

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/395472789>

Identifying and Presenting Key Factors Influencing the Quality of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship in Entrepreneurship

Conference Paper · September 2025

CITATIONS

0

READS

25

2 authors:



Abdul Rafi Sulaimani

Persian Gulf University

2 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Helaludin Abi

Persian Gulf University

4 PUBLICATIONS 20 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Identifying and Presenting Key Factors Influencing the Quality of the Mentor–Mentee Relationship in Entrepreneurship

Abdul Rafi Sulaimani¹, Helaludin Abi^{2*}

1. M.A. Graduate in Business Administration (Entrepreneurship), Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran
email address: sulaimanirafi@gmail.com
2. M.A. Student in Business Administration (Entrepreneurship), Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran*
email address: abi.helal@mehr.pgu.ac.ir
WhatsApp Number: 009398310809

Abstract

This research aims to identify and present the factors influencing the quality of the relationship between entrepreneurship mentors and mentees. Mentoring, as one of the most effective methods for entrepreneurial learning and development, plays a significant role in transferring knowledge, skills, and experience from seasoned entrepreneurs to nascent ones. However, the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship critically impacts the effectiveness of this process and can affect the individual and organizational success of both parties. In this study, through a review of the literature and analysis of previous research, key factors such as goal alignment, learning style compatibility, balance between guidance and autonomy, mutual respect, effective communication, constructive feedback, and continuous evaluation were identified as core components of relationship quality. The research methodology was descriptive-analytical, utilizing a review of credible domestic and international sources. The findings indicate that attention to these factors can lead to increased satisfaction, motivation, self-confidence, and performance among young entrepreneurs, ultimately contributing to the growth and sustainability of nascent businesses. Furthermore, this research offers practical strategies for enhancing the quality of mentoring relationships, which can be utilized by policymakers, entrepreneurship development organizations, mentors, and mentees. The results of this study are considered a crucial step toward improving the mentoring process and strengthening the country's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Mentoring, Mentor-Mentee Relationship Quality, Factors Influencing Mentoring, Entrepreneurial Skill Development, Occupational and Psychological Support.



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Introduction

The development of effective mentors in the field of entrepreneurship is essential for achieving sustainable economic and social progress. Despite its importance, this dimension often receives insufficient attention in macro-level policies and entrepreneurship development programs. In the 21st century, expectations of university graduates extend far beyond technical knowledge. To thrive in today's dynamic job market, they must possess critical competencies such as digital literacy, creativity, innovation, and communication skills (Eslam Bolchi et al., 2022). These skills enable individuals to adapt and perform effectively in complex environments. However, vocational and technical education systems tend to focus primarily on technical training, often neglecting the cultivation of entrepreneurial mindsets and intrinsic motivation key elements for success in entrepreneurial endeavors (Bani Amirian et al., 2017). In this context, the knowledge and experience of seasoned entrepreneurs serve as valuable assets for aspiring entrepreneurs. Mentors play a crucial role by offering guidance, emotional support, and practical insights that not only boost mentees' self-confidence but also help them navigate and utilize available resources effectively (Eslam Bolchi et al., 2023). A growing body of research highlights the positive impact of mentoring on entrepreneurial learning, business development, and competency enhancement (Bosward et al., 2023). Studies show that mentorship improves financial literacy, marketing capabilities, and emotional resilience among entrepreneurs (Nabi et al., 2019). Moreover, mentor-mentee relationships provide access to valuable networks and help strengthen entrepreneurial and social skills (Santini et al., 2020). Evidence also indicates that mentoring increases hope, confidence, and entrepreneurial motivation (Matagi & Baluku, 2019), and contributes significantly to the growth of social entrepreneurship (Fernandes Tomaz & Catalão Lopes, 2019). Mentors experienced individuals with years of practical exposure to challenges and opportunities in specific industries can offer young entrepreneurs not only knowledge but also strategic insights and networking opportunities (Momen Nejad Limoudehi et al., 2022). The mentoring process is mutually beneficial, generating value for mentors, mentees, and their organizations alike. The transfer of expertise through mentoring or business consulting has been shown to play a pivotal role in entrepreneurial success (Eslam Bolchi et al., 2023). Different forms of mentoring formal, informal, peer-based, and group mentoring have proven effective across diverse entrepreneurial contexts (Shittu, 2017; Koberg et al., 2018; St-Jean et al., 2016). Benefits such as increased self-efficacy, motivation, and entrepreneurial orientation are frequently reported outcomes of these practices (Vila et al., 2021). Despite these advantages, a central question remains: Is technical competence alone sufficient for entrepreneurial success, Evidence suggests that the experience and guidance of mentors are equally critical. Recent research indicates that the presence of a mentor, the strength of the mentor-mentee relationship, and the quality of their interaction directly influence entrepreneurial outcomes (Chang & Kiang, 2022). When applied effectively, mentoring practices can enhance entrepreneurs' self-



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

confidence, strategic thinking, and business growth potential (Vila et al., 2021). Against this backdrop, the central research question of this study is: What factors influence the quality of the relationship between entrepreneurship mentors and mentees? More specifically, what characteristics and behaviors in both mentors and mentees foster the development of a high-quality, effective mentoring relationship? This study seeks to explore these factors and identify mentor attributes that most significantly contribute to mentee success. The findings offer practical implications for policymakers, entrepreneurship development organizations, mentors, and mentees, contributing to more effective mentoring practices and a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Research Significance and Necessity

A review of the existing literature and previous studies reveals that the quality of the relationship between entrepreneurship mentors and mentees significantly influences the mentees' learning, development, and overall performance. Despite this, the specific factors that shape and enhance this relationship have not been thoroughly or systematically identified. This gap in knowledge poses a challenge for the effective design and implementation of mentorship programs, particularly in selecting appropriate mentors for entrepreneurial mentees. Given that mentees often require tailored guidance across various stages of their entrepreneurial journey, it is critical for mentors to understand their individual needs, goals, and motivations. Without a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to a high-quality mentoring relationship, the impact and success of mentorship initiatives may be diminished or even rendered ineffective. The lack of empirical clarity in this area underscores the importance of this research, as it addresses a vital yet underexplored aspect of entrepreneurial development.

Research Objectives and Contribution

While the role of mentoring in entrepreneurial development has been acknowledged in the literature, the relational dynamics between mentors and mentees—particularly the factors that define and shape the quality of these relationships—have received limited systematic attention. Most existing studies have primarily focused on the outcomes of mentoring or the structural design of mentorship programs, often overlooking the interpersonal and contextual variables that influence relationship effectiveness. Addressing this gap, the primary objective of this study is to identify and articulate the key factors that influence the quality of the relationship between entrepreneurial mentors and mentees. By focusing on the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of the mentoring relationship, this research proposes an integrated conceptual framework that highlights how these variables contribute to mentee satisfaction, enhanced performance, and entrepreneurial success. From a practical perspective, the findings offer valuable insights for informed decision-making in the selection and training of mentors, as well as in the design of support programs tailored to the actual needs of novice entrepreneurs. Improving the quality of mentoring relationships—particularly during the early stages can significantly enhance the confidence, motivation, knowledge, and skills of mentees,



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

thereby fostering the long-term sustainability of their ventures. Moreover, the success of mentorship programs can lead to broader societal and economic benefits, such as increased employment, innovation, self-reliance, and national economic growth. By addressing both theoretical and practical dimensions, this study contributes to the advancement of research in the field of entrepreneurial mentoring and offers a foundation for future empirical investigations. It also provides actionable strategies for policymakers, entrepreneurship support organizations, and program designers aiming to strengthen mentorship practices and promote a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Theoretical Foundations

The concept of mentoring has deep historical roots, with its earliest reference found in classical literature. The term “mentor” originates from Homer’s *Odyssey*, in which the character Mentor is entrusted with guiding and protecting Odysseus’s son, Telemachus. This literary depiction captures the essence of mentorship: the transfer of knowledge, wisdom, and support from an experienced individual to a less experienced one (Allen & Eby, 2010). Mentoring is broadly defined as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced individual the mentor supports the learning, growth, and success of a less experienced person the mentee. This support may include role modeling, coaching, advising, and facilitating access to networks and opportunities (Kram, 1985; Allen & Eby, 2010). Over time, mentoring has become a well-established tool for personal and professional development across a variety of contexts, including education, industry, management, and entrepreneurship. Scholarly research has demonstrated that mentoring relationships can positively affect career advancement, leadership development, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007; Eby et al., 2013). In educational settings, mentoring contributes to improved academic performance and career readiness among students, especially when embedded within structured institutional support systems (Mullen et al., 2010). In the entrepreneurial context, mentoring takes on unique importance. Entrepreneurs, particularly those in early stages, often face high levels of uncertainty and complexity. Entrepreneurial mentoring defined as a supportive relationship between an experienced entrepreneur and a novice plays a critical role in addressing these challenges. It assists in opportunity recognition, strategic decision-making, marketing, financial planning, and the development of entrepreneurial identity (St-Jean & Audet, 2012; Cull, 2006).

Mentoring support in entrepreneurship generally includes three primary functions:

1. Career-related functions, such as sponsorship and coaching.
2. Psychosocial functions, including emotional support and role modeling.
3. Professional development functions, which help mentees develop their leadership and innovation capabilities (Ragins & Kram, 2007).



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Mentoring is also commonly embedded in entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly within incubators and accelerators, where experienced entrepreneurs or business professionals offer structured or informal guidance. These mentoring activities include consulting, investment advice, network facilitation, and sharing of tacit knowledge practices that have been shown to improve startup performance and long-term sustainability (Clarysse et al., 2015; Nordeng Fauchald, 2022).

Furthermore, diverse mentoring models exist to suit different contexts and needs. These include:

- Formal mentoring, typically organized through institutions with clearly defined goals and timelines.
- Informal mentoring, which evolves organically through mutual interest.
- Peer mentoring, in which individuals at similar levels share knowledge and experiences.
- E-mentoring, a growing trend enabled by digital platforms, facilitating long-distance or asynchronous mentoring relationships (Single & Single, 2005).

The dynamic and often volatile nature of entrepreneurship necessitates adaptive and flexible mentoring relationships. Recent studies suggest that effective entrepreneurial mentoring enhances decision-making quality, builds self-confidence, and promotes sustainable business practices (Chang & Qiang, 2022; St-Jean & Tremblay, 2020). In particular, mentors who have firsthand entrepreneurial experience can offer practical, context-specific insights that are critical for the growth and survival of startups.

Entrepreneurial Mentors

In contemporary entrepreneurship ecosystems, a mentor is commonly defined as a knowledgeable and experienced individual who offers ongoing guidance, advice, and support to a novice entrepreneur. This relationship enables the mentee to leverage the mentor's competencies and experiences to foster personal and professional growth. Mentoring is characterized as a dyadic and developmental relationship, involving both verbal and non-verbal interactions aimed at facilitating the mentee's learning and adaptation (Kram, 1985; Allen & Eby, 2010). An effective mentor adapts to the evolving needs of the mentee, ensuring that the guidance provided is contextually relevant and developmentally appropriate. Key characteristics of successful entrepreneurial mentors include deep industry experience, interpersonal competence, accessibility, trustworthiness, technological literacy, and strong communication and networking skills (Cox, 2005; St-Jean, 2012). These attributes help mentors build meaningful relationships that extend beyond knowledge transfer, fostering confidence, resilience, and strategic thinking in mentees. It is important to distinguish between mentoring and coaching. Coaching is typically a short-term, performance-driven relationship focusing on specific skill development, while mentoring is more holistic and long-term, centered on the personal and professional growth of the mentee (Marshall & McQuaid, 2015;



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Clutterbuck, 2004). In entrepreneurial contexts, mentors are often active or retired business professionals with direct experience in launching and managing ventures. Their prior exposure to entrepreneurial uncertainty, failure, and recovery equips them to offer mentees context-sensitive advice and emotional support that non-entrepreneurial mentors may lack. Empirical evidence suggests that entrepreneurial mentors can help mentees develop both tacit knowledge and practical skills, such as opportunity recognition, team building, investor relations, and strategic planning, competencies critical for entrepreneurial survival and growth (Eesley & Wang, 2017; St-Jean & Audet, 2012). Additionally, experienced mentors often hold high levels of credibility and influence within entrepreneurial networks, allowing mentees to access valuable social capital and resources (Ozgen & Baron, 2007). In contrast, non-entrepreneurial mentors such as academic advisors or financial consultants may offer technical or managerial knowledge but lack the firsthand insights and social legitimacy often needed in navigating entrepreneurial environments.

Stages of the Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationships typically evolve through a **four-stage process**, which reflects the dynamic and adaptive nature of personal development over time. Understanding these phases is essential for structuring mentoring programs and managing expectations throughout the mentoring lifecycle. Each stage requires different approaches and levels of engagement to sustain the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985; Scandura & Williams, 2001).

1. Initiation Stage

The **initiation stage** marks the beginning of the mentor-mentee relationship. At this point, both individuals engage informally, aiming to establish a connection based on shared values, goals, and mutual expectations. This early interaction often involves uncertainty and limited trust as both parties evaluate compatibility and commitment (Scandura & Williams, 2001). As rapport builds, the relationship may transition into a more structured format, with defined roles, objectives, and expectations including the scope of training and frequency of interaction. In formal mentoring programs, mentor-mentee matching may be administratively driven or participant-driven. The quality of matching is often enhanced by considering demographic variables, expertise, communication styles, and professional interests (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011). While self-selected mentoring relationships typically exhibit stronger initial commitment and engagement, structured matching processes can offer strategic alignment in large-scale programs (Allen & Eby, 2010).



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

2. Cultivation Stage

Following the establishment of trust and mutual understanding, the relationship enters the cultivation stage, which is often regarded as the most productive and dynamic phase. During this period, the mentor provides ongoing support, advice, and constructive feedback, while the mentee actively engages in self-directed learning and entrepreneurial development. The mentor-mentee relationship may become formalized through agreements that outline specific developmental goals, which may include business equity, joint ventures, or shared social objectives (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Communication intensifies, fostering a deeper interpersonal connection. Regular discussions often include progress reviews, problem-solving sessions, and revisions of short- and long-term goals. This stage is essential for enhancing the mentee's self-confidence, decision-making, and business acumen (Briones & Janoske, 2013; St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

3. Separation Stage

The separation stage typically signifies the conclusion of the formal mentoring relationship. This phase may be initiated by either party for various reasons, such as goal completion, evolving career paths, geographic relocation, or the mentee's desire for autonomy (Kram, 1985). Separation can be a healthy and natural evolution, reflecting the mentee's increased competence and reduced dependency. However, challenges may arise if expectations about the relationship's end are misaligned. A premature or unilateral separation might lead to emotional discomfort or perceptions of abandonment, particularly if one party feels the process was incomplete or unfair. Conversely, a well-managed separation promotes independence, encourages lifelong learning, and enhances professional identity (St-Jean, 2012).

4. Redefinition Stage

In the redefinition stage, the mentoring relationship transitions from a structured developmental role to a more collegial or informal interaction. This often occurs when both individuals have mutually benefited from the relationship and are interested in maintaining a connection based on mutual respect rather than formal guidance (Johnson, 2003). Successful redefinition is more likely when the prior phases concluded on positive terms and the relationship evolved naturally. Informal continuation can take the form of friendship, peer support, or occasional collaboration. However, in formal mentoring programs especially those with geographic or institutional boundaries redefinition is less common due to logistical and contextual constraints (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011). In such cases, closure is more definitive, though professional respect and networking may persist.



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Empirical Background of the Research

Row	Researchers	Research Title	Summary and Research Findings
1	Mostafa Eslambolchi, Mohammad Azizi, Seyed Rasoul Hosseini (2023)	Presenting and Validating a Model for Developing Entrepreneurial Mentors in Iran.	The study confirms that mentoring knowledge and competence greatly impact entrepreneurial coach development. The strongest relationship was found between market knowledge and promotional activities, while the weakest was between family support and personality. Less experienced entrepreneurs are advised to maintain communication with senior mentors to refine their mentoring skills and support business revitalization.
2	Boyoung Kim (2023)	Three Actors in Entrepreneurial Mentoring and Their Impact on Perceived Mentoring Effectiveness: The Context of Formal Korean Mentoring.	This study finds that the willingness to accept advice enhances entrepreneurial competence. Mentors' problem-solving support positively impacts mentees' satisfaction and skill development, while their motivational guidance significantly contributes to building entrepreneurial competence and satisfaction. Additionally, agency support plays a crucial role in strengthening entrepreneurial capabilities.
3	Wubben van Rooij, Joep Verheijen, & Onobu Master (2023)	The Relational Dimension of Feedback Interactions: A Study of Early Feedback Sessions between Entrepreneurs and Potential Mentors	This study reveals that feedback is crucial in forming mentoring relationships, not just after they are established. It emphasizes early conversational alignment and structured feedback, which foster long-term mentoring success. These insights guide mentors and entrepreneurs in effectively initiating and shaping feedback discussions.
4	Ragnhild Nordeng Fauchald, Lise	Leveraging Entrepreneurial Experiences in Student-Centered Mentoring Processes	The study finds that mentors acquire entrepreneurial experience through formal lessons and real-world activities, transferring it to mentees via explanation and experiential learning. Effective communication enhances mentees' learning and growth.
5	Mostafa Eslambolchi, Mohammad Azizi, Seyed Rasoul Hosseini (2022)	Entrepreneurial Mentor Nurturing Ecosystem	This research identifies 12 key factors for developing an entrepreneurial mentor ecosystem, divided into formal and informal categories. Formal factors include mentor recruitment, training processes, planning, and educational enrichment. Informal factors encompass professional associations, supportive policies, career pathing, family support, social responsibilities, knowledge prioritization, promotional activities, and social valuing.



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

6	Yanrou Chang & Qiang Xing (2022)	Entrepreneurial Mentoring, Financial Support, and Patent Incubation: Evidence from Chinese Licensing Devices	The study finds that entrepreneurial mentorship positively influences patent licensing—having more mentors, greater interaction, and stronger relationships leads to an increase in licensed patents. In contrast, financial support initially boosts patent licensing but reverses after reaching a certain threshold. Additionally, both effects are amplified when accelerators operate in regions with strong support policies.
7	Saurabh A. Lal, Liuyi Chen, Diana P. Mason (2022)	Digital Platforms and Entrepreneurial Support: A Field Experiment in Online Mentoring	The study found that showing a video of a successful mentor-mentee relationship increases the likelihood of reaching out to a mentor, especially for women entrepreneurs, but does not affect actual contact. Instructional videos on platform usage or message writing had no significant impact. However, entrepreneurs who actively engage with the platform and craft strong introductory messages are more successful in establishing connections.
9	Leoncio Matagi, Martin Baluku, Khemisi Msanj, Julius Fred Kikooma, & Kathleen Otto (2019)	Entrepreneurial Socialization and Psychological Capital: Cross-Cultural and Multi-Group Analyses of the Impact of Mentoring, Optimism, and Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intentions	The results of this paper have shown that: mentoring, hope, and self-confidence are positively and significantly correlated with entrepreneurial intention. Hope and self-confidence play a mediating role in the relationship between mentoring and entrepreneurial intention; meaning mentoring increases hope and self-confidence, and these two factors increase entrepreneurial intention. The program results varied across three different countries and depended on the employment status, gender, and culture of each country.
10	Lilli Catrina Villa, Alissa Ruth, Rachel Lochmann, Elizabeth Canto (2021)	Increasing Self-Efficacy in Mentoring Relationships for Aspiring Entrepreneurs in Community Colleges	This study confirms that effective mentoring techniques enhance mentees' entrepreneurial self-efficacy when tailored to their needs and goals. Higher self-efficacy boosts entrepreneurial intention and motivation, leading to business growth. While student diversity has no direct effect, groups like women, ethnic minorities, and first-generation college students benefit from additional mentor support.
11	Joseph Henson (2020)	Best Practices for Mentoring in Arts Entrepreneurship Education: Findings from a Delphi Study	This research identifies key elements of effective arts entrepreneurship mentoring. Experts emphasize mentors' psychological and career roles motivator, confidant, and guide, while highlighting essential skills like critical thinking, networking, and business model development.
12	Inês Fernandes-Tomaz & Margarida Catalão-Lopes (2019)	Improving the Mentoring Process for Social Entrepreneurship in Portugal: A Qualitative Study	Mentoring plays a key role in social entrepreneurship by fostering innovation, enhancing skills, expanding networks, and addressing challenges. To improve the process, the paper suggests diversifying mentors, strengthening collaboration, and tailoring methods to entrepreneurs' needs.



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

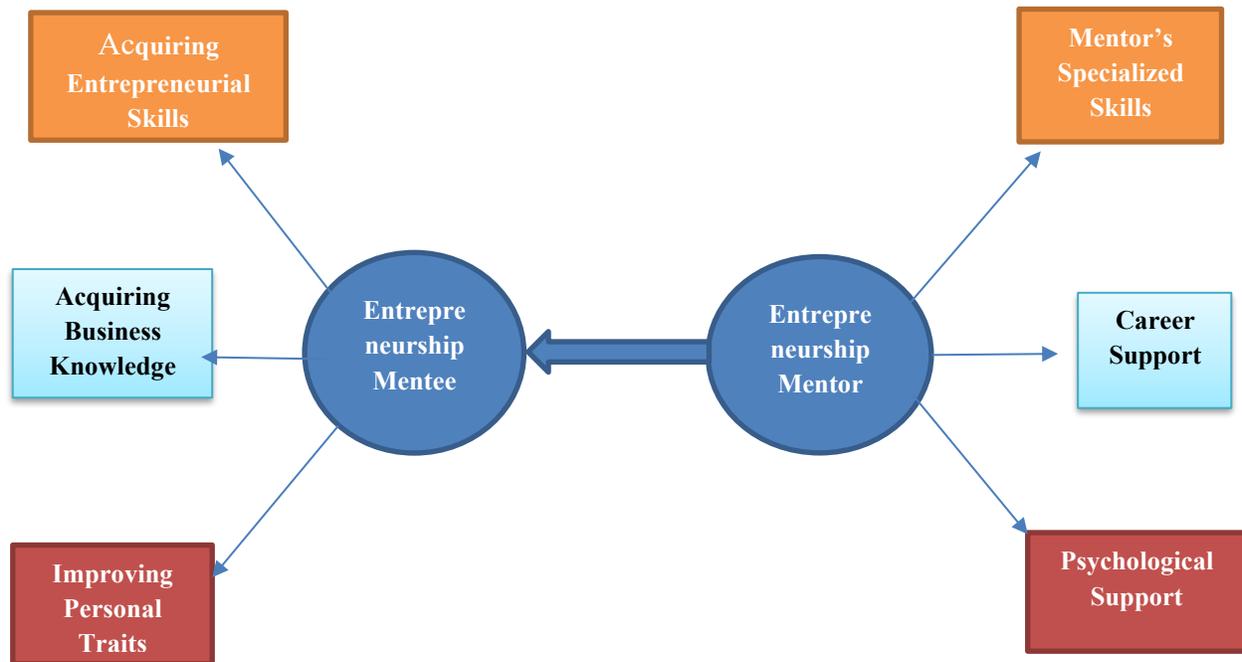
21 August 2025

No	High Frequency Indicators	Frequency	Weight
1	Family Support Characteristics	3	0.006
	Having a Market	6	0.013
	Personality	10	0.021
2	Supportive Family	3	0.006
	Professional Associations	2	0.004
	Continuous, Purposeful Mentorship	9	0.019
	Entrepreneurship Training	4	0.008
3	Supportive Policies	2	0.004
	Social Valuation	4	0.008
	Problem-Solving Provided by Mentor	8	0.017
4	Motivational Role/Performance by a Mentor	3	0.006
	Social-Psychological Support: "Emotional Career Support"	11	0.023
5	Social Impact	7	0.015
	Parental Influence on an Individual's Likelihood to Start a Company	4	0.008
6	Providing Entrepreneurship Training	3	0.006
	Entrepreneurial Goals for Trainees	4	0.008
7	Career Support from Mentors as a Stimulus	5	0.011
	Role Modeling, Psychological Functions	7	0.015
8	Trainee Characteristics: Openness	11	0.023
	Mentor Availability	10	0.021
	Career-Related Functions	6	0.013
	Psychological Functions	9	0.019
9	Emotional Support from Role Model Presence	7	0.015
	Development of Financial, Product	11	0.023
	Entrepreneurial Career Development	6	0.013
10	Behavioral Aspects uncertainty, flexibility, innovation, Learning: This includes knowledge in areas such as management..	10	0.021
	Ability to Provide Guidance/Mentorship	5	0.011
	Establishing a Relationship with a Mentor	3	0.006
11	Establishing a Relationship with a Mentor	9	0.019
	Entrepreneurs' Self-Confidence	10	0.021
12	Feeling of Similarity between	11	0.023
	Self-confidence and Hopefulness	10	0.021
13	Entrepreneurial Self-Confidence	10	0.021

No	High Frequency Indicators	Frequency	Weight
14	Professional Associations	6	0.013
	Sense of Belonging	11	0.023
	Personality Traits of Trainee	10	0.021
15	Understanding Entrepreneurs' Specific Needs at Various Mentoring Relationship Stages	3	0.006
	Mentor Selection: Gender Differences in Access to Mentors	4	0.008
16	Social Interactions	8	0.017
	Expertise of the Provider and Feedback Timeliness	11	0.023
17	Strong Emotional Bond	8	0.017
	Learning Facilitator	6	0.013
18	Supportive Mentor and Familiar Role Model	11	0.023
	Increasing Trainee's Self-Confidence	10	0.021
19	Feeling of Similarity between Trainee and Mentor	11	0.023
	Increasing Trainee's Self-Confidence	10	0.021
20	Utilizing Mentor's Knowledge and Experience	6	0.013
	Enhancement of Entrepreneurial and Social Skills	5	0.011
21	Problem Solving	8	0.017
	Uncertainty; Dealing with Customers, Suppliers, Investors	5	0.011
22	Mentors' Encouragement Methods: Mentors' Commitment Methods	11	0.023
	Providing Understandable and Practical Explanations and Examples	8	0.017
23	Experiences	6	0.013
	Open Communication and Encouragement	11	0.023
24	Storytelling, Active Listening	8	0.017
	Increasing Trainees' Motivation, Commitment, and Self-Confidence	10	0.021
25	High Number of Mentors	9	0.019
	Trainee Gaining Positive Emotions/Feelings	11	0.023
26	Higher Education Institutions	4	0.008
	Business Support by Mentor	7	0.015
27	Business Mentorship Elements: Mentor's business approach	9	0.019
	Providing Training	4	0.008
27	Mentors' Motivation, Experience, and Methods	8	0.017
	Trainee Skill Acquisition: Ideation, Innovation, Management, and Entrepreneurship	3	0.006
27	Utilizing Social and Professional Networks	3	0.006
	Total frequency of indicators	475	1



Conceptual Model of Entrepreneurship Mentorship



Entrepreneurship Mentee

An entrepreneurship mentee is an individual who is either new to the entrepreneurial landscape or intends to establish their own business. Depending on their skills, educational background, and current stage in the entrepreneurial process, they require the guidance and support of an experienced and knowledgeable mentor in the relevant field. The mentor plays a crucial role in assisting the mentee in overcoming challenges and enhancing their chances of success (Eslambolchi et al., 2023).

Acquiring Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition refers to the enhancement of an individual's ability to interact with customers, engage with suppliers, and develop an entrepreneurial mindset. These skills include fostering creativity, ideation, risk-taking, and the capability to assess innovative ideas—all of which are essential for success in the business environment (Marshall & McQuit, 2015).

Acquiring Business Knowledge

Business knowledge acquisition encompasses learning about market dynamics, product development, and the application of specialized knowledge in fields such as management, marketing, finance, and product quality. This knowledge enables entrepreneurs to make



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

informed decisions and manage their businesses more effectively (Petridou & Kyrgidou, 2013).

Enhancement of Personal Traits

The enhancement of entrepreneurs' personal traits involves increasing self-confidence, adaptability, motivation, optimism, openness, engagement, improved social communication skills, and willingness to embrace change. These characteristics help entrepreneurs effectively navigate business challenges and enhance their overall performance (Petridou & Kyrgidou, 2013).

Entrepreneurship Mentor

Entrepreneurship mentors are experienced individuals with specialized knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship who assist young or inexperienced entrepreneurs in achieving success. These mentors play a crucial role in guiding entrepreneurs through the process of establishing a new business, developing business strategies, and addressing entrepreneurial challenges (Eslambolchi et al., 2023).

Mentor's Specialized Skills

A mentor's specialized skills include problem-solving, motivation-building, effective mentoring techniques, clear and comprehensive explanations, storytelling, active listening, and understanding the specific needs of entrepreneurs at various stages of their journey. These skills enable mentors to provide meaningful and effective support to their mentees (Nordang Facchald et al., 2022).

Career Support

Career support provided by mentors includes career stimulation, entrepreneurial career development, networking, and business model enhancement. Such support helps entrepreneurs expand their career opportunities and establish their businesses sustainably (Hanson, 2020).

Psychological Support

Psychological support includes counseling, friendship, acceptance, emotional encouragement, reassurance, commitment, fostering positive feelings, empathy, and alleviating entrepreneurial concerns. This type of support plays a vital role in maintaining entrepreneurs' motivation and mental well-being (Ankuoh & Ifeoma, 2019).



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Conclusion

This study set out to identify and analyze the key factors that influence the quality of relationships between entrepreneurship mentors and mentees. The findings confirm that mentoring serves as a powerful mechanism for entrepreneurial learning and development, with the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship being a critical determinant of its overall effectiveness. Several essential factors emerged as foundational to a successful mentoring relationship. These include alignment of goals, adaptation to individual learning styles, an appropriate balance between guidance and mentee autonomy, mutual respect, clear and effective communication, constructive feedback, and ongoing evaluation of progress. The comprehensive literature review and empirical evidence illustrate that mentoring substantially enhances young entrepreneurs' knowledge, skills, self-confidence, motivation, and networking abilities, all of which contribute to the sustainability and success of startup ventures. Moreover, experienced mentors play an indispensable role by transferring practical knowledge, offering psychological and career support, and fostering both personal and professional growth in mentees. The initial phase of the mentoring relationship, where trust and communication are established, is especially crucial for ensuring long-term success. Based on these insights, it is imperative that careful mentor selection, targeted training, and empowerment programs be prioritized. Additionally, mentoring initiatives should be tailored to meet the specific needs of mentees. Policymakers and entrepreneurship support organizations must also invest in creating robust infrastructures and networking platforms to promote the formation and maintenance of high-quality mentoring relationships. Ultimately, this study provides actionable recommendations and practical frameworks that can benefit mentors, mentees, program administrators, and policymakers alike. It also contributes to strengthening the national entrepreneurial ecosystem. Future research should focus on exploring the contextual and cultural dimensions of mentoring relationships and examine the potential influence of emerging digital technologies on entrepreneurial mentoring practices.



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

References

1. Azizi, Mohammad; Hosseini, Seyed Rasoul; Eslambolchi, Mostafa (2022). Entrepreneurship Mentor Development Ecosystem. Quarterly Journal of Entrepreneurship Development, Vol. 15, No. 1. DOI: [10.22059/jed.2022.323146.653657](https://doi.org/10.22059/jed.2022.323146.653657)
2. Bani Amarian, Maryam; Javadi Pour, Mohammad; Hakim Zadeh, Rezvan; Dorani, Kamal; Khodaei, Ebrahim; Mobaraki, Hassan (2017). A Comparative Study of Technical and Vocational Education (Formal and Academic) with an Emphasis on Entrepreneurial Intent Among Canada, Germany, India, and Iran. Quarterly Journal of Iranian Curriculum Studies, Vol. 12, No. 45. DOI: [10.1007/s40497-022-00310-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40497-022-00310-8)
3. Eslambolchi, Azizi, M.; Hosseini, S. (2023). Providing a Validation Framework for the Development of Entrepreneurship Mentors in Iran. Journal of Sustainable Agricultural Entrepreneurship Studies, No. 10. DOI: [10.22069/jead.2023.21362.1723](https://doi.org/10.22069/jead.2023.21362.1723)
4. Momen Nejad, Hejazi Asad; Rahmani, Hamed (2023). Designing a Mentoring Model for the Development of Food Industry Startups. Productivity Management, Vol. 17. DOI: [10.30495/QJOPM.2022.1945785.3272](https://doi.org/10.30495/QJOPM.2022.1945785.3272)
5. Bozward David, Rogers Mottew, Angba Cynthia, Zhang Carol, (How can entrepreneurial interventions in a university context impact the entrepreneurial intention of their students.(2023) Entrepreneurship Education. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s41959-022-00083-x>
6. Nabi Ghulam, Walmsley Andreas & Akhtar Imran. Mentoring functions and entrepreneur development in the early years of university (2019), Taylor & Francis Group. DOI: [10.1080/03075079.2019.1665009](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665009)
7. Santini Sara, Baschiera Barbara & socci Maraco(2020): older adult entrepreneurs as mentors of young people neither in employment nor education and training(Evidences from multi-learning program, Educational Gerontology). DOI: [10.1080/03601277.2020.1714142](https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2020.1714142)
8. Fernandes thomaz & catalao lopes Margarida (2019). Improving the mentoring process for social entrepreneurship in Portugal: Journal of entrepreneurship. DOI: [10.1080/19420676.2018.1561497](https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2018.1561497)
9. Ayodele Ibrahim (2017): the role of mentoring, Africa's youth employment challenge (promoting youth entrepreneurship). DOI: [10.19088/1968-2017.132](https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2017.132)
10. Elin kabberod, siw M. fosstenlokken, per olav Ersted, (2018) "peer mentoring in entrepreneurship education: towards a role typology", education. DOI: [10.1108/ET-08-2017-0109](https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-08-2017-0109)
11. Elin Kubberod, siw M. fosstenlokken, per Olav erstad: (2018). Peer mentoring in entrepreneurship education. DOI: [10.1108/ET-08-2017-0109](https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-08-2017-0109)
12. Etienne St-tean, & Meruna Radu-lefebvre.(2017). Mentoring functions, learning goal orientation, and novice entrepreneurs,(international journal of entrepreneurial behavior & research). doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-09-2016-0299
13. David Mckevitt Donna Marshall, (2015): the legitimacy of entrepreneurial mentoring. (international journal of entrepreneurial behavior & research). DOI: [10.1108/IJEBR-05-2014-0089](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-05-2014-0089)
14. Villa Katerina, Alissa roth, Rachel luchmun & cantu Elizabeth(2021): increasing self-efficacy in mentoring relationships for aspiring entrepreneurial community colleges, journal of research and practice. doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2021.1896397
15. Chang Yanru & Qiang cheng,(2022), entrepreneurial mentoring, financial support and incubator patent licensing.(Chinese incubators publishing limited). DOI: [10.1108/EJIM-03-2022-0140](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-03-2022-0140)
16. Fauchald musdeng & lise aaboen,(2022),Utilisation of entrepreneurial experiences in student-driven mentoring processes, published by Elsevier. doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100651
17. Ruben van Werven, Cornelissen Joep & Bouwmeester Onno,(2023). The relational dimension of feedback interactions: A study of early feedback meetings between entrepreneurs and potential mentors.(British Journal of management). DOI: [10.1111/1467-8551.12615](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12615)



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

18. Eesley C & Wang Y, (2017). Social influence in career choice: evidence from a randomized field experiment on entrepreneurial mentorship. *Res policy*. doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2017.01.010
 19. David McKeivitt Donna Marshall, (2015), "The legitimacy of entrepreneurial mentoring", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*. [DOI:10.1108/IJEBR-05-2014-0089](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-05-2014-0089)
 20. Memon Jamshed, Ismail Kamariah & Mueen Uddin, (2015) *Mentoring an Entrepreneur: Guide for a Mentor* The Author(s). *sagepub.com*. doi.org/10.1177/2158244015569666
 21. T. A. Scandura, & Williams, E. A. (2001). An investigation of the moderating effects of gender on the relationships between mentorship initiation and protégé perceptions of mentoring functions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1809
 22. F. J. Weinberg, & M. J. Lankau (2010), Formal mentoring pro-grams: A mentor-centric and longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309349310>
 23. R. Briones, & M. Janoske. (2013), How PR educators use social media to create and maintain relationships with students. *International Journal of Continuing Engineering Education and Life Long Learning*. [DOI:10.1504/IJCEELL.2013.051764](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJCEELL.2013.051764)
 24. W. Johnson & Kalbfleisch A (2003), A framework for conceptualizing competence to mentor. *Ethics & Behavior* Davies, Minorities and mentoring: Managing the multicultural institution. doi.org/10.1207/S15327019EB1302_02
 25. Islambolchi, M., et al. (2023). *Mentoring and entrepreneurial development: Concepts and applications*. Tehran: Darolfonoon Publications. [DOI:10.1080/03075079.2019.1665009](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665009)
 26. Marshall, D., & McQuitty, D. (2015). The difference between mentoring and coaching in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30(2), 123-135. *Theses*, 2018. 10789649.
 27. Izeli, C., & Yanbowang, Y. (2017). Entrepreneurial mentors and their impact on startups. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 21(4), 45-60. DOI:10.24310/ejfb.14.1.2024.17011
 28. Eesley, C., & Yangbowang, J. (2017). *Entrepreneurial mentorship and startup success*. *Journal of Business Research*. [DOI:10.2139/ssrn.2387329](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2387329)
 29. Scandura, T. A., & Williams, E. A. (2001). Mentoring and transformational leadership: The role of supervisory career mentoring. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59(3), 326-341.
 30. Weinberg, F., & Lankau, M. (2010). Matching mentors and mentees in formal mentoring programs. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(3), 219-230.
 31. Chang, Y., & Kiang, S. (2022). The value of entrepreneurial mentoring in startup success. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 60(1), 75-93.
 32. Ogah Aduwari, S. (2024). The impact of mentor characteristics on entrepreneurial success. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Education*. [DOI:10.61100/adman.v2i1.129](https://doi.org/10.61100/adman.v2i1.129)
 33. Marshall, D., & McQuitty, D. (2015). The difference between mentoring and coaching in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30(2), 123-135.
 34. Petrou, Y., & Kirgidou, L. (2013). The role of business knowledge in entrepreneurial success. *Journal of Business Management*, 25(4), 45-60. [DOI:10.1177/0266242606065507](https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242606065507)
 35. Nordeng Fauchald, R., et al. (2022). Specialized skills in entrepreneurial mentoring. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Research*, 18(1), 75-90.
 36. Henson, J. (2020). Career support in entrepreneurial mentoring processes. *Human Resource Development Journal*, 12(3), 150-165. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.792066
- Ankoh, E., & Ifeoma, E. (2019). Psychological support and its role in entrepreneurial success. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 10(2), 80-95. [DOI:10.1007/s11365-009-0130-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-009-0130-7)



International Conference on Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship

www.mee-conf.ir hi@mee-conf.ir

21 August 2025

Practical Suggestions for Future Researchers

Based on the results of this study, future researchers are encouraged to explore several important areas to improve the quality of entrepreneurship mentoring relationships. They should examine how cultural and social backgrounds influence these relationships and affect entrepreneurial success. It is also important to study the impact of new technologies, such as AI-based mentoring tools and online platforms, in supporting mentor-mentee communication. Long-term studies would help understand how mentoring relationships develop and support entrepreneurs over time. Comparing mentoring practices across different industries can reveal specific needs and challenges unique to each field. Additionally, investigating diversity factors like gender, economic status, and minority backgrounds can help ensure fair access to mentoring opportunities. Exploring mixed mentoring approaches that combine formal and informal methods could lead to more effective learning. Finally, developing accurate ways to measure the impact of mentoring on entrepreneurs' skills, confidence, and business growth will help improve mentoring programs. These directions will contribute to making entrepreneurship mentoring more effective and accessible.