

An Examination of the Correlation Between Mentorship and Job Satisfaction in Academic Libraries of Public and Private Universities and Colleges in China

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ABSTRACT

Mentorship programs in both public and private university libraries throughout China are the focus of this study, which aims to determine whether or not they contribute to faculty members' job satisfaction. In the dynamic landscape of higher education, staff satisfaction is crucial to institution survival, employee retention, and the scholarly quality of output. Mentoring programs are often seen as strategic HR tools due to their ability to boost employee engagement and professional development, but there is a lack of research on their applicability to the academic library setting in China. In this qualitative study, managers, library employees, and mentors selected via purposive sampling all contributed rich contextual insights via topic analysis and semi-structured interviews. Mentoring that is both professional and personal, typified by trust, well-defined goals, and institutional support, has a positive effect on people's levels of work satisfaction via methods including career counselling, skill development, and emotional support. However, obstacles such as institutional constraints, ineffective mentorship, and inconsistent program implementation were most noticeable in areas with little resources. Differences in organisational culture, access to resources, and mentoring approaches emerged as gaps widened between public and private sector organisations. The study highlights the requirement of specialised mentoring tactics that are fully supported to enhance employee satisfaction, and it also helps to explain why there is a lack of information on mentoring in Chinese university libraries. The research highlights the need of promoting mentorship programs and continuous professional growth in educational institutions.

Keywords: Mentoring Programs, Employee Satisfaction, Academic Libraries, Qualitative Research, China, Public Institutions, Private Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Today, more than ever before, human capital is crucial to a university's success in the competitive academic landscape. Academic libraries are highly dependent on the passion, happiness, and career advancement of its staff members because of their central role in the creation, distribution, and consumption of knowledge. Public and private libraries will continue to provide a useful service by offering a pleasant and engaging environment, especially as they face challenges related to legal, technological, and user expectations. There are a number of ways to make workers happier, including mentoring programs that encourage engagement and advancement in the workplace, and the increasingly common practice of enforcing higher moral standards. Mentoring has evolved from its humble beginnings as a way to connect more seasoned individuals with less experienced ones to a flexible and dynamic instrument for career and personal growth. Library employees, whose job is sometimes more demanding and specialised, would benefit substantially from mentorship programs that assist them balance their duties while also contributing significantly to the goals of the institution. Research on university libraries in China has not yet looked at the benefits of mentoring programs on employee happiness or how public and private libraries vary in this regard. On the other hand, school systems in the West often use mentoring programs. In an effort to level the playing field, this article explores the relationship between mentoring programs and staff contentment in Chinese university libraries. This qualitative research seeks to understand the perspectives of library staff members on mentoring, the extent to which it impacts morale on the job, and the factors of the institution that contribute to these perspectives. Researchers were able to get a better understanding of the ways in which

mentoring tactics and outcomes were impacted by structural and cultural variances by included both public and private firms. This study aims to shed light on how Chinese university libraries function and provide recommendations for improving the efficiency of mentorship programs by tailoring them to the specific requirements of different industries. As a result, employees should be able to take advantage of greater chances for advancement in their careers (Popoola & Fagbola, 2023).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last several decades, academic libraries have transformed in response to shifts in research methodologies, writing styles, and user expectations. The fast expansion of China's higher education industry, the increasing need for digital resources, and the global push to increase competitiveness have made the country particularly vulnerable to these shifts. The promotion of a culture where staff members are motivated and competent is of utmost importance in academic libraries, whether they are public or private. In the fast-paced modern library environment, staff satisfaction has become an important measure of performance, retention, and operational efficiency. When people are passionate about their work, they go the extra mile, think of creative ways to solve challenges, and are more invested in the company's success. Mentoring programs are booming in popularity as a way to boost employee satisfaction via personal and professional development. Employee morale and a sense of belonging are both boosted by mentoring relationships that foster knowledge sharing, self-confidence, and professional networking. Mentorship programs boost professionalism, professional growth, job satisfaction, and loyalty to the organisation, according to studies conducted at Western academic institutions. Chinese university libraries have not placed mentoring programs on par with academic priorities, despite the growing recognition of their importance. Understanding the background, perspective, and experience of mentoring programs in China is challenging due to the country's institutional and cultural context. Mentoring may be less accessible and effective due to factors such as a lack of resources, competing corporate goals, and organisational hierarchy. Additionally, public and private organisations may have different mentorship programs and different results based on factors including funding, independence, and leadership style. Because academic libraries continue to have a significant impact on information management and instructional support, it is essential to investigate the potential effects of mentorship and other internal support systems on staff happiness and institutional effectiveness. It is crucial to be abreast of the latest news on China's higher education strategy and job goals. To fill a substantial knowledge gap, this study examines the correlation between mentorship programs and staff satisfaction in Chinese university libraries. This qualitative study will examine both public and private university libraries to learn more about the inner workings of library personnel and how they may improve the cultural relevance and effectiveness of mentorship programs (Akinlade, 2022).

Over the course of the last several decades, academic libraries all over the world have seen a considerable transition in terms of the roles and activities that they provide, and China is not an exception to this trend. As a consequence of China's rapid economic growth and increasing investment in education, universities and colleges, both public and private, have emerged as the most significant institutions in the country's knowledge economy. This is the case for both public and private universities and colleges. Academic libraries have been put under a substantial amount of pressure to undergo transformation, innovation, and adaptation in order to assist learning, research, and teaching. This pressure has been put on them in order to enable these activities. As a result of the fact that the environment is in a constant state of flux, the relevance of human resources, and librarians in particular, has grown more significant. It is no longer the case that the sole traditional obligations that academic librarians are required to do are cataloguing and circulation for the collection. Instead, it is necessary for them to provide support in the training of information literacy, scholarly communication, and the management of research data, digital archives, and other tasks that are associated with this field. To fulfil these commitments, one must engage in

ongoing education, possess the ability to adjust to changing circumstances, and actively participate in professional activities (Ahmed, 2024).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This research primarily seeks to find if mentorship might affect the work happiness of Chinese professors hired for private universities. This research primarily seeks to identify how official and informal mentors influence teachers' work satisfaction, motivation, and involvement in their assigned tasks. This research aims to provide some understanding of the many dynamics of mentoring at private institutions and their consequences on overall work satisfaction of faculty members. It particularly highlights these groups. Aiming to improve teacher effectiveness and retention, the results will drive institutional policies and professional development projects in China's private higher education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentorship programs have long been emphasised as crucial for professional development and for job satisfaction across many environments, including institutions. The investigation of the impacts and implementations of such initiatives in university libraries is generating increasing attention among Chinese scholars. This literature analysis aims to aggregate the most significant findings about mentoring programs and their impact on staff satisfaction in Chinese university libraries over the last five years.

Although professional groups provide formal mentoring efforts, a pilot study on the mentoring experiences of academic librarians in New England revealed that libraries do not have such programs (Freedman, 2021). Research indicates that participants' positive prior experiences with mentors and organisational norms significantly influence the effectiveness of mentoring programs. Although this research was performed in a Western context, the findings suggest that institutional support for mentoring relationships is necessary worldwide. Researcher examined the responses of artistically engaged Chinese master's degree applicants to supportive mentoring programs. Their study indicates that an effective mentoring technique significantly impacts creative activity. Scholarly aspirations impact this relationship. Such results suggest that when mentors provide both emotional and practical assistance, mentees are more inclined to exhibit creativity and innovation, which are vital for personal and professional development (Yang et al., 2024).

A secondary contemporary trend is reverse mentoring. An examination of informal mentoring dynamics between Chinese professors and students indicates that undergraduates in China often aid their mentors in refining research methodologies and cultivating innovative concepts, therefore advancing both their mentors' professional trajectories and their own self-worth. The bidirectional nature of these associations underscores the potential for mentoring relationships to enhance educational environments. In pursuit of digital transformation, researchers qualitatively analysed the information management methods of Chinese university libraries. They emphasised the need of user engagement and the challenges of maintaining large digital databases to improve library services. The study emphasises the need for library personnel to participate in ongoing professional development to keep pace with technological advancements and fulfil their increasing responsibilities, but it does not specifically mention mentoring (Zhao & Zhang, 2024).

The study examined the design of virtual mentoring systems based on student engagement incentives, highlighting the need of incorporating motivating characteristics of participants into mentoring program designs to enhance participation and efficacy. This research is more pertinent due to the rising need for adaptive coaching solutions and the digitisation of several procedures (Hennig et al., 2024).

Ultimately, the findings of this study indicate that mentorship programs are essential for Chinese university libraries to facilitate the professional development of their personnel and enhance their appreciation of their job. They emphasise the significance of disciplined, communicative, and structured mentoring relationships to meet the evolving demands of

higher education. Further study on the cultural and institutional factors influencing the efficacy of mentorship programs is essential to address the special needs of Chinese library personnel.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- When it comes to job satisfaction among teachers at private universities in China, how does mentorship factor in?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The objective of qualitative and quantitative research is to identify statistically significant correlations between variables by gathering numerical data on those variables and inputting it into statistical models. Quantitative studies seek to get a deeper comprehension of society. Researchers often use quantitative approaches when investigating events having a personal impact. Quantitative investigations provide empirical data represented via tables and graphs. A quantitative research depends significantly on numerical data, requiring a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. It may be used in several capacities, such as data averaging, forecasting, investigating correlations, and projecting findings to larger populations. Quantitative studies are fundamentally distinct from qualitative investigations, which depend on comprehensive interviews and observations. Quantitative research methodologies are extensively used across several academic fields, including biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, marketing, and others.

Sampling:

A pilot research was performed using a questionnaire with a cohort of 20 consumers from China, followed by a final study employing the questionnaire on a sample of 1200 customers. A total of surveys was sent to clients chosen via rigorous random selection. All completed questionnaires were included in the study, while any incomplete questionnaires will be discarded by the researcher.

Data and Measurement:

Primary data for the research study was collected through questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was divided into two parts – (A) Demographic information (B) Factor responses in 5-point Likert Scale for both the online and non-online channels. Secondary data was collected from multiple sources, primarily internet resources.

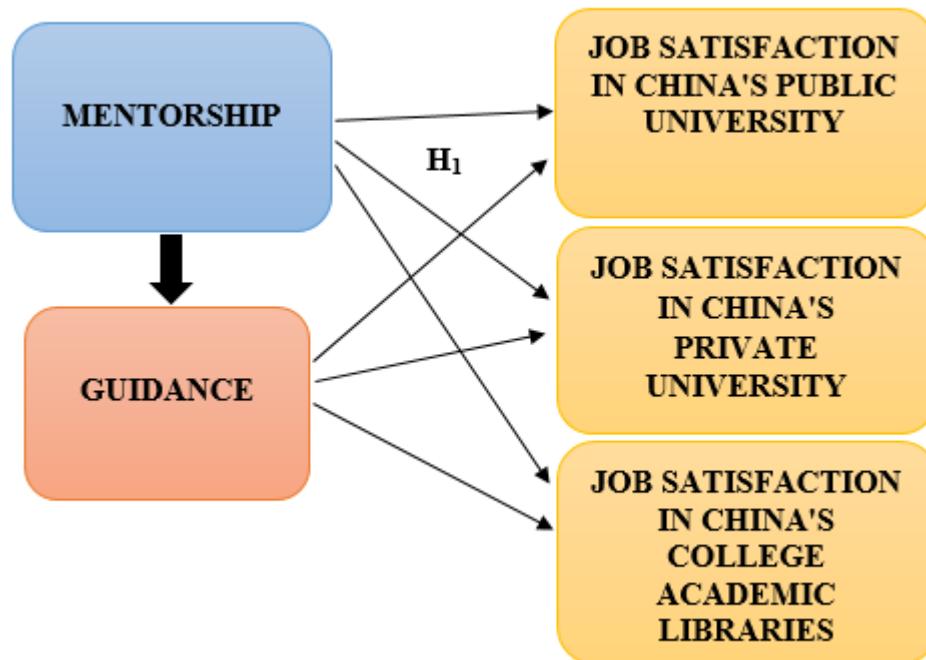
Statistical Software:

MS-Excel and SPSS 25 will be used for Statistical analysis.

Statistical tools:

Descriptive analysis was applied to understand the basic nature of the data. Validity will be tested through factor analysis.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



RESULT

- **Factor Analysis:**

Factor Analysis is often used to validate the latent component structure of a measurement set. Latent factors may influence the scores of observable variables. Model-based accuracy assessment (FA). It delineates causal relationships among observable events, unobserved factors, and measurement inaccuracies. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test assesses data suitability for factor analysis. The model and its variables are evaluated for adequate sampling. Statistics quantify the shared variance across many variables. Factor analysis is more effective with reduced percentages. KMO yields values between 0 and 1. Sampling is deemed sufficient if the KMO value ranges from 0.8 to 1. If the KMO statistic is below 0.6, the sample is insufficient and corrective measures are required. Exercise your discretion within the range of 0.5 to 0.6. Certain writers choose 0.5. KMO A value close to 0 indicates slight overall correlations in comparison to partial correlations. Significant correlations complicate component analysis. Kaiser's criteria for acceptance: Kaiser's acceptance criteria: 0.050–0.059. 0.60–0.69 subpar Middle grade: 0.70–0.79. Quality point value: 0.80 to 0.89. A range of 0.90 to 1.00 will be exceptional.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.870
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The first stage in EFA is to ascertain the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Kaiser advised postponing factor analysis until a sample adequacy coefficient over 0.5 is

achieved, as shown by the KMO measure. The KMO value derived from the data used in this analysis is 0.870. Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a significant result of 0.00.

❖ **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Is there a formal mentorship program in your institution, and how effectively is it implemented?
2. In what ways has your mentor supported your professional development and career goals?
3. How has mentorship impacted your job satisfaction or motivation in your current role?
4. Have you noticed any differences in mentorship practices between public and private university libraries?

❖ **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EXPLAIN**

The survey revealed that regarding the structure of the program, 97.0% (n=1163; M=557, F=606) agreed that there is a structured mentoring program at the institution and that it works well. Only 3.0% did not see it that way. . When asked what mentors do to help employees grow professionally and reach their career goals, 93.0% (n=1115; M=542, F=573) said that the mentor helps the employee grow professionally and reach their career goals. Only a tiny number (7.0%) disagreed. Mentorship was also connected to how happy and motivated people were at work. 88.0% of the 1060 people who answered (505 men and 555 women) said that mentoring affects how happy and motivated they are in their present employment. Ninety-five percent (n=1135; M=547, F=588) of those who answered said that there are variations between public and private university libraries when it comes to mentoring procedures. Only five percent said there is no difference. All of these results show that people in China's university libraries strongly believe that mentoring is linked to staff growth, contentment, and integration into the institution.

Test for Hypothesis:

❖ **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

- **Mentorship**

A "mentoring" relationship involves an experienced colleague teaching a less-experienced colleague about their professional path. This is often done via mentorship. Someone with greater life experience may mentor someone with less to help them reach their potential. The mentee receives a piece of the success since they've proved they're ready to climb the corporate ladder and may qualify for more aid. Mentoring may benefit the mentor when they can pass on their knowledge and abilities in a sector they care about. Mentoring is a way for an older, more experienced person (the mentor) to help a younger, less educated person (the mentee) grow personally and professionally. Every mentoring relationship should assist the mentee improve intellectually and professionally. More experienced librarians mentor less experienced colleagues at university libraries. Thus, mentees would be more equipped to overcome obstacles, advance in the workplace, and improve the world. Formal business contacts include well-planned programs with specific goals and deadlines, whereas informal ones are more chance meetings. Both commercial alliances are possible. A trustworthy, open, honest, and grateful mentor-mentee relationship is essential to learning and growth. The following are some benefits: the opportunity to meet like-minded people, learn from others, progress one's career, and inspire others. Mentoring programs that encourage academic professionals to improve their grades, volunteer, and study may boost work satisfaction. Mentors may find it easier to integrate into the workplace and determine their study intensity. Mentoring may begin in many ways (Adekoya & Fasae, 2021).

❖ **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

- **Job Satisfaction in China's Private University**

One definition of job satisfaction is the level of contentment, motivation, and engagement felt by faculty members working within the institutional framework of privately managed higher

education institutions in China. This includes their professional roles, responsibilities, and work environment. In China's private colleges, this is the accepted definition of job satisfaction. That which is said here is especially relevant to the professors employed by private universities. Specifically, it encompasses both subjective feelings and objective assessments of key facets of academic life. Teaching duties, salary, perks, career progression prospects, administrative support, and interactions with students and co-workers are all part of the job. Academic freedom, the degree to which one's own ideas match with the institution's objective, the stability of the institution, and the acknowledgement of triumphs are all factors that contribute to faculty members' work satisfaction in China's private universities. All things considered, contentment in one's job is a direct result of these elements. Private colleges and universities may not have the same resources, employment opportunities, or reputation as public institutions. This is so despite the fact that there are many benefits to private institutions, such as more flexible legislation, faster hiring procedures, and more creative classroom settings. Consequently, job satisfaction in these types of workplaces is often heavily influenced by how well the organisation meets the requirements for fair compensation, open and honest evaluation processes, reasonable workloads, and opportunities for career growth (Adebayo & Sunderman, 2023).

➤ **Relationship between Mentorship and job satisfaction in China's Private universities**

Linking mentorship and work contentment is becoming an increasingly significant aspect in China's higher education system, given the competitive and performance-driven nature of the country's private universities. When compared to public institutions, private ones tend to provide less employment security and less perks in the long run. Employees may feel more pressure and leave as a consequence of this. Mentoring, within the context of this debate, is a crucial support structure that may enhance job satisfaction. Mentoring is a great way for more seasoned staff members and librarians to learn the ropes and succeed in their careers. Because of this, they are able to adjust to the requirements of the organisation much more quickly. Instead of following rigid guidelines, mentorship programs at private universities tend to be more flexible and directed by department heads or other enthusiastic individuals. With any luck, it will help workers feel valued, increase their self-assurance, and identify more closely with the organization's goals. Having a sense of purpose, less job-related worry, and much more general happiness may all be achieved via this relationship. Mentoring also has the potential to speed up career advancement and provide employees with the knowledge to meet high performance standards, two factors that are known to have a direct impact on employee happiness on the job in private companies. However, these benefits may be diminished at private universities due to the absence of formal mentorship programs or programs that are ongoing. Improvements in job happiness, employee retention, and the effectiveness of China's private university system can only be achieved by instituting a mentoring culture (Akinlade et al., 2022).

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which analysed the relationship between Mentorship and job satisfaction in China's private universities.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Mentorship and job satisfaction in China's private universities.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Mentorship and job satisfaction in China's private universities.

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	566	5685.617	1059.761	.000
Within Groups	492.770	633	5.365		
Total	40081.390	1199			

In this investigation, the results were substantial. The F value is 1059.761, attaining significance with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha threshold. This signifies that "**H₂: There is a significant relationship between Mentorship and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University.**" is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The research among Chinese academics at private universities indicated a substantial association between job satisfaction and mentorship, therefore underlining the relevance of these elements in deciding teachers' contentment of their time at university. Whether formal or informal, mentoring initiatives support scholars in their job satisfaction, confidence, and connections to the academic community. When compared to their colleagues at public universities, private university faculty members may come against problems like a lot of courses, little research funding, and a feeling of social inequality. Having a mentor could practically save life considering the advantages on mental health, professional clarity, and resilience. The studies largely support the hypothesis that mentoring enhances professional and personal relationships on the workplace, thereby boosting motivation and teamwork. Participating students were more conscious of institutional norms, more driven to perform academically, more open to peer and instructor criticism. Most of all, the research found, mentoring relationships benefited individuals just beginning their academic careers. When first-time students join the academic world, they notably gain from the guidance, support, and validation mentors provide. A customised approach would be better than a one-size-fits-all one as the structure of the institution and the ability of the professors impacted the mentoring style and efficacy. By means of intentional mentoring, reducing teacher turnover and raising institutional commitment has shown to be beneficial for retention and academic success. Given the fierce competition for outstanding instructors and the critical need of maintaining good staff morale, Chinese lawmakers and officials engaged in the rapidly growing private education sector may find these results especially significant.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this study's findings highlight the critical role mentoring programs play in improving academic library faculty members' job happiness at public institutions across China. The results of a qualitative research of real-life experiences show that effective mentoring has positive effects on mentees' mental health, level of institutional engagement, and professional skill development. Under the right circumstances and with the backing of upper management, mentoring may help create a stimulating and collaborative work environment. However, these endeavours may not achieve their full potential due to institutional barriers including tight hierarchies, ambiguous expectations, and limited time. Academic libraries are undergoing transformations due to pedagogical and technical advancements, making it all the more important to engage in culturally appropriate mentoring programs. Future initiatives should focus on enhancing existing programs to meet the evolving needs of library staff members by making them more user-friendly, adaptable, and accessible. The result will be an improvement in both individual happiness and the institution's overall performance.

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