

Do Formal Mentoring Programs Matter?: A Longitudinal Randomized Experimental Study of Women Healthcare Workers

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We report results from a pretest-posttest randomized experimental study comparing the impact of high versus low facilitation of formal mentoring programs on female healthcare workers' performance and attitudes. Results indicated increases in job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment for mentoring program participants from both groups with larger gains made by the high facilitated group. These results suggest that facilitated HRD interventions have positive effects on the outcomes of mentoring programs for women employees.

Keywords: Mentoring, Performance, Job Satisfaction

Mentoring relationships and formal mentoring programs have received increasing attention in HRD and related literature over the past several years. Studies examining mentoring involvement have indicated that up to two-thirds of employees have engaged in some type of mentoring relationship and that mentoring functions may be especially beneficial for women employees because of the greater barriers they often face as compared to their male counterparts (Chao et al., 1992). Involvement in formal mentoring programs has a variety of benefits for participants (Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003). Two of the most emphasized developmental benefits have been psychosocial and career advancement (Kram, 1985). Despite increasing activity, few empirical studies have been performed examining outcomes of formal mentoring programs (Wanberg et al., 2003). Because of the considerable 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). No study identified compared women participating in different types of formal mentoring programs or used control groups in the study of females' experiences with mentoring and few studies have examined the impact of formal mentoring participation for women employees. Additionally, clarification regarding the impact of various approaches to the facilitation of formal mentoring programs would be helpful in determining which HRD practices may positively influence mentoring program results.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

Despite the increase in organizational investment over the past decade or more, there is little research on formal mentoring programs. The handful of well implemented studies has largely failed to distinguish formal mentoring programs in terms of quality and content (Wanberg et al. 2003). Many studies combine formal mentoring programs facilitated by organizations for comparison regardless of whether the mentoring programs are similar in approach. Those conscientiously assembled programs may be compared to other mentoring programs involving a poorly planned arrangement between mentors and protégés without attention to detail or opportunities to support mentoring relationship development. The purpose of the current study is to answer the general question: do formal mentoring programs matter to the development of female healthcare workers? We test a series of hypotheses (clarified below) to evaluate the effectiveness of high versus low facilitated mentoring programs on the development of female employees and whether there are differences between female participants and non-participants in mentoring programs regarding job performance and job related attitudes.

Significance of the Study

Recent comprehensive reviews of the literature by Noe et al. (2002) and Wanberg et al. (2003) identified 192 total mentoring studies, 24 on formal mentoring, 28 on women in mentoring relationships, and 4 comparing mentored versus non-mentored employees and managers. In addition to being one of only a handful of studies to make a systematic comparison between mentor versus no mentor female employees, this study is the first mentoring study of female protégés known to use a randomized participant selection processes, and the first identified to explore specific differences in facilitation approaches between formal mentoring programs for women.

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Review of the Literature

The use of mentoring relationships aimed at employee development is rapidly increasing in organizations (Noe, et al., 2002). Some benefits of mentoring relationships include career mobility and advancement (Scandura, 1992), career satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992), career commitment, and career advancement (Scandura et al., 1996), more promotions and higher compensation (Chao et al., 1992) and higher retention (Viator & Scandura, 1991). 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.

Women in Mentoring Relationships

Because of demographic trends and glass ceiling realities in many organizations, there are typically few women holding upper management positions to serve as mentors (Noe et al., 2002). Mentoring relationships help women integrate and advance in frequently male dominated organizational cultures (Stewart & Gudykunst, 1982). Women who report having a mentor generally identify having greater job satisfaction, career success, greater self-confidence, and a stronger support base than women who do not have a mentor (Noe, et al., 2002). "Mentoring may help women to develop career plans and to acquire a self-identity" (Noe, 1988, p. 462).

Women are more likely than men to report the need for a mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1991). However, the availability of women in upper management to mentor young female professionals has long been identified as a major challenge for most organizations. This demographic imbalance creates a supply problem for those seeking to be mentored by women executives (Noe, et al., 2002). These gender imbalances necessitate cross-gender mentoring in order to provide women with mentors. If an effective cross-gender relationship can be achieved, the experience can be very beneficial for both the mentor and protégé because they can learn from two different perspectives (Clawson & Kram, 1984). Nelson and Quick (1985) suggest male mentors may be less able to fully appreciate the unique work-related stress and work-family conflicts faced by females.

Although cross-gender mentoring relationships have been found to be effective, research indicates that women who are mentored by women gain unique benefits (Noe et al., 2002). "Based on available research, female mentors may be best suited to prepare their female protégés for the unique sources of stress that women face in the workplace, such as discrimination, social isolation, and coping with work-family conflict" (Noe et al., 2002, p. 164). Female protégés more often report their female mentors provide more role modeling than male mentors (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Additionally, female mentors may provide more social support and more strategies for work-life balance to their protégés (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). Because women are in need of productive and meaningful mentoring relationships, more research needs to be conducted in order to better understand the needs of female professionals seeking development opportunities and how those needs can be met in the context of mentoring (Noe et al., 2002).

Formal Mentoring

Comparisons between formal and informal mentoring relationships have been key themes in recent literature. Informal mentoring relationships are most frequently defined as cooperative and ongoing connections between protégé and mentor instigated and maintained voluntarily (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Informal mentoring relationships develop naturally without external intervention or planning. On the other hand, an organizational representative typically initiates formal mentoring relationships. Employees or managers are typically invited to participate in externally matched mentor-protégé pairings. HRD practitioners, who shape goals and expectations for participation, facilitate formal mentoring relationships. Parameters for participation may include mandatory introductory sessions or ongoing training, a required number of meeting times, specific discussion topics, and mentor-protégé goal setting.

Expectations for the length of commitment for formal mentoring programs vary; the typical minimum expectation for formal mentoring programs is six to twelve months (Single & Muller, 2001). Similar to formal mentoring practices examined in this study, organizations may use mentoring programs in the retention and promotion of women and minorities and the socialization of new hires (Noe et al., 2002). Because formal mentoring relationships do not emerge naturally, mentor and protégé motivation may be lower than in informal mentoring relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). A formal protégé-mentor relationship may lead to number of circumstances such as: (1) pairing individuals with very different backgrounds and experiences; (2) pairing individuals from different parts of the organization; (3) matching individuals having different expectations; or (4) the relationship may be impeded by low communication abilities on the part of one or both individuals. Given these potential challenges, the mentor-protégé pairing may not be as effective as naturally occurring dyads.

A recent comprehensive review of the literature by Wanberg et al. (2003) identified a significant gap in HRD-related research on formal mentoring. Of the twenty-four studies identified that focused on formal mentoring

program outcomes, only thirteen were determined to be well designed studies. The review found only four studies that explored protégé outcomes in comparison with employees not involved in mentoring. The four published studies identified significant positive results from formal mentoring program participation as compared nonparticipants including: increased career commitment, compensation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational socialization, promotion, and self-esteem (Ragins et al., 2000). Although the study by Ragins and Cotton (1999) failed to report results reflecting positively on formal mentoring, the outcomes examined were narrowly focused. Additionally, the aforementioned study focused on protégés, from numerous organizations did not control for variation in formal mentoring quality and protocols. Another Ragins and Cotton (1999) study did not describe the manner in which the mentoring programs were formulated and implemented. The current study improves on all other available studies by using randomized experimental design to compare the effectiveness of mentoring programs with different facilitation levels (e.g., high facilitated vs. low facilitated). By comparing formal mentoring programs to a nonparticipating control we may develop more confidence about the potential for a causal linkage between the mentoring participation and mentoring outcomes.

Outcomes Associated with Formal Mentoring

Our study explores the impact of high and low facilitation of formal mentoring programs on three outcomes: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance we explore the concepts in relationship to mentoring in the following sections.

Job Satisfaction

This study explores whether facilitated mentoring relationships will have a positive effect on job satisfaction for women protégés. Job satisfaction is characteristically defined as an employee's affective reactions to a job based on comparing espoused outcomes with actual outcomes (Cranny et al., 1992). Job satisfaction is commonly acknowledged as a multifaceted construct involving both intrinsic and extrinsic job elements (Howard & Frick, 1996). Porter and Steers (1973) argued that employees anticipate that their jobs will provide a blend of aspects (e.g., pay, promotion, or autonomy) to which the employee assigns preferences. The ranking of these preferences differ across individuals, but if expectations go unmet for an extended period, satisfaction is diminished and the probability for withdrawal behavior increases (Pearson, 1991). Some who study job satisfaction focus on its influence on employee commitment, absenteeism, intentions to quit, and actual turnover (Agho et al., 1993).

There are apparently few studies exploring associations between job satisfaction and mentoring and only four studies that compare employee participants in facilitated mentoring programs to employees reporting they have no mentor. In their meta-analysis focusing mentoring outcomes, Allen, Eby et al. (2002) identified ten mentoring studies utilizing job satisfaction as a dependent variable. These studies identified positive relationships between mentoring and job satisfaction. According to Ragins (1999), men and women do not differ in their increased job satisfaction reactions in association to mentoring experiences. However, comparisons between groups of employees with formal mentors to those without mentors, found no difference between groups with regard to job satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992). It is important to note that the findings in both of the aforementioned studies combined and compared groups from different organizations where the designs and quality of the programs are not described, but are assumed to be similar. Ragins et al. (2000) were unable to identify differences between protégés in formal and informal mentoring relationships in relation to their job satisfaction. In one of only four studies examining an employee-protégé group participating in a formal mentoring program with employees in the same organization without a mentor, increases in job satisfaction were identified in a group participating in formal mentoring relationships over the non-mentored group (Siebert, 1999).

Based on previous findings about the relationship between mentoring and job satisfaction, we proposed in the study a hypothesis associated with this relationship:

HYPOTHESIS 1a. Women participating in high and low facilitated mentoring programs will, on average, have higher job satisfaction than those not in a program.

A formal mentoring program with more facilitation is intended to provide a stronger and more positive impact on protégés' than the mentoring program with less facilitation, therefore, we proposed that:

HYPOTHESIS 1b. For women participating in a high facilitated formal mentoring program, the level of job satisfaction will be higher than those participating in the low facilitated formal mentoring program.

Organizational Commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1997), employee organizational commitment has been defined in a number of ways including as a process by which the goals of the organization and those of the individual become congruent, an attitude or an orientation that links the identity of the person to the organization, the costs associated with leaving an organization, the perceived rewards associated with continued involvement with an organization, and normative

pressures to behave in a manner consistent with organizational goals. Overall, three major elements are most prevalent in the organizational commitment literature: a moral obligation to remain with the organization, commitment reflecting an affective identification with the organization, and recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization.

Research is fairly consistent in finding an association between being a protégé and favorable outcomes (Wanberg, et al, 2003). In a comparison of those individuals who had mentors and those that did not, the individuals with mentors often have more positive subjective outcomes including career satisfaction, job satisfaction, career commitment, and intention to stay at their organization (Allen, Eby, et al., 2002). Donaldson, et al., (2000) found that high quality mentoring relationship correlated with organizational commitment.

In two separate studies, Ragins and Cotton (1999; 2000) found evidence of increased organization commitment associated with mentoring. In the earlier study, it was found that individuals with satisfying formal mentoring relationship had higher levels of organization commitment than those without mentors. In the next, study both informal and formal mentoring relationships were addressed. No difference in organization commitment between protégés in an informal or formal mentoring program were identified. In addition, the study found that levels of organization commitment were higher in both groups compared with those individuals who did not have a mentor.

Few studies have examined organizational commitment as an outcome variable for formal mentoring programs or mentoring relationships. Donaldson et al. (2000) found high quality mentoring relationships to be associated with organizational commitment and self-reported levels of organizational citizenship behaviors. Ragins and Cotton (1999) found individuals with satisfying formal mentoring relationships had higher levels of organizational commitment than those without mentors. Ragins and Cotton (2000) found no differences between satisfied protégés in formal or informal mentoring relationships and their levels of organizational commitment, but found higher levels for both groups as compared to those without mentors. Two hypotheses associated with organizational commitment were forwarded in this study:

HYPOTHESIS 2a. Women participating in the high and low facilitated formal mentoring program will have greater organizational commitment than those not in the program at the time of the posttest.

HYPOTHESIS 2b. Women participating in the high facilitated formal mentoring program will have greater organizational commitment than those in the low facilitated mentoring group.

Job Performance

Despite this identified need for exploration of performance results in the HRD literature (Holton, 2002), few studies have focused on direct measures of job performance in relation to mentoring participation and no studies have been identified which use managerial or organizational reported measures of protégé performance. Wanberg et al. (2003) emphasize that the “well-established linkages between ability, conscientiousness, motivation, and job performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998) and between ability, motivation, and objective career success (Tharenou, 1997) support the need for research that carefully examines the association of mentoring to career success outcomes above and beyond protégé ability, motivation, and other individual.” (p. 14).

Wanberg et al. (2003) found only one study focusing on mentoring performance outcomes. Green and Bauer (1995) identified a significant zero-order correlation between production of published work and participation in informal mentoring, but these results were not significant in a multivariate context in which protégé ability and commitment were controlled. Job performance was used as a control by Day and Allen (2002) who explored mediating effects of career motivation and self-efficacy between mentoring provided and protégé outcomes. Career motivation was found to mediate fully the relationship between self-reported performance effectiveness and involvement in mentoring. Because of the absence of studies exploring the impact of mentoring on performance, this study has the potential to make an initial contribution in the exploration of performance and mentoring interactions.

We proposed two hypotheses associated with performance ratings in this study:

HYPOTHESIS 3a. Women participating in the high and low facilitated formal mentoring program will have performance ratings from their managers greater than those not in the program.

HYPOTHESIS 3b. Women participating in the high facilitated formal mentoring program will have higher performance ratings at the posttest than those in the low facilitated mentoring group.

Method

The following section details the specifics of the study such as: research setting and participants, the facilitated mentoring program, research design and procedure, and the measures used.

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted within a large metropolitan hospital in the central US. Those who qualified to be included in the mentoring program were 121 employees who worked with the organization for at least six months,

but no more than 24 months. Among these 121 individuals, 109 filled out both pretest and posttest surveys (90 % completion rate). The following analyses were based on these 109 participants. The average age of the sample was 28.3 years old ($SD=2.83$) and average previous work experience was 7.1 years ($SD=3.02$). 8.6 percent of the study participants had associate degrees, 88.5 percent has Bachelor's degrees and the remaining had attained Master's degrees. In the report of demographics, 76.1 percent reported themselves as Caucasian, 10.5 as African American, 7.3 as Latino, 4.4 as Asian and 1.6 as Native American. One hundred percent of the sample was female.

The Facilitated Formal Mentoring Program

The facilitated formal mentor program was part of a larger effort to increase employee satisfaction and organizational commitment while reducing turnover. Mentors internal to the organization were recruited to participate in the program. Following the identification of 121 prospective participants, protégé participation was strongly encouraged and based largely on the commitment by top management in combination with support for participation by prospective protégés' managers. Because of a limited number of mentors, all employees eligible and interested in participation were not provided an opportunity to be paired with a mentor during the six-month period identified for the implementation of the mentoring efforts under study.

Employees were sorted and randomly assigned to one of two groups—high facilitated or low facilitated. Those unable to participate or whose program participation was postponed due to a limited number of mentors became the control group for the study. Protégés assigned to participate in a high or low facilitated mentoring program were assigned to a mentor based on a matching process facilitated by internal HRD practitioners. Before the beginning of the program, all mentors and protégés were informed regarding the expectation that mentors and protégés meet regularly over a six-month period (no specific number of expected meetings was identified). Mentors and protégés were not expected to commit to any interaction beyond the six-month period. The program appeared to be well supported, designed and implemented including: upper level managerial support for the program, clearly defined and communicated objectives, experienced mentors with solid performance records, and clear expectations communicated to mentors and protégés (Kram & Bragar, 1992). Subsequent program evaluations were positive and several measures supported the overall effectiveness of the program. 84.2 percent of protégés reported meeting with their mentors once or more than once per month. Protégés reported that they were, on average, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” (mean = 4.37 $SD = 0.71$ on a five-point scale) with the mentor-protégé relationships.

The major differences between the high and low facilitated mentoring groups involved different participation expectations and actions by the protégés in the high facilitated mentoring group versus the low facilitated group. Both groups participated in a program kickoff meeting where they were mentor-protégé pairs were introduced and were given time to get to know one another. Similarly, both groups participated in an end of program gathering where they were asked to again meet in pairs to discuss the challenges and growth that occurred during the six-month long program. Although both groups were provided written information regarding mentoring and goal setting, the high facilitated group of protégés was asked to meet for one hour once per month during the program to have a “brown bag lunch discussion.” Facilitated by an HRD practitioner, this meeting included approximately fifteen minutes of structured discussion about the printed information provided to all protégés on mentoring and goal setting, and an unstructured discussion focused on how the protégé relationships were going with their mentors.

Research Design and Procedure

This study uses a version of a randomly assigned pretest–posttest nonequivalent control group design. One hundred twenty-one employees were randomly assigned to one of three groups of high facilitated mentoring, low facilitated mentoring, and the control group. Twelve of 121 participants later dropped from the study. The final numbers of participants in the high facilitated mentoring group, low facilitated mentoring group, and the control group were 38, 43, and 28 respectively. Questionnaires were administered prior to program participation and immediately following the official termination of the formal mentoring programs six months later. Data on the demographic, control, and outcome variables were collected from all study participants on the time 1 questionnaire. Data on the control and outcome variables was collected again at time 2 from all study participants

Questionnaire packets were provided to mentoring program participants in intraorganizational mail. Each packet included a letter and study questionnaire emphasizing that participant data would remain anonymous and that respondents would be making a contribution to the organization's understanding of new employee development needs. Participants were asked to bring survey responses to the mentoring program “kickoff” meeting. Those failing to bring the survey were provided one at the meeting. A very few non-attendees sent their surveys into the organization's human resource office via internal organizational mail. Control group members received a similar packet through intraorganizational mail and returned it through the same means within the same timeframe as the participant groups. The time two protocol occurred in the same manner in correspondence with the six-month large group program completion meetings occurring on consecutive days during the same return timeframe as the control group return dates.

Measures

Job satisfaction was measured using the three item overall job satisfaction measure developed by Cammann, Fichman et al., (1983). Responses were obtained on a seven point Likert-type scale (1 =strongly disagree and 7 =strongly agree). A sample item is “in general, I like working here.” In the current study, the Cronbach alphas coefficient values for the measure were .83 and .87 at the pretest and posttest respectively.

Organizational commitment was measured using affiliation commitment items from the organizational commitment scale (OCS) developed by Balfour and Wechsler (1996). Responses were obtained on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). An example item is “I feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization.” the coefficient alphas values were .85 and .88 at the pretest and posttest.

The *job performance* measures were evaluated by the managers of each protégé and were part of the numerical performance rating utilized by internal human resources. The three items used in this study focused on employee productivity and performance and were rated by each protégé’s manager on a 5-point Likert type scale (5 = exceptional to 1 = unacceptable). The reliability coefficients were .84 and .86 at the pretest and posttest.

Five *demographic variables* were included to assess equivalence between groups. Respondents were asked to report their *age in years*, *years of previous work experience*, and *number of months with the company*, on the blanks provided. They were asked to mark the appropriate category to indicate their *level of educational attainment* (high school through doctoral degree), and *race*.

Results

Table 1 provides matrix of intercorrelations for all measured variables at both pretest and posttest. The group differences of measures at pretest were assessed by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). No significant multivariate effect was detected (the Wilks’ multivariate $F(6, 296) = .24, p=.93$). Multiple comparison Bonferroni tests for each variable also showed that time 1 values were not significantly different across three groups. These tests provide evidences to support that three groups were equivalent at the pretest.

Table 1. *Intercorrelations Among Studied Variables.*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Pretest Job satisfaction	.81						
2 Posttest Job satisfaction	.76	.88					
3 Pretest Organizational commitment	.72	.55	.80				
4 Posttest Organizational commitment	.47	.82	.72	.82			
5 Pretest Manager performance rating	.46	.43	.25	.31	.87		
6 Posttest Manager performance rating	.44	.52	.21	.41	.90	.90	
7 Number of mentoring meetings	.21	.25	.19	.23	.36	.35	--

Note. Cronbach alphas are on the diagonal. N=109 for interactions among variables 1-6. N=81 for interactions among variable 7.

To assess the effects of mentoring, we used the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), with the posttest measures as the dependent variables, mentoring group status as independent variable, and pretest measures as the covariates. Significant multivariate effects were detected for the covariates, Wilks’ multivariate $F(12, 443.39) = 158.27, p<.01$. A significant group effect was also obtained, Wilks’ multivariate $F(6, 283) = 8.77, p<.01$.

To evaluate the effect of the mentoring group on individual outcome variable, we conducted a series of univariate analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling pretest measure. Significant effects emerged for all three dependent measures. More specifically, $F(2, 151) = 24.03, p<.01$ for job satisfaction; $F(2, 151) = 26.51, p<.01$ for organizational commitment; $F(2, 151) = 17.33, p<.01$ for person-organization fit; $F(2, 151) = 13.86, p<.01$ for manager’s performance rating.

Based on the above ANCOVA models, Bonferroni tests with adjusted marginal means were conducted to simultaneously compare outcome measures for three groups, controlling for the pretest measures. For the job satisfaction, employees in high facilitated group demonstrated higher values than the low facilitated group, and both two groups had higher values than the control group: (adjusted mean=16.82, 15.46, and 14.79, respectively, all $ps<.01$). Employees who received high facilitated mentoring demonstrated higher organizational commitment than the low facilitated mentoring, and both mentoring group ratings were higher than the control group: (adjusted mean=14.44, 12.16, and 11.43, respectively, all $ps<.01$). Thus, hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b were fully supported. For the manager’s performance rating, employees who received high facilitated mentoring demonstrated higher ratings than the low facilitated mentoring and the control group (adjusted mean=11.84, 10.88, and 10.43,

respectively, both $p < .01$), which provide support for the hypothesis 3b, but the low facilitated mentoring was not significantly different from the control group, thus the hypothesis 3a was only partially supported.

Discussion

This study was the first known randomized longitudinal comparison of the effectiveness of high versus low facilitated mentoring programs on female protégés in a field setting. The results identified significant differences between groups associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Six months following the parallel launch of high and low facilitated programs, women who participated in the high facilitated mentoring program reported greater levels of job satisfaction organizational commitment, and manager performance ratings than the low facilitated group, and both mentoring groups were higher than their non mentored counterparts on the measures of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

These findings are consistent with previous correlational research demonstrating positive outcomes of mentoring on satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chao, 1997; Chao et al., 1992) and for the first time demonstrated the significant difference in performance ratings for high facilitated formal female mentoring participants and those without formal mentoring. Our results advance the study of the impact of formal mentoring programs because it does not share the threats to internal validity suffered by the majority of the mentoring literature, which uses non-experimental and non-randomized designs. The current study supports the conclusion that the positive effects of mentoring on protégé job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance, is likely a characteristic outcome of formal mentoring, and not the result of an implicit selection process on the part of the mentors or protégés. Additionally, support was provided for the notion that formal mentoring designs that engage mentoring program participants beyond the initial pairing and mentor-protégé introductions enhance desired program outcomes, in this case job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance.

Contributions to HRD

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). Mentoring can serve 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 (DeSimone & Harris, 1998). 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).

This study not only fills a gap in the literature on mentoring relationships, it improves upon the current literature available particularly in the area of women in mentoring. The design of this study is also important in improving the current literature in that few studies have an experimental design. The findings of this study will be effective in developing a better understanding of performance, organization commitment, and job satisfaction as it relates to mentoring relationships. By better understanding this perspective, HRD practitioners can utilize mentoring to improve the development and performance of professionals, particularly female professionals.

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