

Doctoral Research Brief

**How can Mentors help Teachers sustain Motivation at critical career junctures:
Integrating concepts from Education and Business to offer a dynamic understanding**

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Abstract

This integrated literature review delves into the dynamic nature of teacher motivation, emphasizing its pivotal role in long-term commitment and classroom effectiveness. The literature on teacher motivation has transitioned from questioning its relevance to exploring why and how it matters. Acknowledging motivation as a fluid process, influenced by various career factors, the study highlights its impact on attrition, particularly exacerbated by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. While mentors are recognized as vital in sustaining teacher motivation, the research aims to fill gaps in understanding how mentoring should adapt during critical career junctures.

Aim

This study seeks to provide fresh insights into the relationship between mentoring and motivation in education and business, offering a comprehensive understanding of their dynamic interplay.

Problem or Issue

Motivation is often seen as a static process (deLoof et al., 2019) i.e., when driving factors are met, the teacher is motivated. However, motivation is experienced in a dynamic manner as it will ebb and flow throughout the life of the teacher (Navarro et al., 2007). Changing motivation can impact the decisions teachers make in regard to staying in the profession over the course of their careers and thus, teacher attrition can be attributed to a lack of motivation on the part of the teacher (Tehseen & Ul Hadi, 2015). This problem has been further exasperated by the Covid-19 pandemic, with one in four teachers stating that they were likely to leave the profession by the end of the 2020/2021 school year (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Change can significantly impact educators' motivation to learn and achieve (Gonida and Lemos, 2019). Teachers, and in particular schoolteachers who interact with young children, have been placed under increased stress which may impact their motivation to teach as their students struggle to make sense of the recent economic, social, health, and political disruptions (Wong, 2020).

Mentors are reported to play an instrumental role in sustaining teacher motivation (He, 2009; Onjoro et al., 2015; Morettini et al., 2020), however, there is a dearth of understanding on how mentoring support needs to change at critical junctures of a teacher's career, especially in response to crisis events such as the pandemic or other political and social disruptions. Toward this end, there is a need for integrative literature reviews that can compare and critique the expanding knowledge base on mentoring and motivation to offer a dynamic view of the mentor's role in supporting teacher motivation. Thus, the purpose of this study is to review how the disciplines of education (i.e., teacher, and student mentoring and motivation as reported in

education research) and business (i.e., mentoring and motivation of employees in organizations as reported in business research) have conceptualized motivation, mentoring, and the relationship between those. Such an interdisciplinary inquiry can help to develop a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical perspectives that can guide our understanding of how mentoring may impact the dynamic ebb and flow of teachers' motivation.

Research Findings

In educational settings, a teacher's motivation is strongly linked to personal outcomes and favorable teaching approaches for their students. Daumiller et al. (2021) found that highly motivated teachers' practices were positively perceived by their students. Teacher motivation is an important component of self-concept. In a self-reported survey using a FIT Choice scale (Alexander et al., 2022), teachers who identified as highly motivated also score highly for self-efficacy. Business literature shows a heavier focus on the benefits of motivation on employee performance and ultimately, advancements for the organization. Kuvaas (2009) studied employee motivation in terms of work performance while Miquel et al. (2017) focuses on the benefits of having motivated employees for the stakeholders (e.g. investors, boards of directors etc.), not for the individual employee. Both educational and business motivational studies agree on one thing - there is a need to capture teacher/employee motivation in a dynamic way and this is not currently being done. A common shortcoming of motivation research in both settings is that the employee is being observed at only one point in time rather than measuring their motivation over time (Murnieks et al., 2019; Daumiller et al., 2021; Holzberger & Prestele, 2021).

Review of studies examining mentoring in the field of education indicate that mentoring is considered a "mutually trustworthy learning relationship" (Vrtič et al., 2020, p. 15) where mentors are expected to exercise interpersonal skills such as listening and empathy to both support and challenge their mentees (Ghosh, 2012). Some highlight the importance of recognizing the contextual influences on mentoring (Brondyk & Searby, 2013; Lee & Feng, 2007; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) and how contexts guide the purpose of mentoring to focus on socialization of mentees into the different systems they are trying to acclimatize into for their work (Fairbanks et al., 2000; Hobson et al., 2009; Ellis et al., 2020). However, some noted the need to go beyond mere socialization that depends on transmissive principles of learning to constructivist and critical principles where mentors are expected to challenge and transform their mentee's thinking capacity through promoting collaborative inquiry and reflection (Richter et al., 2013; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021).

The studies examining mentoring in the field of business acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of mentoring through identifying the different ways that mentors can support mentee's growth. For instance, a mentor's role has been reported to range from offering support for mentees' career advancement that enhances their autonomy, competence, and relatedness at work (Janssen et al., 2013; 2016; Vianen et al., 2018) to psychosocial support needed for mentee's well-being when faced with microaggressions and other anxiety-inducing experiences in workplaces (Ragins et al., 2017; Varghese et al., 2020). Mentors have also been called upon to undertake critical reflective work collaboratively with their mentees that can enable both of them to build awareness of how their intersectional identities interact with the systems within which they are situated (Warhust & Black, 2019; Weinberg, 2019).

Our review reveals the widespread use of Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT; 2000) in both educational and business articles exploring mentoring and motivation. In

education, SDT enhances intrinsic motivation, focusing on the mentor-mentee relationship (Jameson and Torres, 2019), linking successful mentoring to doctoral students' self-efficacy and dissertation completion. In business, SDT relates to organization-based self-esteem (Yun Sun et al., 2013), measuring success through employee performance and organizational rewards. While both studies feature SDT, they differ in emphasizing individual vs. organizational benefits. Business literature examines mentor impact on employee self-efficacy (Joo et al., 2018) and job satisfaction (Van Vianen et al., 2017). Education literature underscores the importance of a high-quality mentoring relationship, emphasizing feedback, customized support, autonomy, competence, and a strength-focused, open mentor-mentee relationship (Lin et al., 2019; Fayram et al., 2018; Jameson and Torres, 2019; He, 2009).

Significance

The findings of this review help to identify unique ways in which the fields of education and business examine the relationship between mentoring and motivation. As indicated in the articles we reviewed, the business field focuses on the output of the mentoring relationship and measures its success by assessing the increased productivity of the employee and gains for the organization. The education field tends to focus more on the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship, the communication between both parties and the increased benefits for the individual teacher through increased autonomy and self-efficacy with the ultimate goal of improving the educational experience for teachers and students and retaining teachers in the profession.

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