

Formal Mentoring: A Shot in the Arm? A Mixed Method Study on Indian Women Managers

Archita Dutta & Pooja Purang

This study examines the experiences and effectiveness of formal mentorship in career outcomes of Indian women employees. A mixed method approach was adopted. First, was an exploratory qualitative study with 28 semi-structured interviews with Indian working women. This was followed by a cross-sectional survey with 239 Indian women employees. The results from both studies show that formal mentorship fails to create the intended impact on women's career development due to problems such as unmet expectations of the mentees and lack of understanding of mentee's career and life challenges by mentors. Further, only informal mentorship has a positive association with promotions by women. Both formal and informal mentorship combined contribute positively to women's career planning.

Archita Dutta (E-mail:194083004@iitb.ac.in) is a Research Scholar & **Pooja Purang** (E-mail: purangp@iitb.ac.in) is a Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai, India

Introduction

Organizations today are developing diversity initiatives targeting more retention and inclusion of women, and mentorship has been regarded as an important one among them. We find increasing investment in developing formal mentorship programs with almost two-thirds of women reporting at least having one mentor, compared to 55% of men (Carter & Silva, 2010). Similarly in the Indian context, studies (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012; Blake-Beard et al., 2017; Mallick, 2008) argue for having more mentors for women in the workplace. However, there has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs on women's career-related outcomes such as promotions (Ibarra et al., 2010; Chow, 2021; Ghosh, 2015). Ibarra et al., (2010) report that women who receive formal mentoring consider it to be an important personal development tool, but it fails to attract as many promotions as it does for men. Additionally, formal mentorship has

been found to provide low career and psycho-social support (Ragins & Cotton, 1999) in women. The growing evidence of the failure of formal mentorship in the Western context necessitates the exploration of the experiences and impact of formal mentoring of Indian women employees.

A rapidly growing economy in India has resulted in more women joining the workforce (Blake-Beard, 2017; Haynes & Ghosh, 2012; Budhwar et al., 2013). However, the representation of women in the Indian workforce is around 32%, which is significantly lower than the global representation of around 50% (LFPR Report, 2022; World Bank, 2022). The reasons are embedded in the primary barriers that Indian women face in terms of the dual burden of home-family and gender stereotypes operating within the organizations that restrict their retention and progression within workplaces (Gupta & Sharma, 2003). Indian women have expressed the need for mentors to guide them in balancing their dual roles. The studies on women and mentorship in the Indian context have mostly focussed on individual outcomes such as work-family balance and career resilience (Blake-Beard, 2017; Arora & Ragnekar, 2014). Therefore, there is a need to examine women's career outcomes like promotions and career planning in the context of formal mentoring. Additionally, studies have also not addressed the impact of different types of mentorship, specifically the impact

of formal mentorship, on women's career outcomes. The results of the present study can provide guidelines for creating more effective mentoring programs focussed on women's career growth.

Literature Review

Mentorship is a developmental relationship between two individuals that is instrumental in promoting professional and personal growth within career contexts (Kram, 1983; Levinson, 1978; Chao, 1997). Traditionally, mentoring involved senior or experienced individuals supporting the career development of a junior, however, the definition of mentoring has changed to include developmental relationships formed between peers (Kram, 1983; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Mentorship has been majorly classified into two types: formal and informal. The two types of relationships differ primarily on two important aspects: the initiation of a relationship, structure and relationship duration. Ragins & Cotton (1999) point out that in the case of informal mentorship, the relationship between mentor and protege is developed organically, based on mutual identification, is longer in duration and the goals of the relationship evolve. Whereas a formal relationship is initiated by organizations, where a program coordinator assigns members of the mentoring dyad, is shorter in duration and the program's goals are pre-determined.

In women, mentorship has been associated with several positive careers and individual well-being outcomes, including understanding performance expectations, gaining access to informal networks, and overcoming stereotypes (McKeen & Bujaki, 2012; Ragins 1989; Farris & Ragan, 1981). However, studies have reported within masculine-dominated workplaces, women face several barriers to gaining informal mentors and maintaining such relationships (Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1989; Kanter, 1977). Men who occupy a significant proportion of top management engage in 'homo social reproduction' thus choosing to sponsor other men and maintaining masculine hegemony (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, formal mentorship becomes important for women to gain access to mentors in their workplace.

Several organizations are therefore developing formal mentorship programs specifically as a part of their diversity drive for inclusion, retention and career advancement in women (Ibarra et al., 2010; Ghosh, 2015). The effects of these programs on women's career management have been partial. Ghosh (2015) explains three important flaws in formal mentorship programs designed for women. These include unequal power dynamics between the mentor and mentee that restrict women's voice in the relationship, acculturation of practices that propagate further gender biases like restricting women mentors to psychosocial support functions and men to career support functions; and finally, it is constructed

as a remedial solution for women, making women look weak.

The study points to the heavy dependence of Indian women on familial mentors and how these mentors become paternalistic, further reinforcing gender roles.

Within the Indian context, greater participation of women warrants more developmental programs such as mentoring (Ghosh & Haynes, 2012). There is a shortage of research in understanding women's mentoring experiences in the Indian context, except for one study by Blake-Beard (2017). The study describes women's need for role models who can 'do it all'. However, it fails to document women's career growth opportunities through mentoring. Moreover, the study points to the heavy dependence of Indian women on familial mentors and how these mentors become paternalistic, further reinforcing gender roles. It becomes important to understand if the Indian women are undergoing formal mentorship and to document their experiences about it to create more growth opportunities for them.

Mentorship & Promotions

Promotions entail the number of times an individual is being raised in position or rank within the organization (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). There are gender differences in the promotions that women receive versus men, with men receiving more promotions

than women (Ibarra et al., 2010). In India, a study by LinkedIn Opportunity Index (2021) reveals that 85% of women miss out on promotions due to gender-related barriers. In their performance ratings, women scored lower on potential ratings leading to a lesser number of promotions (Benson et al., 2022). Several gender-related barriers in the workplace in terms of biased hiring processes and hostile organizational climates may contribute to such inequalities in the Indian context (Budhwar et al., 2005; Gupta & Sharma, 2003).

Some studies have shown that mentoring is positively related to promotions among women (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Gardiner et al., 2007). Contrastingly, another set of studies has also reported how formal mentoring programs have not been effective in bringing about promotions among women. While women recognize how formal mentoring has been effective in providing support and guidance in terms of understanding themselves and their preferred styles of behavior within the workplace it has failed to produce as many promotions for women in comparison to men with mentors (Ibarra et al., 2010). A study by Carter & Silva (2010) shows that more high-potential women than men have mentors yet they are not receiving as many promotions as their male counterparts as they are often not sponsored. Sponsorship entails impression management, in which the sponsors promote, connect and make the proteges' achievements visible to the upper management for

their career advancements (Chow, 2021). Many leaders believe that they are sponsoring women, but in most cases, they are providing other functions of mentorship due to a lack of awareness about the distinction between the two (Chow, 2021). Due to the contradictory evidence about mentoring and its effectiveness in women's promotions, our study attempts to investigate the effect of mentoring on the promotions of women in the Indian context.

H1: Mentorship is positively associated with promotions in women.

Mentorship & Career Planning

Career planning is the extent to which goals are set and strategies are formulated to attain those goals. Career planning is the extent to which career behaviors are organized, enacted and evaluated (Gould, 1979). Similarly, Gould (1979) argues for gender differences in career planning owing to women's 'here and now' approach towards their careers as well as basing their successes on external factors like task characteristics and luck. Career planning may be more challenging and different for women than for men as women's career paths tend to be more non-linear and disjointed as they constantly balance their caregiving responsibilities with their professional commitments (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006; Tomilson et al., 2018).

Mentoring has been linked to the achievement of career goals in women

(Petersen et al., 2012). However, Dashper (2019) explains that formal mentorship programs designed to provide women with career advancement opportunities perpetuate gendered notions making women look like “the problem” that requires “fixing”. Thus, it would further put the onus on women to use these programs to accommodate themselves better within the male-centric norms rather than using them for their unique career planning needs. The mixed evidence regarding the impact of mentorship on women’s career planning necessitates the need to further study the impact of mentorship on women’s career planning within the Indian context.

H2: Mentoring is positively associated with career planning in women.

From the discussion above, it can be understood that even though diversity programs such as formal mentorship are being formulated to target women’s career development, they are unable to produce the necessary results. Additionally, in the Indian context, studies have not explored the experiences of women employees with formal mentorship. Further, in the context of women studies have also not documented the effect of types of mentorship on women’s career-related outcomes like promotions and career planning. Therefore, the present study attempts to explore the experiences of formal mentorship in Indian women and the role of different types of mentorship on career outcomes.

Method

The present study uses a mixed-method research design. Mixed method design allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection and analysis to explain complex social phenomena and thereby holds potential in terms of viewing the phenomena from multiple lenses (Creswell, 1999). The present study uses a convergent parallel design which allows for understanding the extent to which qualitative and quantitative data converge to provide validation of one type of data with another (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The present design has been chosen to get a complementary perspective on the data and for data triangulation through corroboration of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Study 1 was designed as an exploratory qualitative study. Study 2 was designed as a quantitative study.

Sample

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used for both study 1 and study 2.

Study 1

A qualitative study with 28 female professionals ranging from 29 to 60 years of age, with a mean age of 42.3 years was included in the study. The inclusion criteria for the present study were any Indian woman employed full-time and holding a managerial/ technical position within their organization and

Table 1 Demographic Details of the Participants of the Qualitative Study

Variables	N= 28	%
Age		
24 to 35	7	25%
36 to 45	12	43%
46 to 60	9	32%
Marital Status		
Not-married	2	7%
Married	26	93%
Maternity Status		
Without children	8	29%
With children	20	71%
Managerial Level		
Junior	8	29%
Mid	14	50%
Senior	6	21%

having obtained at least a Bachelor's degree from an Indian educational institution. 20 participants were employed in the private sector and 8 participants in the public sector. The demographic details of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Study 2

A quantitative study, with a cross-sectional design and survey method was chosen. A total of around 600 women employees were reached out, out of which, 239 completed the whole survey. The target sample included women across different age groups, marital status, maternal status, location of work, sectors of employment, industries, managerial positions and career development stages. The minimum inclusion criterion was those holding a Bachelor's degree in any particular field. The target sample in-

cluded both types of participants including those who have received some form of mentoring (formal, informal or both) and those who had no mentorship experience in their careers. Women working in private, public sector enterprises and government sectors were included in the study. The participants were contacted through their organizations or e-mails and other social media platforms. The demographic details of the participants are presented in Table 2.

Procedure

Study 1: The ethics approval of the study was obtained from the Institute Ethics Committee. Interviews were conducted through video conferencing during the COVID lockdown. A semi-structured interview schedule was prepared about the mentorship experiences of the participants for the present study based

Table 2 Demographic Details of Participants of the Quantitative Study

Variables	Percentage/ Average
Age	· Mean=37.4 years
Level	· Junior Level=17.8% · Middle Level=54.5% · Senior Level= 27.7%
Marital Status	· Unmarried= 29.6% · Married= 64.3% · Divorced/ Separated= 6.1%
Maternity Status	· With children= 46% · Without children= 54%
Mentorship Received	· Without mentorship= 12.1% · Only Formal Mentorship= 16.9% · Only informal mentorship= 46.5% · Both formal and informal mentorship= 19.2%

Note= N=239

on previous literature. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and informed consent was taken, orally before starting the interview as well as written after the interview. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

Study 2: For the quantitative study, a write-up was prepared and circulated through email and on social media platforms describing the purpose of the study, ensuring anonymity, data confidentiality, the academic nature of the study, the target sample and the method of data collection. A Google Survey Form was prepared consisting of all the questions related to the survey. For each section of the form, the instructions related to the particular section were provided before the questions. Common method biases were controlled using procedural design and sta-

tistical controls. The survey link was kept active from January 2023 to August 2023. Data was cleaned and prepared for analysis.

Tools for Study 2

Types of Mentorship: Types of mentorship were assessed by including a single item stating, “Have you had any mentors in your workplace”? Having four response categories of: “Yes, someone assigned formally by the organization”; “Yes, informally through supervisors and managers”; “Both”; “No, I have never had a mentor”.

Career Planning: Career Planning Scale with 5 items developed by Gould (1979) measured on a 5-point Likert Scale where 1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree. A sample item includes, “I have a strategy for reaching my career goals.”

One negatively worded item of “I do not have a clear career goal” was re-phrased into a positively worded item of “I have a clear career goal” to avoid the method bias as it would produce artifactual responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To suit the target population of women employees, questions about gender-specific issues in career planning were added. A sample item includes, “I have a strategy to deal with various gender-related barriers to attain my career goals”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is 0.834. The participants instructed the following, “Below are statements related to your career goals. Please respond by indicating your degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Please remember there are no right or wrong answers.”

Number of Promotions: The number of promotions was measured by a single item stating “Number of Promotions Received” in the demographic section.

Analysis

Study 1: The qualitative analysis was done using six steps of Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). This included re-reading the transcripts and identification of meaningful units about formal mentorship. The next step involved two coders independently coding the data and the inter-rater reliability was computed using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) formula. The codes agreed upon by both coders were grouped into overarching themes related to different issues of

formal mentorship that restrict its effectiveness and how it could be designed better.

Study 2: For the quantitative study, a multiple regression was used to estimate the variances created by different types of mentoring (formal, informal, both and none) on outcomes of career planning and promotions for the women. Since, the predictor variables of types of mentorship (formal, informal, both and none) received were categorical variables, hence a dummy coding of 0 and 1 was used. SPSS Statistics 22 was used to test the multiple regression.

Results of Study 1

The participants in the present study have described the existence of formal mentorship programs in both private and public sectors. Participants in the private sector described the programs as diversity initiatives that are focused on women’s growth in the workplace. As participant 14 pointed out, these programs are meant for “Women and under representative minorities specifically because they (organization) saw that they weren’t getting the opportunity to rise in the organization like men were.” The programs in the public sector are restricted at the entry level, as a part of the orientation program and are designed to familiarise the new joiners in terms of their work and the organization’s culture.

The results of the exploratory findings show that even though organizations

are including developmental programs like mentorship, they are failing to make the intended impact. Women managers have described the various aspects of the programs that are making them profitless in terms of their career growth. Further, the participants have also recommended key features that need to be present to make the formal programs effective.

Formal Mentorship: A Story of Mentor-mentee Disconnect

The hindrances faced by mentees in a formal mentoring relationship occurred due to discrepancies in the support that women wanted from their mentors and what they received, communication gaps, the need for more structured guidelines about the program and the mismatch with the mentors.

Participants engaged in formal mentoring report the absence of involved formal mentors which led to disengagement with the mentors.

Discrepancy in the ideas of support that mentors should provide was an important hindrance in developing an effective relationship. Women managers conceptualized a mentor as someone who is actively engaged in women's career journeys and provides continual support. In contrast, participants engaged in formal mentoring report the absence of involved formal mentors which led to disengagement with the mentors. The inadequacy of such rela-

tionships in providing meaningful guidance has been described by a participant as,

“So it's more like a placeholder. Some would say, ‘Hey, if you run into issues then look me up.’ But the thing is, you don't want to look for a mentor when you have issues, you have to have that constant interaction with that person to even think of that person when you have issues.” (P4, 44 years, Program Manager).

The lack of frequent meetings with the mentor created hindrances in communicating with the formal mentors, which further created difficulty in building effective relationships.

“Unfortunately, you meet the mentor once, but then the mentor never shows up another time, and you never get to interact with the mentor” (P4, 44 years, Program Manager).

Similarly, one participant also described how it is equally important for the mentees to take the initiative in communicating with the mentor and making them aware of their support needs.

“I would say that 90% of the time if you genuinely go to your mentor with a problem, people are going to help you. But I think asking is more important, a lot of people just don't” (P.16, 33 years old, Aerospace Engineer)

Since formal mentorship was initiated by the organization, one participant reported, that women may be

criticized for voicing the problems that they face in the organization. She further elaborates that when women approach an organizationally assigned mentor, she is at risk of being labeled as “hypersensitive” with low coping abilities.

“Let’s say somebody is having a problem and somebody is talking about the problem then that person becomes a bad person because they will say that the person is not being able to adjust. People think mentorship is only when you have an issue but it is not like that. So until the mentality changes, the stigma stays, it won’t be successful”. (P 23, 55 years, Senior Manager).

Participants working in PSE have described these programs as “semi-formal”, lacking clear mandates about their application.

Additionally, some of these programs lack clear guidelines about the goals and frequency of meetings. Participants report confusion regarding initiating communication in the absence of a definite framework for execution. Participants working in PSE have described these programs as “semi-formal”, lacking clear mandates about their application. One participant working in a PSE reports how the advent of several diversity programs, similar to mentorship reduces their unique contribution. She further reports, how women are discouraged by their supervisory managers from joining such programs since there are no mandates

about joining them, thereby reducing their importance.

“I have seen that now the management has so many programs but how many of them can they attend? I have seen there are people, even ladies, who are denied a chance to go there; they are told, “Let it be! What will you gain going there?” (P.23, 55 years, Senior Manager).

Finally, the lack of identification and understanding of the mentees’ career development needs and life context on the part of the formal mentors forms an important barrier to successfully leveraging such relationships.

“When I was talking about my challenges she was like dude I don’t understand it and I was like why did you assign this person to me? I somehow think that this mentorship sort of thing sometimes breaks down because you don’t put enough thought into who should be mentoring whom”, (P.17, 29 years old, Manager).

Essentials for a Successful Formal Mentorship Program

While talking about the failure of formal mentorship programs, the participants’ interviews have also revealed the conditions under which such programs can be successful. The mentor and mentees’ commitment to the relationship and the mentee’s choice in selecting the mentors are regarded as important elements in the success of such relationships.

Two types of commitment have been mentioned as crucial for developing effective formal mentoring: The mentor and mentee's commitment to providing time and the mentor's commitment to providing safe psychological space. Commitment to providing time is important in the case of formal mentoring since the mentors and mentees are chosen to enter into a relationship by the organization, unlike informal mentoring where individuals commit to providing time organically. One participant, when asked about what can make a formal mentoring relationship successful, emphasized the importance of giving time and having a genuine interest in making formal mentoring functional.

"If both mentor and mentee are interested, you have to devote time and people are always short of time. So unless you are interested in doing a mentorship or being a mentor, or else, it's not of use". (P.27, 42 years, DGM)

Similarly, women have described the need to have a supportive organizational culture, which provides a safe psychological space for women to leverage mentoring relationships. Women should be given a fair chance to talk about their problems without letting them feel judged.

"It does have a mentoring program but I am not sure how effective it is. Let's say somebody is having a problem and somebody is talking about the problem then that person becomes a bad person because they will say that per-

son is not being able to adjust. Mentoring should be normal. People think mentorship is only when you have an issue but it is not like that". (P.23, 55 years, Senior Manager)

Another important aspect related to the success of the formal relationship described by our participants is the choice of selecting their mentors. This empowers women to select an individual who can cater to their unique mentoring needs. Participant 17 describes how it was important for her to have a female mentor so that she could learn how to navigate 'men's clubs'. Similarly, participant 15 describes she insisted on having a same-gender mentor from the organization, to cater to her mentoring needs of navigating gender-specific hurdles.

The findings of the exploratory study suggest that women managers who have received formal mentoring from their organizations are not satisfied with their contribution to women's career development. The presence of such programs is merely symbolic as they are not built with careful consideration. The programs are majorly ineffective as they lack structured guidelines about their implementation and the mentees lack identification with their formal mentors.

The results show that formal mentoring programs built within the organizations fail to create impactful support for women. Particularly no participant has described these programs as creating a significant impact

in terms of their career growth such as promotions or helping them in strategizing for their advancement to more senior positions. Thus, to corroborate the findings of the qualitative study, a quantitative confirmatory was designed to test whether the variance created by different types of mentoring received on career-related outcomes of women of promotions and career planning.

Results of Study 2

Multiple regression analyses were carried out to test the relationship between the types of mentorship (formal, informal, both) and outcomes of promotions and career planning.

The mean, standard deviations and Pearson's Product Moment correlations are presented in Table 1. The descriptive statistics show that there are positive and significant correlations between informal mentorship (dummy coded as informal versus no mentorship) and the outcome of promotions, and both forms of mentorship combined (dummy coded as both versus no mentorship) and the outcome of career planning. It shows that higher informal mentoring is associated with higher promotions in women and higher both formal and informal mentorship

Both formal and informal mentorship combined is associated with higher career planning in women.

combined is associated with higher career planning in women.

Table 2 contains the results of the multiple regressions. According to these results, the hypothesized model accounted for 3.70 % of the variance of the obtained score of promotions, $F(3, 235) = 3.02, p < 0.05$. For the outcome of career planning, the hypothesized model accounted for 3.80 % of the variance of the obtained score, $F(3, 235) = 3.11, p < 0.05$.

The analysis shows that formal mentoring did not significantly predict promotions (Beta = .02, $t(238) = 0.32, p > 0.05$), both formal and informal mentoring combined also did not significantly predict promotions (Beta = 0.061, $t(238) = 0.71, p > 0.05$), however, informal mentoring did significantly predict promotions (Beta = 0.23, $t(238) = 2.46, p < 0.05$). This shows that informal mentorship accounts for 2.3% of the variance in promotions for women. Thus, H1 is supported for the group that has received informal mentorship.

Informal mentoring did significantly predict promotions.

The analysis shows that formal mentoring did not significantly predict career planning (Beta = -0.13, $t(238) = -0.15, p > 0.05$), informal mentoring also did not significantly predict career planning (Beta = 0.08, $t(238) = 0.93, p > 0.05$), however, both formal and informal mentoring combined did significantly predict career

Table 3 Mean, SD & Correlations Between the Variables

Sl. No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Informal versus No mentoring	0.44	0.50					
2.	Both versus no mentoring	0.20	0.40	-0.45**				
3.	Formal versus no mentoring	0.18	0.39	-0.43**	-0.24**			
4.	Promotions	2.71	2.19	0.19**	-0.05	-0.08		
5.	Career Planning	22.01	4.39	-0.00	0.18**	-0.10	-0.03	

Note= ** indicates $p < 0.01$

planning (Beta = 0.21 ., $t(238) = 2.47$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that informal mentorship accounts for 2.1% of the variance in career planning for women. Thus, H2 is supported for the group that received both forms of mentoring.

Discussion & Implications

The results of both studies show that formal mentorship does not create the intended impact on women's career growth. Study 1 documented the experiences of Indian women employees with different types of mentorship. Study 2 measured women's career growth in terms of their promotions and career planning.

The results of study 2 show that informal mentorship is positively related to promotions in women. Additionally, the results from the second study also show that formal mentorship is not related to promotions for women. The minimal impact of formal mentorship on women's career growth outcomes is also corroborated by the findings from Study 1, which points out the flaws in the design of such programs. Participants label these programs as "placeholders", and

describe issues related to disruptions in communication, lack of structured guidelines about navigating the relationship, and the mentor's lack of understanding of the mentee's life and career contexts. The participants in Study 1, especially, in the public sector have also pointed out that these programs are restricted to entry-level and mostly to familiarise women with their work and the workplace. Thus, programs such as these are missing in the mid-managerial levels where women's growth to more senior levels can happen if a mentor sponsors them.

The findings that formal mentorship is not responsible for bringing about more promotions in women can be explained by the lack of sponsorship function which is integral to receiving promotions. Past research shows that women have found formal mentorship to be effective in understanding themselves, however, the mentors were not actively engaged in endorsing women for senior roles as they were viewed as 'risky appointments' (Ibarra, 2010). On the other hand, as per the findings of study 2, informal mentors have a significant role to play in women's promotions. This can be explained by the

Table 4 Types of Mentorship Contributing to Promotions & Career Planning

Dependent Variables	Independent Variable	r ²	Adj. r ²	F-value	Beta	T-value	p-value
Promotions	Informal versus No mentoring	0.03	0.02	3.11	0.09	0.94	>0.05
	Both versus no mentoring				0.21	2.48	<0.05
	Formal versus no mentoring				-0.01	-0.15	>0.05
Career Planning	Informal versus No mentoring	0.04	0.02	3.03	0.23	2.46	>0.05
	Both versus no mentoring				0.06	0.71	<0.05
	Formal versus no mentoring				0.03	0.32	<0.05

Note: Adj.r²= Adjusted r-square

fact that in the Indian context, the most important function of mentoring is considered to be performance appraisal and therefore supervisory managers who are responsible for appraisals become the most important source of informal mentors (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). Since performance appraisal is positively linked to the number of promotions received, informal mentorship contributes significantly to the number of promotions that women get.

For career planning, the results of study 2 show that both types of mentorship (formal and informal) combined are positively related to career planning in women. Thus, formal mentorship is individually not enough to have a positive impact on women's career planning. This can be attributed to formal mentors providing career advancement strategies that do not fit well with women. This is also complementary to the findings from Study 1 where participants describe a mismatch in support needs and expectations from the formal mentors.

According to Clutterbuck (2002), mentor-mentee mismatch forms an important hindrance in developing a formal mentoring relationship. The similarity between mentor and mentee is important as well as the choice in selecting the mentor to ensure mentee's identification with the mentor. The findings that both types of mentorship combined create a positive impact on women's career planning can also be attributed to the lower quality of for-

mal mentoring relationships. Quality of mentorship is an important factor for a successful formal mentoring relationship and in the absence of adequate quality, informal mentors are needed to provide effective developmental support (Holt et al., 2016). Since career planning involves setting career goals and strategies depending on life context (Gould, 1979), informal mentors like direct supervisors and other senior women in the organization may be more aware of the mentee's life context and her professional and personal goals and can provide better guidance regarding the same.

Formal mentoring alone may not be enough to create a positive impact on career planning as formal mentors may provide career advancement strategies that do not fit well with women. Male mentors often provide strategies and tactics for career development to women similar to male counterparts which may not be feasible for women owing to their dual burden at home and work (Ibarra et al., 2010).

Additionally, the results from Study I have also shown that formal mentoring programs suffer in terms of their structure; the mentees perceived a lack of continued support from their mentors making it difficult to provide the needed support when faced with difficulty; suffered from having low frequency of meeting between the pair and felt a lack of trust with their mentors as they problematize the women. These corroborate the previous findings about issues related to formal mentorship aris-

ing from unmet expectations of the mentee and neglect from the mentor (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Wang et al., 2010; Noe, 1988).

The present study contributes by providing guidelines to the organizations while designing formal mentoring programs for women. Formal mentorship should be developed with more careful considerations by matching the mentor with the mentee and incorporating the mentee's preferences for a mentor. Since informal mentorship is a significant source of mentoring support for women, organizations should invest in developing a culture that supports the building of more networks of informal mentors. Elements of successful informal relationships like genuine interest in both the members of the dyad, frequency of meetings and effective communication can be incorporated while designing formal programs.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to acknowledge the Department of Science and Technology, India for the research grant (DST/NSTMIS/05-2017-18) given to the second author that helped them conduct the first study. The authors would like to thank the participants who took their time to participate in the study.

References

- Arora, R. & Rangnekar, S. (2014), "Workplace Mentoring and Career Resilience: An Empirical Test", *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 17(3): 205-20. <https://>

- psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/ mgr0000021
- Benson, A., Li, D. & Shue, K. (2022), "Potential" and the Gender Promotion Gap. Unpublished Working Paper, SSRN-Elsevier, Rochester, New York.
- Blake-Beard, S., Halem, J., Archibold, E.E., Boncoeur., Burton, A.R. & Kumar, P. (2017), Mentoring Relationships of Professional Indian Women: Extending the Borders of Our Understanding at the Intersection of Gender and Culture, in A.J. Murrell. & S, Blake-Beard (Eds.), Mentoring Diverse Leaders: Creating Change for People, Processes, and Paradigms, Taylor & Francis. New York.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006), "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2): 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Budhwar, P. S., Saini, D. S. & Bhatnagar, J. (2013), "Women in Management in the New Economic Environment: The Case of India", *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2): 179-93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/136023804200291199>
- Carter, N.M. & Silva, N. (2008), "Mentoring: Necessary But Insufficient for Advancement", *Catalyst*, Retrieved from https://www.catalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Mentoring_Necessary_But_Insufficient_for_Advancement_Final_120610.pdf.
- Chao, G.T. (1997), "Mentoring Phases and Outcomes", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51(1): 15-28, <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1997.1591>
- Chow, R. (2021), "Don't Just Mentor Women and People of Color. Sponsor Them", *Harvard Business Review*, Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2021/06/dont-justmentor-women-and-people-of-color-sponsor-them>
- Clutterbuck, D. (2002), "Establishing and Sustaining a Formal Mentoring Program for Working With Diversified Groups", in D. Clutterbuck & B. R. Ragins (Eds.), *Mentoring and Diversity: An International Perspective*, Oxford, UK: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Creswell, J., & Creswell, J.D. (2018), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approach*, Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (1999), "Mixed-method Research: Introduction and Application", in , G.J. Cizek (Ed.), *Handbook of Educational Policy* , Academic press.
- Dashper, K. (2019), "Challenging the Gendered Rhetoric of Success? The Limitations of Women only Mentoring for Tackling Gender Inequality in the Workplace", *Gender, Work & Organization*, 26(4): 541-57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12262>
- Dreher, G. F. & Ash, R. A. (1990), "A Comparative Study of Mentoring Amen and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(5): 539.
- Eby, L. T. & Lockwood, A. (2005), "Protégés' and Mentors' Reactions to Participating in Formal Mentoring Programs: A Qualitative Investigation", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(3): 441- 58.
- Farris, R. & Ragan, L. (1981), Importance of Mentor-protege Relationships to the Upward Mobility of the Female Executive", *Mid-South Business Journal*, 1(4): 24-28
- World Bank, (2022), Female Labor Force Participation, Retrieved from <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/> on February 22nd, 2024.
- Gardiner, M., Tiggemann, M., Kearns, H. & Marshall, K. (2007), "Show Me the Money! An Empirical Analysis of Mentoring Outcomes For Women in

- Academia”, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26(4): 425-42.
- Ghosh, R. (2015), “Mentoring–Is It Failing Women?” *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 27(4): 70-74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20126>
- Gould, S. (1979), “Characteristics of Career Planners in Upwardly Mobile Occupations”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 22(3): 539-50.
- Gupta, N., & Sharma, A. K. (2003), “Gender Inequality in the Work Environment at Institutes of Higher Learning in Science and Technology in India”, *Work, Employment and Society*, 17(4): 597-616.
- Haynes, R. K. & Ghosh, R. (2012), “Towards Mentoring the Indian Organizational Woman: Propositions, Considerations, and First Steps”, *Journal of World Business*, 47(2): 186-93.
- Holt, D. T., Markova, G., Dhaenens, A. J., Marler, L. E. & Heilmann, S. G. (2016), “Formal or Informal Mentoring: What Drives Employees to Seek Informal Mentors?”, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 28(1/2): 67-82.
- Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M. & Silva, C. (2010), “Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women?” *Harvard Business Review*, 88(9): 80-85.
- Kanter, R. (1977), *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Basic Books, New York.
- Kram, K. E. (1983), “Phases of the Mentor Relationship”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 26 (4): 608–25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/255910>.
- Kram, K. E., & Isabella, L. A. (1985), “Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development”, *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1): 110-32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/256064>
- Kram, K.E. (1985), *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organisational Life*, Glenview III. Scott, Foresman.
- Labor Force Participation Report (2022) Retrieved from <https://dge.gov.in/dge/sites/default/files/2023>, on February 22nd, 2024.
- Levinson, D. J. (1978), *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, Knopf, University of California, CA.
- LinkedIn Opportunity Index (2021), https://news.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/news/en-us/images/Opportunity_Index_Whitepaper_Final_1604.pdf
- Mainiero, L. A. & Sullivan, S. E. (2005), “Kaleidoscope Careers: An Alternate Explanation for the ‘Opt-out Revolution’”, *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 19 (1): 106-23. <https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2005.15841962>
- Mallick, P. (2008), “Mentoring... Mantra for Women Leaders”. *NHRD Network Journal*, 2(2): 59-65.
- Mc Keen, C & Bujaki, M. (2012), “Gender and Mentoring: Issues, Effects and Opportunities”. in B.R. Ragins & K.E. Kram. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research and Practice*, Sage Publications.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (Second Ed), Sage Publications.
- Noe, R. A. (1988), “Women in Mentoring: A Review and Research Agenda”, *Academy of Management Review*, 13: 65–78.
- Petersen, R., Eggert, A., Grümmer, R., Schara, U. & Sauerwein, W. (2012), “The Mentoring of Women for Medical Career D”, *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 1(2): 155-68.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y. & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003), “Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended

- Remedies”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5): 879- 903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Ragins, B. R. (1989), “Barriers to Mentoring: The Female Manager’s Dilemma”, *Human Relations*, 42(1): 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F001872678904200101>
- Ragins, B. R. & Cotton, J. L. (1999), “Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(4): 529 –50. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.84.4.529>
- Ramaswami, A. & Dreher, G. F. (2010), “Dynamics of Mentoring Relationships in India: A Qualitative, Exploratory Study”, *Human Resource Management*, 49(3): 501-30. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20363>
- Tomlinson, J., Baird, M., Berg, P. & Cooper, R. (2018). “Flexible Careers Across the ILife Course: Advancing Theory, Research and Practice”, *Human Relations*, 71 (1): 4-22.
- Wang, S., Tomlinson, E. C. & Noe, R. A. (2010), “The Role of Mentor Trust and Protégé Internal Locus of Control in Formal Mentoring Relationships”. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(2): 358.