Mentorship-Driven Talent Management

The Asian Experience

Edited by
Payal Kumar & Pawan Budhwar
Mentorship-driven Talent Management
To date, studies of cultural differences between Western and Eastern models of mentoring have been sporadic. Payal Kumar and Pawan Budhwar have assembled eleven substantive chapters in which authors offer unique organizational case studies, as well as qualitative and quantitative studies of mentoring relationships in countries including India, Thailand, China, Japan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh. This is a ‘must read’ for scholars and practitioners who claim to be experts on mentoring in a global context.

Dr Kathy E. Kram
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Although mentoring is a critical developmental relationship, the field has been constrained by Euro-Western approaches and ideologies. This fine volume offers mentoring scholars needed insights into the unique experiences of mentoring within Asian contexts.

Dr Belle Rose Ragins
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Asian societies are high power distance in nature. I am delighted that Professors Kumar and Budhwar focus their book on mentoring in Asia, where respect and reverence are the norms and mentoring is much more than offering advance on career development. This edited volume offers unique insights into mentoring relationships across several Asian countries.

Dr Eddy Ng
James and Elizabeth Freeman Professor of Management
Bucknell University, Canada

This book unravels the dynamics of mentoring across various Asian cultures, from academic and practitioner perspectives. It brings to the fore contexts that have so far been given scant visibility in mentoring research. As such, the book brings fresh ideas and perspectives to developmental relationships, thereby validating, questioning, challenging and importantly putting in context the existing theories and frameworks of mentoring.

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Mentorship-driven Talent Management: The Asian Experience

EDITED BY

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To Professors Stacy Blakebeard, Simmons College (USA) – a friend and a trusted mentor, and Manish Singhal, XLRI (India) – thesis advisor and mentor (Payal Kumar)

To Professors Paul Sparrow, RD Pathak and Michael West (Pawan Budhwar)

To all those who believe in the significance of mentoring in present-day organizations.
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As I write this Foreword, I come straight from a meeting of senior coaches in Africa. The subject? How to escape from the cultural dominance by Western society of the concepts, theories and overall debate around coaching and mentoring. It’s a discussion I frequently find across the Asian region, too. While the words coach and mentor have their origins in Europe and have been given radically different interpretations from these origins in the United States in recent decades, the principles that underpin developmental dialogue belong to many cultures and often find their richest expression in the Asian region, from the gurus of India, to the Buddhist traditions of the Himalayan kingdoms, Southeast Asia and Japan.

In my recent travels in Central Asia, I was struck by the impact of medieval scholars, such as the astronomer Ulum Beg, grandson of Tamerlane, who stimulated learning as a way of life. A recurrent theme I observe in all the Asian cultures I have engaged with – brought home in particular in dialogue with monks in Laos and Myanmar – is that knowledge and self-knowledge are inseparable in creating a whole person. This is also the core of mentoring: by raising the level of self-awareness and awareness of the world around us, we are able to have powerful learning dialogues that link these worlds.

This diffusion of conceptual bases for mentoring is both a strength (in that people throughout the region can immediately associate with the core principles of listening, questioning and reflection) and a weakness because it opens the door for imposed definitions from other cultures. The word ‘mentoring’ is a relatively recent creation from the Anglo-Saxon world. The word ‘mentor’ comes from a character in The Odyssey. Although a dictionary definition of mentor is ‘a wise man’, the old man Mentor was by and large an incompetent. I am struck by the similarities with Nasiruddin, the wise fool of Central Asian culture. The ‘real’ mentor was Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, who allowed Odysseus to make mistakes, then sat with him to help him reflect and learn from his experiences. In effect, she used her wisdom to help him become wiser in turn. This role has much in common with that of a sage or guru in Asian cultures.

Athena had multiple personalities, resulting from the merging of many gods into one. In her role as Goddess of Martial Arts she was a brutal, vengeful bringer of retribution. US scholars in the 1960s and 1970s failed to appreciate the subtlety of these contrasting personae and lumped them into one. The result was that the mentoring role of stimulating wisdom became overshadowed by the largely incompatible role of a powerful and influential sponsor – someone, who took
action on the behalf of a protégé (someone who was protected). It is interesting to note that this culturally biased interpretation of mentoring occurred at a time when the United States was preoccupied with exercising its power and authority around the world. With cultural dominance comes the power to influence language – even in this book, which aims to be thought-liberating, some contributors refer to protégé rather than more accurate mentee (one who is helped to think).

In doing so, the US scholars also ignored the more recent history and evolution of mentoring, in which the French cleric Fenelon, appointed tutor to the son of Louis the XIV, continued the dialogues of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, with Odysseus’ son, in a book titled simply Telemachus. One of the first books on leadership of modern times, and translated into many languages, it established the principles of reflective dialogue as the key to developing wise leaders.

In co-editing the book Coaching and Mentoring in Asia-Pacific – a project designed to illustrate the diversity of indigenous approaches within the region – my respect for the insights to be gained from Asian perspectives (in all their diversity) has deepened. For example, while I have researched and written on the role of laughter in learning dialogue, I had never comprehended the complexity of smiling as a vehicle to steer the conversation, until introduced to the concepts by a colleague in Thailand, where subtle variations in smiling may convey multiple meanings.

Engaging with other cultural traditions reveals that mentoring and coaching are complex, multi-faceted constructions heavily influenced by local traditions and cultural assumptions. For example:

- Many Asian cultures have a built-in reverence for age that both encourages people to seek to explore issues with someone older and wiser and at the same time inhibits open challenge from the younger person to the older. Good mentoring practice in Asia-Pacific therefore involves encouraging the younger person to challenge themselves. In contrast, there is an implicit assumption in much of Western mentoring that the mentor (or coach) does the challenging. My own practice has been enriched by recognizing that I have a choice in which of these routes I take.

- The simplistic Goal, Reality, Options and Will model popularized in Western coaching and often advocated in mentoring starts from the assumption that the person seeking help knows what they want and simply needs support in how to get there. One of the reasons GROW has been discredited is that effective coaching and mentoring result in changes of perception and identity that substantially change the person’s goals – so rigid pursuit of an initial goal is both pointless and potentially harmful. By contrast, one of my Chinese supervisees brought to me the case of a client, who typifies a perspective found commonly in the region. The client begins the learning dialogue by describing, bit by bit, the circumstances and context of an issue not yet defined. Working round it, meandering through the landscape of the issue, the client and the mentor both develop insights into the multiple systems in play. By the time the issue clarifies into a goal, the choices and decisions to be made are already evident. There are pluses and minuses with both of these approaches, but I conclude that the
greatest value lies in being able to step outside the rigidity of a single, culturally bounded approach and *work with wherever the client is coming from.*

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It is heartening to see the chapters in this pioneering volume present a diversity of national and cultural perspectives along with a range of applications. This edited volume has been divided into three themes: country reviews, perspectives and case studies (which will be useful to use in teaching purposes). The country reviews of Indonesia, Japan and Thailand (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) are important stepping stones towards creating and valuing national identities for mentoring. Gender-based mentoring and reverse mentoring (Chapters 6 and 8, studies from Malaysia and India) have emerged as major forces for social change. Other chapters emphasize issues that are of particular significance in an Asian economic context – for example, Chapter 9 explores mentoring in the context of family businesses in Bangladesh, a relatively unexplored theme in the Western world. Other countries that are covered are China and Pakistan. There is an also an interesting perspective of the challenges in India faced by a female European coach.

For a mentor or mentor trainer in Asia, it cannot be healthy to allow their practice to be defined solely by cultural assumptions from the West – not least, because so much ‘good practice’ can be challenged on the basis of lack of evidence. For example, the notion that coaches and mentors should take copious notes flies in the face of all the evidence from research into attentiveness and neuroscience. (It also puts the power of the relationship firmly in the hands of the mentor, not the mentee.)

One of the reasons for the sudden rapid emergence of an Asia-Pacific chapter of the European Coaching and Mentoring Council is pushback by serious practitioners against formulaic approaches to accreditation and standards by the largest of the global professional bodies in the field.1 The great danger with standardization at a global level is that it marginalizes the majority of cultures, expecting them to conform to the mores of one or two dominant cultures. Contextual differences are there and need to be acknowledged and respected.

Equally, it cannot be healthy for Western mentors and coaches, or the research communities built around them, to ignore the wealth of insights into learning dialogue from other cultures, nor to discount the value of diversity of approach. Indeed, not to do so is a negation of two of the core principles of mentoring – curiosity about other world views, seeking diverse perceptions that open up different choices.

Hence the importance of this book. It is not enough just to challenge the cultural dominance of coaching and mentoring by the West, which is what I have been saying for long (Clutterbuck, Kochan, Lunsford, Dominguez, & Haddock-Millar, 2017). It is equally important to engage in dialogue that can benefit mentoring practice in all parts of the world. This edited volume – the first of its kind – does just that. Kudos to the volume editors Prof. Payal Kumar and

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1The oldest of the professional bodies in the field of coaching and mentoring, created in 1991 to bring together academics and practitioners.
Prof. Pawan Budhwar for taking the pains to bring out this volume on Asian mentoring experiences. In effective mentoring, all parties learn. Indeed, one of the most accurate measures of mentoring quality is how much of a learning exchange has taken place. It is, in my view, imperative that we maintain this principle of collaborative learning across cultures in the development of mentoring practice, in accreditation, in research and in how we build the global mentoring community. Anything less would be hypocritical!

David Clutterbuck, July 2019

Professor Clutterbuck, a leading global authority on coaching and mentoring, has authored 70 books. He is the Special Ambassador, European Mentoring and Coaching Council; and Visiting Professor, Henley Business School, UK.

Reference

Chapter 1

Contextualizing Mentoring in the Asian Context

Payal Kumar and Pawan Budhwar

Abstract
Research on mentorship has been dominated by the West and little is known about the cultural variations of the mentoring phenomenon in Asian countries. A richer understanding of the cultural context that is more attuned to mentoring experience in Asia can help to improve workplace experience, in general, for those working in and for those who intend to work in the region. This chapter captures the important theoretical lenses in the mentoring literature, and also provides a clear demarcation between negative mentoring and dysfunctional mentoring. This is followed by contextualizing mentoring as per four of Hofstede’s six cultural dimensions by dwelling on mentoring experience in countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. It is hoped that this chapter will pave the way for further research, which may be a precursor for theory development.

Keywords: Asian countries; defining mentoring; negative and dysfunctional mentoring; Hofstede’s cultural dimensions; contextualizing mentoring; mentoring relationships

Introduction
Scholars are increasingly questioning the positivist trend of decontextualizing human resource management (HRM) from the social-historical context of the workplace (Clutterbuck & Ragins, 2002; Cooke, Wood, Wang, & Veen, 2019; Knights & Omanović, 2016). More and more studies suggest that cultural context does impact strategic HR initiatives differently, implying that business leaders and scholars would need to be aware of what makes development, training and competency initiatives thrive in a particular cultural context under the influence of larger historical and social structures (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015; Budhwar, Varma, & Patel, 2016; Srikanth & Jomon, 2015). In a recent
study on oneness behaviours – based on the understanding of an inherent unity of self with others – cultural differences were even found in scale validity (Aşkun, Sharma, & Çetin, 2019).

Within the HRM framework, research on mentorship has been dominated by the West (Budhwar & Debrah, 2009; Chandler, Kram, & Yip, 2011) and little is known about the cultural variations of the mentoring phenomenon. This raises many questions, including that of generalizability of the existing understanding on the topic of mentoring. In this regard, Prof G. F. Dreher of Kelley School of Business, USA, enquires: ‘Can the observed correlational or cause-effect relationships that make up the mentoring literature be generalized beyond low power distance western cultures?’

While some studies on mentoring are emerging in Asian countries such as China (Wang, Noe, Wang, & Greenberger, 2009), South Korea (Joo, 2019) and India (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012; Kumar, 2018a), in order to move the field forward there is a strong need for more research. Heeding the call for mentoring relationships to be studied across cultures (Clutterbuck, Kochan, Lunsford, Dominguez, & Haddock-Millar, 2017), it is hoped that this edited volume (Mentorship-driven talent management: The Asian experience) will add value and fill an important gap in the existing literature. Given that Asian countries have unique social contexts, for example, they are known to be high power distance cultures where protégés tend to perceive the mentor to be more of a paternalistic figurehead, it is expected that the chapters in this volume will both consolidate and add new elements to existing scholarship.

More and more global businesses are looking towards Asia, resulting in this continent’s economic rise over the last five decades (Nayyar, 2019). For practitioners (within Asia and also for those planning to work in the region), a richer understanding of the cultural context that is more attuned to the mentor and protégé experience in Asia can help to improve workplace experience in general. Till date, there has been no publication that covers the range of mentoring experiences in Asia. This edited volume aims to provide a deeper understanding of the contextual interpretation of mentoring by focusing on the Asian experience in countries such as China, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

This chapter begins with definitions of mentoring, negative mentoring and dysfunctional mentoring. This is followed by a description of different variables in the Asian context that can influence mentoring. Thereafter, there is a precis of chapters in this book, ending with a discussion on further areas of research to build upon.

**Background to Mentoring as a Practice**

While mentorship had been practiced for centuries, the word ‘mentor’, meaning a trusted counsellor, was popularized by Francis Fénelon in his 1,699 book – Les Aventures de Télémaque. Historically, the practice of mentorship dates as far back

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1An excerpt from the book endorsement of Kumar (2018b).
as the ancient Greek mythological times. Since then, many mentors have counselled and coached the young and inexperienced in various fields spanning philosophy, military, sports and education. Notable thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have been part of a direct mentoring lineage (Cheatham, 2010).

Another ancient mentoring developmental relationship is the classical Indian guru–shishya (teacher–disciple) tradition. This relationship too involves a teaching–learning process, but there are differences when compared to organizational mentoring in the management literature, in terms of the nature of the relationship, the outcomes expected and the duration of the relationship (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). For example, in terms of the nature of the relationship, in the guru–shishya relationship, the disciple is on the path of spiritual self-discovery and his relationship with the guru is based on absolute trust and obedience.

Scholarly interest in this phenomenon in the management literature arose following some path-breaking studies in the 1970s and 1980s from different domains, all pointing to the importance of mentoring. In the field of education, Chickering’s (1969) conceptual study posited that informal student–faculty interaction positively influenced students both in terms of their intellectual development and in building their self-image. Later, in Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee’s empirical study on 40 adults, mentoring emerged as a critical factor for overall well-being in the context of transition from childhood to adulthood (1978).

Sociologists came to a similar conclusion about the positive outcome of mentoring in their landmark ethnographic study of 900 low-income urban youth, which suggested that mentorship was vital for youth development (Williams & Kornblum, 1985). In this study of teenagers seemingly trapped in poverty, it was found that with the help of a mentor, some of the youth were able to build their self-esteem and opt for a course of life that would steer them away from self-destructive trajectories of street life. Furthermore, developmental psychologists in a study of 700 high-risk children who were tracked over a 30-year period suggested that the children who succeeded in life had an ability to locate another adult as support, apart from their parents (Werner & Smith, 1982). In other words, those children who developed into competent adults had at least one supportive adult to turn to for emotional support apart from family members.

Management practitioners’ interest in this phenomenon continued to surge after two descriptive articles in Harvard Business Review which linked mentoring to the protégé’s professional growth, namely ‘Everyone who makes it has a mentor’ (Lunding, Clements, & Perkins, 1978), and another article that reported that two-thirds of almost 4,000 executives listed in the ‘Who’s News’ of the Wall Street Journal had a mentor (Roche, 1979), suggesting that those with a mentor earned more and were more satisfied in their job. Subsequently, Kathy Kram’s pioneering study of 18 mentor–protégé dyads (1985) proved to be a trigger for a burgeoning scholarship on mentoring in the workplace.

In more modern times, the relevance of mentoring in the management literature is growing, especially since studies suggest that mentoring is not only associated with positive instrumental outcomes such as managers’ salary level and promotions
(Barnes, 2004), but also with the job and career satisfaction of a protégé (Day & Allen, 2004; Lankau & Scandura, 2002). In other words, available research evidence suggests that mentoring plays an important role not only in the career progression of the protégé, but also in the reduction of stress (Blake-Beard, 2003) and an affirmation of the protégé’s self-worth (Gibson, 2004). Effective mentoring is also said to lead to more affect-driven constructs such as better socialization and psychological adjustment for newcomers in the firm, which in turn leads to greater job retention (Hamlin & Sage, 2011), and also to a more fulfilling relationship with the mentor (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003).

Defining Mentoring

The definition of mentoring in Kram’s (1985) study is possibly the most highly cited in literature (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2002; Ragins, Ehrhardt, Lyness, Murphy, & Capman, 2016). Kram describes mentoring as consisting of developmental assistance provided to a protégé by a more experienced organizational member in the form of career and psycho-social guidance (see Table 1). Since then, some scholars have suggested that the definition of mentoring needs to be widened in scope to include networking as a distinct function (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001), or that role modelling should be a third sub-construct of mentoring rather than be included as a part of the psycho-social construct (Scandura, 1992).

However, other scholars and practitioners have defined mentoring in multiple ways, which has led to a certain amount of conceptual looseness of the construct (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). In fact, there is a lack of alignment about the fundamental nature of mentoring. For example, is mentoring best conceptualized as task-centred, social support-centred or career guidance-centred (O’Neill & Sankowsky, 2001)? Furthermore, there are also varying interpretations as to how long the process of mentorship should last (Chandler et al., 2011). There are also divergent views on whether the mentoring relationship is an intense, personal one (Chun, Litzky, Sosik, Bechtold, & Godshalk, 2010; Kram, 1985), or a less emotional one depending on which culture one is from (Bozionelos, 2006).

Given the large amount of information on mentoring, the literature search was narrowed down to predominantly mentoring in the workplace, from the literature of the late 1970s up to the present day. For the review of the literature, multiple sources were sought in order to compile data, including online databases such as EBSCOhost and JSTOR, which provide peer-reviewed journal articles and also articles from more popular sources. Apart from journal articles, and also relevant theses and dissertations on this topic from the Open Access Theses and Dissertations site (https://oatd.org/), existing meta-analyses on mentoring were also drawn upon (for example, Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Eby, Allen, et al., 2008; Eby et al., 2013; Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; O’Brien, Biga, Kessler, & Allen, 2008; Underhill, 2006) and so too were relevant handbooks on mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2011; DuBois & Karcher, 2013; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Lancer, Clutterbuck, & Magginson, 2016; Lunsford, 2016; Ragins & Kram, 2007).
In spite of the conceptual looseness of the mentoring construct, there are some cohesive dimensions too.

Although definitions of mentoring have been scrutinized, debated, and criticized by scholars, it is possible to identify several key features of mentoring relationships and to place some loose boundaries on what is often a fairly fuzzy construct. (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007, p. 17)

Below are some key features of workplace mentoring relationships to be found in the literature:

- Mentoring is a unique relationship between individuals, with some relationships being life-altering (Levinson et al., 1978), and others destructive (Scandura, 1998). Mentoring relationships are also complex, especially in formal mentoring relationships given that relationships develop in the midst of other organizational commitments during time-constrained programmes (Eby & Robertson, 2019; Wanberg, Welsh, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007).
- Mentoring provides two types of functions to the protégé, broadly classified as career-related and psycho-social (Kram, 1985).

### Table 1. Career and Psycho-social Functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Functions</th>
<th>Psycho-social Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship: The mentor opens doors that would otherwise have been closed.</td>
<td>Role modeling: The mentor demonstrates the kinds of behaviour, attitudes and values that lead to success in the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: The mentor teaches and provides feedback.</td>
<td>Counselling: The mentor helps the protégé deal with difficult professional dilemma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection: The mentor supports the protégé and/or acts as a buffer.</td>
<td>Acceptance and confirmation: The mentor supports the protégé and shows respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge: The mentor encourages new ways of thinking and acting, and pushes the protégé to stretch his or her capabilities. Exposure and visibility: The mentor steers the protégé into assignments that make him or her known to top management.</td>
<td>Friendship: The mentor demonstrates personal caring that goes beyond business requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Kram (1983).
Mentoring is a dynamic process which unfolds over time (Garvey & Alred, 2003; Zachary, 2005), the impact of which is said to increase with the passage of time. Not only do healthy mentoring relationships develop over time, but problematic ones do too.

Mentoring is a form of social learning in the form of socialization, a process by which protégés learn attitudes and behaviours needed to participate as organizational members (McDowall-Long, 2004).

Mentoring consists of formal and informal relationships: In formal relationships the mentor and protégé are assigned to work together for a specified time, with set goals; whereas, informal mentoring relationships develop more spontaneously, largely out of mutual identification and interpersonal comfort (Young, Cady, & Foxon, 2006).

Thus, the definition of mentoring has evolved over the years, especially in light of the positive organizational scholarship movement (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). There has been a noticeable shift in the manner in which mentoring has been construed, from the traditional, hierarchical, one-way relationship, to more of a relational approach in which mentoring includes interdependent relationships that enable mutual learning (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Weinberg, 2019). Researchers are increasingly turning their attention towards alternative dyadic relational models, including peer coaching (Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008; Parker, Hall, Kram, & Wasserman, 2018), peer mentoring (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003), reverse mentoring (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012; Meister & Willyerd, 2010) and e-mentoring (Ensher & Murphy, 2007).

Relational mentoring extends beyond the classical instrumental and psychosocial functions, to encompass relational processes such as reciprocity; behaviour such as empathy; and relational outcomes that help develop future relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). In other words, while a host of studies indicate that there are several positive instrumental and career-related protégé outcomes of mentoring such as compensation, promotion and perceived career success (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008; Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge, 2008; Ng, Eby, Sorenson, & Feldman, 2005; Underhill, 2006), researchers over the years have extended the range of mentoring outcomes to include subjective states in the mentoring relationship like protégé well-being (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2006). So, apart from instrumental (distal) outcomes, there are increasing studies on relational (proximal) outcomes too (Wanberg et al., 2003).

In the next section, we shall describe ineffective mentoring relationships from the protégé perspective. Often in the literature, the constructs ‘negative mentoring’ and ‘dysfunctional mentoring’ are used interchangeably. In this section we make a clear demarcation between the two.

**Defining Ineffective Mentoring Relationships**

Kathy Kram had warned against simplifying mentoring as a positive experience: ‘...it is argued that the potential value of a mentor relationship is limited and that, indeed, a relationship of this kind can become destructive’ (Kram, 1983, p. 608).
Subsequently, in her qualitative study of 18 mentoring dyads she observed that one mentoring relationship was noticeably ‘destructive’ (Kram, 1985, p. 10). Yet, since her seminal studies, there has not been much research on ineffective mentoring relationships. Rather, this is a fairly new development in the literature, with an increasing number of studies associating mentoring with epithets such as ‘dysfunctional’, ‘toxic’, ‘negative’ and ‘marginal’ (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008; Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Wu, Turban, & Cheung, 2012).

Mentoring scholars often describe positive and negative mentoring relationships along a continuum, with each relationship consisting of a range of experiences, some proving to be life-altering in a positive way, and others destructive. Effective mentoring relationships are said to be at the one end of the continuum, while truly dysfunctional ones are at the other end (see Fig. 1). Neutral relationships known as ‘marginal mentoring relationships’ are said to rest somewhere near the middle of the continuum, and are said to neither help nor harm the protégé (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000, p. 1178).

There is a lack of clarity at the far end of the continuum when it comes to ineffective mentoring relationships, with references in the literature to either negative mentoring experiences or dysfunctional mentoring experiences (and at times these terms are used interchangeably). There is little consensus as to how these two constructs are defined and thus differentiated from each other.

For a better understanding of ineffective mentoring relationships, predominant references from the management literature to negative mentoring and dysfunctional mentoring relationships have been listed in Table 2 and thereafter analyzed by categorizing them as per Duck’s classification of experiences based on both intent and outcome (1994). In Duck’s 2 × 2 typology, the two categories of the classical mentoring definition of Kram, namely vocational and psycho-social, are associated with bad intent towards the other or good intent, leading to four types of destructive relationships (negative relations, sabotage, difficulty and spoiling, e.g. betrayal).

In order to demarcate the boundary conditions of these constructs and help establish construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955), four essential differences between negative mentoring relationships and dysfunctional mentoring relationships are detailed as follows.

(1) **Mentoring outcomes:** Dysfunctional mentoring relationships are those in which the outcomes are almost exclusively negative, including damage to the protégé in terms of both negative personal interactions (Eby & McManus, 2004) and goal attainment (O’Neill & Sankowsky, 2001). On the other hand, a negative mentoring relationship for the protégé can be a mixture of negative and positive experiences (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Kumar & Blake-Beard, 2012).
Table 2. Definitions of Ineffective Mentoring Relationships for the protégé.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intent</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Negative mentoring relationships**

These (ineffective relationships) are marked by problems relating to one another which can lead to the premature termination of a relationship or feelings of disappointment or regret. However, ineffective relationships are distinct from dysfunctional ones because there is no bad intent expressed, and they do not seriously damage the mentor or protégé (Scandura, 1998). For example, functional, well-intentioned mentoring can lead to poor learning outcomes for the protégé if the relationship lacks mutuality (Weinberg, 2019).

Duck (1994) had said that negative mentoring experiences should not be conceptualized simply as a ‘deviation from the positive, but (rather) a phenomenon that also composes the totality of relational experiences’ (p. 5). The experiences can be both good and bad, in various degrees (Eby, Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010).

A protégé may experience both positive and negative experiences with the same mentor, e.g. a mentor could provide the protégé with greater visibility in the organization, yet also engage in manipulative work by taking credit for the protégé’s work or acting tyrannically (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004).