

The Influence of Career and Psychosocial Mentoring on Affective Institutional Commitment, Job commitment and Employee turnover-With a Focus on IT Employees

Dr.Venu Arelly

Professor, Department of Humanities and Science,
Christu Jyothi institute of technology and science Jangaon Warangal,India

Abstract- This study focuses on the relationships between career and psychosocial mentoring, and the employee outcomes of affective institution commitment (AIC), job commitment, and employee turnover. The relationships between psychosocial mentoring and the employee outcomes of AIC and employee turnover were significant. Building from affective events theory, it is found that AIC mediated the relationship between psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover. The study emphasizes the importance of emotion and affect by showing that employees who experienced positive mentoring events at work exhibited higher levels of AIC, which in turn led to reduced employee turnover.

Keywords - Career mentoring, Effective institutional commitment, Job commitment, employee turnover.

I Introduction

The outcomes of mentoring relationships have been studied widely for decades, with the majority of empirical research being done in the private sector (e.g., Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Packard, 2003). Traditionally, scholars have focused on the benefits associated with mentoring; however, a growing body of literature highlights the negative aspects associated with implementing and maintaining mentoring relationships (e.g., Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008; Scandura, 1998). Individuals involved in formal and informal mentoring programs may see positive, negative, and/or neutral outcomes

This study takes place in a private enterprise i.e., IT industry and seeks to replicate private sector results. With the exception of relatively few studies, mentoring research in the private sector has been limited (Reid, Allen, et al., 2008). Replication studies are important, given the range of differences IT employees face in public and private enterprises.

The majority of mentoring literature has focused on objective issues such as employee salary or promotion (e.g., Allen et al., 2004; Joiner, Bartram, & Garreffa, 2004) rather than on more intrinsic issues such as affective institutional commitment (AIC) or job commitment. Ofcourse, emotional reactions and subjective issues do matter. Research has demonstrated a mixed relationship between employee AIC and job commitment (e.g., Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), and shown these work attitudes to provide predictive value in reducing employee turnover.

Given the importance of emotions, this study discusses the utility of affective events theory (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) in enhancing our understanding of employee perceptions and reactions. In this study, we examine the relationships that career and psychosocial mentoring potentially have with AIC, job commitment, and employee turnover. The previous mentoring research has demonstrated a positive relationship with various employee outcomes, including low employee turnover and high AIC levels.

However, the link between mentoring and job commitment has been largely overlooked. Few studies have examined the relationships between mentoring and AIC, job commitment, and employee turnover in the context of the private sector, in IT enterprises.

In addition, the current study examines the possible mediating role that AIC plays between psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover. With the exception of the longitudinal study conducted by Payne and Huffman (2005), where AIC acted as a partial mediator between mentoring and employee turnover, the mentoring literature has primarily focused on direct relationships between antecedents and consequences. The study moves in this newer direction by building on Payne and Huffman's (2005) research to test the impact that more complex relationships have on employee turnover. The study proposes that an employee's affective reaction to mentoring in the form of AIC will mediate the relationship between psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover.

In its most basic form, AET is based on the premise that when salient, emotionally driven events happen at work, employee affective reactions occur (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). These affective reactions in turn influence employee and institutional outcomes, such as job satisfaction or employee turnover rate.

Emotions play an important role in explaining how employees evaluate and respond to their workplaces. Although scholars investigating AET have not explored mentoring as an independent variable. Mentors can assist their juniors to process emotional reactions to workplace experiences, which can influence their emotional connection to their institutions.

The purpose and objectives of the study is essentially twofold: (a) to examine the more affective, or emotionally driven, aspects of mentoring and AIC as guided by AET and (b) to add further support to the positive role mentoring plays in the Private sector, IT enterprises.

II Review of Literature

Mentoring

It is the intense relationship between two people where a more experienced person (the mentor) helps the junior person by providing advice or modeling about career development issues as well as personal (psychosocial) support. We define mentoring "is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social thought, and psychosocial support understood by the juniors as related to professional career, work nature and job performance

Mentoring involves informal communication, usually face-to-face occurring over time "between someone perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less knowledge. A mentor is often seen by his or her junior as a resource person or counselor whose views and judgment are trusted and valued.

Mentoring has been linked with beneficial employee outcomes such as AIC, job commitment, and lower employee turnover. In this study, the relationships career and psychosocial mentoring have with three outcome variables: AIC, job commitment, and employee turnover.

B Career mentoring

Career mentoring, or career-related support, involves coaching, sponsorship, exposure, and protection of the lesser skilled junior. Career mentoring behaviors involve task-related aspects of work and are often positively linked to more objective measures of success. Benefits of career mentoring include extrinsic success factors such as compensation, promotion, and career growth. There exists a strong link between

career mentoring activities and positive employee outcomes including AIC, job commitment, and reduced employee turnover.

Individuals with high levels of job commitment tend to find career mentoring appealing and seek out such relationships. Most of IT the employees appear to face problems acquiring or benefiting from their career mentoring due to over work load, time and resource constraints, and high fatigue levels.

Employee career support or development opportunities influence voluntary turnover. In a study of skilled workers in public accounting firms, career development reduced employee turnover. Among the skilled employees they surveyed, Scandura and Viator (1994) found that limited career development opportunities had a stronger negative impact on employee turnover than psychosocial support. Because of the limited qualified workers with IT training and skills, employee employee turnover and the resulting turnover can have salient negative effects on institutions.

C Psychosocial Mentoring:

Psychosocial mentoring, explains “those aspects of the relationship that improves an individual’s sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role”.The advantages with psychosocial mentoring are affective outcomes like AIC or job commitment. Psychosocial mentoring includes intrinsic functions such as role modeling, acceptance, counseling, and friendship.

Because mentors provide their juniors with psychosocial support and opportunities for development, they contribute to the general satisfaction of juniors above and beyond the extrinsic rewards they can secure for their juniors.

The functions of psychosocial mentoring represent a deeper, more intense mentoring relationship and often depend more on relationship quality than on career function. Psychosocial mentoring may enhance an individual’s ability and effectiveness, help reduce work-related stress, emerge into a strong emotional bond between the mentor and the junior, and become a positive, happy and interpersonal relationship effect.

In public and private sector enterprises, psychosocial support has following advantages:

- positive junior outcomes
- employee satisfaction
- High commitment
- lowered employee turnover

The Most important research outcomes variables are discussed below

A Effective institutional commitment Job commitment, and Employee turnover

AIC is of particular interest in this study due to the emotional reactions employees may experience in response to psychosocial and career mentoring. AIC is defined as the “emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the institutions”. This definition highlights the emotional overtones of affective commitment.

In this study, we focus on how effective institutional commitment may result from formal and informal mentoring relationships.

AIC has been linked with multiple positive outcomes. The concept has demonstrated the strongest negative relationship relative to the other forms of institutional commitment (i.e., normative, continuance) with employee turnover and turnover itself.

B Job Commitment

Although not studied as widely as other work attitudes in relation to mentoring, job commitment has demonstrated significant relationships with various institutional phenomena such as employee turnover and job satisfaction. Job commitment can be described as an employee's psychological identification with and active participation in a job.

Considering the characteristics of mentoring relationships, adequate feedback and decreased job insecurity have shown positive relationships with employee job commitment. In a private sector setting, the interaction between job commitment and job satisfaction proved to be an important predictor of employee absenteeism.

C Employee turnover

Employee turnover is a well-established and commonly used term for actual turnover in various contexts, including the private enterprises sector and IT industry.

Characteristics of the private enterprises that can lead to employee turnover include political cycles, budgeting limitations, expanded service offerings with limited resources, and the tendency of IT projects to go over time and over budget. Further magnifying the outcomes associated with IT projects terminating due to political cycles, it is found that job insecurity was positively related to IT employee turnover. Turnover, particularly in a high-skilled IT environment, can have an immediate and negative impact on an institutions' success due to the shortage of qualified IT personnel.

More research on mentoring in a private enterprises of IT industry is needed because such relationships may increase positive employee outcomes, such as AIC and job commitment. Mentoring has consistently shown a negative relationship with employee turnover.

We hypothesize that the more affective, or emotional, nature of psychosocial mentoring will lead to a stronger and more significant relationship with AIC than will career mentoring. We draw empirical studies to support our hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Psychosocial mentoring will show a significant positive relationship with AIC than will career mentoring. Similar to psychosocial mentoring, job commitment is considered a psychological link between an employee and institutions or its agents. As such, it is our contention that due to the more psychological and emotional nature of job commitment, and psychosocial mentoring will have a stronger and more significant relationship with job commitment than will career mentoring.

Hypothesis 2: Psychosocial mentoring will show a more positive significant relationship with job commitment than will career mentoring.

Mentoring has proven to be significantly related to employee turnover in past research. However, the nature of the relationship between career and psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover is inconclusive. In the current study, we hypothesize that psychosocial mentoring will exhibit a stronger and more negative relationship with employee turnover than will career mentoring.

Hypothesis 3: Psychosocial mentoring will show significant negative relationship with employee turnover than will career mentoring.

Hypothesis 4: Psychosocial mentoring has a negative relationship with turnover intention that is mediated through AIC.

III Method

Sample

All IT personal of small company in south India were asked to complete an online survey. The e-mail sent to all 120 IT employees. This number included personnel in the central IT department, as well as IT personnel located within the functional departments they supported. The CIO determined the sampling frame (all IT workers) for this study. Thus, our sample was a non probability convenience sample.

Of the 120 employee enquired, following is the statistics:

Table - I

S.No	Enquiry VARIABLE	Percentage
1	Married	69%
2	Single	17%
3	Divorce	12%
4	South Indians	90%
5	North Indians	7%
6	22-72 Years	Mean age of 46

Figure1: statistics of responses from 120 IT Employees

Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 72 years with a mean age of 46. Worker tenure with the state ranged from 1 to 35 years, with a mean tenure of 12 years. Of the respondents, only 33% percent had an IT-related degree, 46% had an associate's degree or less, 49% had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 5% of respondents did not provide educational information.

Regarding salary, 49% of respondents earned less than Rs.55,000, 30% earned between Rs.55,000 and Rs.69,999, 17% earned over Rs.70,000, and 5% of respondents did not provide salary information. Job functions included systems analyst (28%), information systems manager (17%), project leader (15%), and systems programmer (12%).

IV Procedure

All employees received a project endorsement e-mail from the CIO that included the URL for the online survey and provided information about the project. The online survey consisted of 145 Likert-type questions and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Due to the sensitive nature of working with a state agency, no personal information was collected to ensure anonymity and to potentially increase response rate. A reminder e-mail was sent 2 weeks after the initial e-mail. Responses to the online survey came directly to the author, thereby eliminating any possible negative consequences associated with participation or nonparticipation.

Measures

All survey items came from previously validated and reliable scales, and were tested for reliability. Because personnel working in multiple departments were under the direction of the CIO, it was necessary to replace the words "my institutions" with "state government" in the survey items. At the beginning of the survey, we prompted respondents to think about the state IT department rather than the individual department they might support.

V Discussion

The results of our analysis made two key contributions: (a) we provided further support for the theoretical AET model by confirming the mediating role that AIC occupies between psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover, and (b) we replicated and extended previous research to provide additional support to existing findings on mentoring outcomes in a public sector IT context. Due to the emotional nature of AIC, we hypothesized that psychosocial mentoring—the more subjective form of mentoring—would exhibit a stronger relationship relative to career mentoring with AIC.

Our findings are important because they indicate emotional experiences have a greater impact than the more objective functions of career mentoring on the AIC and voluntary employee turnover of skilled public sector IT employees.

The greatest contribution of our study can be found in the results to Hypothesis 1, showing that AIC functions as a mediator between psychosocial mentoring and employee turnover. To the best of our knowledge, this appears to be the first study to show support for AIC as a full mediator between these two variables. Our findings suggest that affective reactions in the form of commitment in response to psychosocial mentoring activities have predictive value with regard to employee turnover, whether over time or following a particularly salient event.

Contrary to research demonstrating the relationship between mentoring and job commitment, we were unable to provide support for Hypothesis 2. The relationship between job commitment and mentoring was in the hypothesized direction, but neither form of mentoring was significantly related to job commitment. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to look at the relationship between job commitment and mentoring in a public IT context.

When looking at the relationship between mentoring activities and employee turnover proposed in Hypothesis 3, we found a negative relationship consistent with research from a variety of contexts. Psychosocial mentoring had a stronger negative relationship with employee turnover than did career mentoring. This probably is because of the emotional, relational, counseling, and problem-solving aspects of successful psychosocial mentoring. In addition, the results from Hypothesis 3 indicate that only psychosocial mentoring was significantly related to employee turnover, providing additional support to the idea that affective reactions play a central role in employee and institutional outcomes.

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