad-based sample it was a purposive, convenience sample rather than a random, representative one. A larger, representative sample from India would develop the literature and provide a basis for cross-cultural research which might test, inter alia, the authors' hypothesis – not capable of being tested here – that the Indian cultural context may be a factor in their results. More generally, such a sample would permit the testing in other contexts of the hypotheses the authors tested here to determine the extent of their applicability.

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