

Preliminary review of implementation mentoring program among students in public university in Kota Kinabalu

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Jusiah Idang^{1,*}, Melissa Edora Sanu¹, Mohd. Sobri Ismail¹

¹ Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

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The implementation of mentoring programs is becoming popular among university students however inadequate prove were provided. This study aims to determine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee program in a public university in Kota Kinabalu. There were 378 university students were involved in this quantitative study that uses survey questionnaires. The result of this study has shown no significant differences in the perception of the effectiveness between genders ($t(376) = -0.379, k > .05$). Year1 students ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.45$) in the study were found to have more positive perception compared to Year 3 students ($M = 3.05, SD = 0.60$). It was also found that there were differences in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the program based on their courses $F(4,373) = 8,872, p < .05$ and students' ethnicity $F(5,372) = 4,401, p < .05$. This study provides lecturers, faculty, university and the Institute of Higher Education information in identifying students' perception regarding the mentoring program and also necessary improvements needed in enhancing the effectiveness of the program?

Keywords:

Perception, programme effectiveness,
mentor-mentee, university students

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1. Introduction

The main goal of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Ninth Malaysia's Plan is to increase the quality of human capital and able to compete in both national and internationally [1]. However, students growing up nowadays are getting more exposure to pressure and sadness. Students are now facing many challenges especially in academics matter and ability to adapt themselves in the university [2]. These indirectly have effects on students' development. Therefore, many initiatives have been taken by the university especially to help students in the social support. Social support given by the university is one of many strategies as a respond to problems faced by students in the university. It is important to provide such support to university students because they are apart from their families respectively. Thus, mentoring program is a form of social support program established by the university to their students. Mentoring defined as a relationship between mentor and mentee

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: jusiah@ums.edu.my (Jusiah Idang)

where a mentor that plays important role as parents, friends as well as teacher, advisor, and guardian and also companion [3]. Another definition of mentoring is as a process where an individual that is more experienced acts as a counsellor, preceptor, tutor or trainer to individuals that has no experience in a particular field [4]. Mentoring also defined as one-to-one relationship that evolves through distinct phases between the mentor and the adult learner (student or employee) to develop separately or in combination, his or her personal, educational or career potential [18]. In a context of university, mentors are among lecturers and mentees are the students. However, the effectiveness of the mentoring program does No solely depending on the goal of the program but also the relationship created between mentors and mentees [5]. The implementation of the mentoring program is gaining its momentum; however an issue has been concerned as No all of the students experience positive effects from the mentoring program. There are three important elements in a mentoring program [6]. Firstly, is the process in identifying an effective to be chosen as a mentor known as; screening. Secondly, orientation training, where both mentor and mentee have achieved mutual understanding regarding respective roles in the program. Lastly, support and supervision in which mentor provide constant support and observation towards mentee at the same time establish relationship between one another.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This is a quantitative research that uses cross-sectional survey method aims to identify perceptions of the effectiveness in the mentor and mentee program among public universities in Kota Kinabalu.

2.2 Research Subject

There were 378 students of Year 1 and Year 3 involved in this research.

2.3 Research Instrument

This research has used a set of questionnaire that includes two parts of demographic information and the perspectives on the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee program. The instrument contains 10 items that uses 4 scale of 1=No, 2=Not really, 3= Maybe, 4=Yes. The questionnaire has been translated from English to Bahasa Malaysia by a group of researchers and its reliability of research instrument is 0.88.

2.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis and inference (independent T-test and ANOVA) uses IBMSPSS program "*International Business Machines Statistical Package For Social Science*" Version 20.0 were used to analyse research *data*

3. Results

3.1 Demographic

Descriptive analysis result has shown that female respondents represented by 76.5% compared to male respondents of 23.5%. Meanwhile, for ethnicity, Sabah Bumiputera represent the majority ethnicity (35.4%), followed by Malay ethnicity (34.1%), Chinese (14.3%), others (10.6%), Indian (3.7%) and Sarawak Bumiputera (1.9%). This research involves Year 1 students (46.6%) and Year 3 students

(53.4%) only. There were in total of 98.4% local students and 1.6% international students involved in this research.

Table1
 Background of Research Respondents (N= 378)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	89	23.5
Female	289	76.5
Ethnicity		
Malay	129	34.1
Chinese	54	14.3
Indian	14	3.7
SabahBumiputera	134	35.4
SarawakBumiputera	7	1.9
Others	40	10.6
Year of studies		
Year 1	176	46.6
Year 3	202	53.4
Program		
A	95	25.1
B	67	17.7
C	71	18.8
D	105	27.8
E	40	10.6
Nationality		
Malaysian	372	98.4
International	6	1.6

Question 1

How do you evaluate the mentor-mentee program?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Weak	23	6.1
Good	197	52.1
Very Good	129	34.1
Impressive	29	7.7

Question2

Do you enjoy becoming a part of the program?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	7	1.9
Not really	57	15.1
Maybe	140	37.0
Yes	173	45.8

Question3

Do you want a mentor for next semester?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	14	3.7
Not really	25	6.6
Maybe	128	33.9
Yes	210	55.6

Question 4

Do you like your mentor?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	3	0.8
Not really	10	2.6
Maybe	85	22.5
Yes	277	73.3

Question5

Do you think that meeting your mentor is fun?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	8	2.1
Not really	35	9.3
Maybe	123	32.5
Yes	211	55.8

Question6

Do you prefer seeing your mentor more often?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	22	5.8
Not really	101	26.7
Maybe	159	42.1
Yes	96	25.4

Question7

Do you think that you can do better in the university with the help provided by your mentor?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	19	5.0
Not really	46	12.2
Maybe	141	37.3
Yes	172	45.5

Question8

Did you learn new things from your mentor?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	18	4.8
Not really	45	11.9
Maybe	107	28.3
Yes	208	55.0

Question9

Are you comfortable talking to your mentor about any matter, be it good or bad?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	15	4.0
Not really	96	25.4
Maybe	156	41.3
Yes	108	28.6

Question10

Are you comfortable sharing your experience with your mentor, be it good or bad?

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
No	13	3.4
Not really	104	27.5
Maybe	156	41.3
Yes	102	27.0

3.2 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Gender

The independent T-test was used to identify the differences in the perception of the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program based on gender. The result of the analysis found that there were no differences in the perception in the effectiveness of the program between male and female students ($t(376) = -0.379, k > .05$). Based on the overall mean, it was found that male students (Mean=3.14, SP= 0.57) and female students (Mean= 3.16, SP= 0.54) has no significant difference in the perceptions of program effectiveness.

Table 2

Results of T-test for differences in perception of the mentor-mentee program effectiveness between male and female students

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	N	Mean	S.P	t	Sig.
Perception of program effectiveness	Male	89	3.14	0.57	-.379	.705
	Female	289	3.16	0.54		

3.3 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Year of Studies

Besides that, the result of independent T-test samples found that there were differences in the perspective of the program effectiveness between Year 1 (Mean=3.28, SP=0.45) and Year 3 (Mean=3.05, SP=0.60) with the significant value of $t(376) = 4.268, k < .05$. However, based on the mean value of the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program among Year 1 students received more positive responses compared to Year 3.

Table 3

Results of T-test for differences in perception of the mentor-mentee program effectiveness between Year 1 and Year 3 students

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	N	Mean	S.P	t	Sig.
Perception of program effectiveness	Year 1	176	3.28	0.45	4.268	.000**
	Year 3	202	3.05	0.60		

** $k < .01$

3.4 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Academic Program Pursued

Results from ANOVA analysis indicated that there are significant differences in the perception of effectiveness in mentor-mentee program based on academic programs pursued by the students in this research, $F(4, 373) = 8,872, p < .05$. Based on Post Hoc test analysis, it was found that several programs show differences from each other. Among these programs are; Program A and Program B, Program A and Program D, Program A and Program E, Program B and Program C, Program C and Program D, Program C and Program E as shown in the table 4.

Table 4

Results of T-test for differences in perception of the mentor-mentee program based on academic program pursued

Variables	JKD	DK	MKD	F	Sig.
Perception of program effectiveness	9.786	4	2.447	8.872	.000**
Between Groups	102.855	373	0.276		
In Groups	112.641	377			
Total					

** $k < .01$

Table 4.1

Results of post-hoc test for differences in perception of the mentor-mentee program based on academic program pursued

Students of Different Academic Program Pursued	Mean	SP	Mean Difference	Sig.
Program A and Program B	3.04 3.32	0.58 0.51	-0.28	.010**
Program A and Program C	3.04 2.90	0.58 0.61	0.14	.462
Program A and Program D	3.04 3.27	0.58 0.46	-0.23	.019**
Program A and Program E	3.04 3.31	0.58 0.37	-0.27	.049**
Program B and Program C	3.32 2.90	0.51 0.61	0.42	.000**
Program B and Program D	3.32 3.27	0.51 0.46	0.05	.980
Program B and Program E	3.32 3.31	0.51 0.37	0.01	1.000
Program C and Program D	2.90 3.27	0.61 0.46	-0.37	.000**
Program C and Program E	2.90 3.31	0.61 0.37	-0.41	.001**
Program D and Program E	3.27 3.31	0.46 0.37	-0.04	.992

** $k < .01$

3.5 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Ethnicity

Results from ANOVA analysis indicated that there are significant differences in the perception of effectiveness in mentor-mentee program based on students' ethnicity $F(5,372) = 4.401, k < .05$. Based on Post

Hoc test analysis, there were differences found on students' ethnicity which are of Malay and Chinese ethnicity, Chinese and Sabah Bumiputera ethnicity and others as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5

Results of the ANOVA test for the differences in mentor-mentee program effectiveness based on ethnicity

Variables	JKD	DK	MKD	F	Sig.
Perception of program effectiveness					
Between Groups	6.291	5	1.258	4.401	.001**
In Groups	106.350	372	0.286		
Total	112.641	377			

** $k < .01$

3. Discussion

3.1 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Gender

Samples from the independent T-test show that there are no differences in the perception of mentor-mentee program effectiveness; between male and female students. Therefore, gender is not factor that influences the responses towards this program. It also indicates that the approach of mentor-mentee is suitable for both male and female students in facing life challenges as university students. The results of this study have indirectly proven that both genders need adequate social support from mentors or lecturers. Students in higher education institutions are among youths that require guidance and advice from adults who cares for them [7]. Youths need guidance as they were said to be emotional and unable to manage their emotions effectively [8]. Moreover, these results were fairly driven in the implementation of the program in which discrimination of genders do not exist. Social justice results in impact towards individual self-confidence, expectations and perception of particular situations [9-11].

4.2 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Year of Studies

There were differences found through the obtained results in effectiveness of mentor-mentee program when the perceptions of Year 1 students are compared to Year 3. In average, Year 1 students were found to be giving more positive responses towards this program as compared to Year 3. Researchers suggested that Year 3 students have more experience and they are able to manage themselves and be independent thus; contributes to the result of the study. Year 1 students need this program as they are adapting to a new environment in the university. Studies indicated that university students are vulnerable to stress especially in their early years of studies due to new life transition process in the university [12]. Besides that, another contributing factor of this result is that Year 3 students' past mentor-mentee program experiences are different than Year 1 students that were just introduced to this program; lacking in good implementation on the program. This is further explained as Year 3 students are busier compared to Year 1 students to be involved in such activities. Mentoring program plays different roles depending on age and individual needs [13]. As an example, Year 1 students needed more support to adapt in the university life but Year 3 students needed more support and advices in the academic aspect to face reality outside of university.

Table 5.1

Results of the post-hoc test for the differences in mentor-mentee program effectiveness based on ethnicity

Students of different ethnicity	Mean	SP	Mean Difference	Sig.
Malay and Chinese	3.20 2.85	0.51 0.58	0.35	.001**
Malay and Indian	3.20 3.09	0.51 0.79	0.11	.977
Malay and Sabah Bumiputera	3.20 3.24	0.51 0.51	-0.04	.997
Malay and Sarawak Bumiputera	3.20	0.51	0.06	1.000
Malay and others	3.14	0.75		
	3.20	0.51	0.03	1.000
Chinese and Indian	3.17	0.47		
	2.85	0.58	-0.24	.653
Chinese and Sabah Bumiputera	3.09	0.79		
	2.85	0.58	-0.39	.000**
Chinese and Sarawak Bumiputera	3.24	0.51		
	2.85	0.58	-0.29	.747
	3.14	0.75		
Indian and Sabah Bumiputera	2.85	0.58	-0.32	.046**
	3.17	0.47		
Indian and Sarawak Bumiputera	3.09	0.79	-0.15	.933
Indian and others	3.24	0.51		
	3.09	0.79	-0.05	1.000
Sabah Bumiputera and Sarawak Bumiputera	3.14	0.75		
	3.09	0.79	-0.08	.997
Sabah Bumiputera and others	3.17	0.47		
	3.24	0.51	0.1	.998
	3.14	0.75		
	3.24	0.51	0.07	.986
	3.17	0.47		
	3.14	0.75	-0.03	1.000
	3.17	0.47		

** $k < .01$

4.3 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Academic Program Pursued

The results of the ANOVA test showed that there were different perceptions on the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program based on students' academic program pursued. Perceptions in the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program of students in Program B were found to be the highest followed by students in Program E, Program D, Program A and Program C. Researcher suggested that the factor that contributes to this result is the inconsistency of activities implemented to these programs. Mentoring should be less hierarchical, less individualistic, more wide-ranging, and more inclusive in its orientation [19]. Different approaches and methods of execution used by mentors in this program are also of the contributing factors that influences the result. Practicing communication in a mentoring program could increase self-confidence, individual skills and motivates mentee in developing themselves [14]. It will be more effective if students are in a higher quality of relationships with their mentors. Interactions and cooperation between mentor and mentee in bridging gaps to ensure the success of this program also result in higher acceptance towards the program. Mentoring program will be effective if mentor provide support, appreciating individual talent and aware of mentees' strengths and weaknesses [16]; [11]. One of the key to successful mentoring process is the formation of strong, trusting mentor-mentee relationship [20]. However successful mentor-mentee relationship requires commitment by both parties [21]. Besides that, professional intimacy such as closeness, acceptance, affection, trust and commitment and self-disclosure are necessary ingredients in successful mentoring [22]; [23]. It is important for mentors and mentees to understand the purpose and the needs of mentoring programme to make it successful [24].

4.4 Differences in Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Mentor-Mentee Program based on Ethnicity

Results from ANOVA test indicated that there were different perceptions in the effectiveness of the program based on students' ethnicity. Malay, Sabah Bumiputera, Sarawak Bumiputera and others were found to be giving more positive response compared to Chinese and Indians. The contributing factors of this result is the personality and culture of both ethnicity where Chinese and Indians usually seek their own independence and does not usually need help and support from others to manage their lives. Moreover, Chinese and Indians may have different ways or strategies in dealing with their problems. It is further added with discomfort faced by mentees in discussing problems faced to their mentors. Students' perceptions on the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program in a university are influenced by cultural factors [16]; [17].

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted in determining students' perception towards the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program implemented in a public university in Kota Kinabalu. Results obtained in this study have indicated that there were no significant differences in the perceptions between male and female students. However, differences in perception of the program effectiveness were found in comparing years of studies, academic program pursued and students' ethnicity. Factors contributing to the result of the studies can be found in the discussion by the researchers. Ongoing monitoring of this program by the faculty is important to ensure that this program will not experience loss in terms of costs, time and energy as suggested by the researchers.

Overall, this study is important to know the students perceptions towards the effectiveness of mentor-mentee program implemented. However, further studies is suggested in obtaining data from

both mentor and mentee to ensure the effectiveness of the program on academic achievements and students' adaptation in the university. Therefore, this study is hoped to provide useful information to the university, faculty and lecturers on students' perception towards mentor-mentee program and seek solutions to problems that arises on perception of students.

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