



Role of Mentoring in Accounting Education: Enhancing Academic Development, Professional Identity, and Career Readiness

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Abstract

Mentoring has emerged as a critical pedagogical and developmental mechanism in accounting education, supporting students' academic success, professional socialization, and career readiness. As accounting programs become increasingly complex due to globalization, technological advancement, and heightened professional expectations, students require guidance beyond formal classroom instruction. This research paper examines the role of mentoring in accounting education by analyzing its impact on student learning, skill development, ethical awareness, and transition to professional practice. Drawing on an extensive review of international literature and established educational theories, the study identifies key mentoring models, explores benefits and challenges, and proposes a structured mentoring framework tailored to accounting education. The findings suggest that effective mentoring significantly enhances student engagement, retention, confidence, and employability, thereby strengthening the overall quality of accounting education.

Key Words: Mentoring, accounting education, student development, professional identity, higher education

Introduction

Accounting education plays a pivotal role in preparing students for professional careers that demand technical expertise, ethical judgment, and continuous learning. While formal curricula provide foundational knowledge, many accounting students struggle with academic transitions, professional expectations, and career decision-making. Mentoring has gained recognition as a powerful support mechanism that bridges the gap between academic learning and professional practice.

Mentoring in accounting education involves experienced faculty members, industry professionals, or senior students guiding learners through academic challenges, skill development, and career planning. In an increasingly competitive and dynamic professional environment, mentoring contributes to holistic student development. This paper aims to explore the role of mentoring in accounting education, examining its theoretical foundations, practical applications, and implications for educators and institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Mentoring in Education

Mentoring is commonly defined as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced individual supports the personal, academic, and professional growth of a less experienced individual. In higher education, mentoring extends beyond academic advising to include psychosocial support, role modeling, and career guidance.

2.2 Mentoring in Professional Education

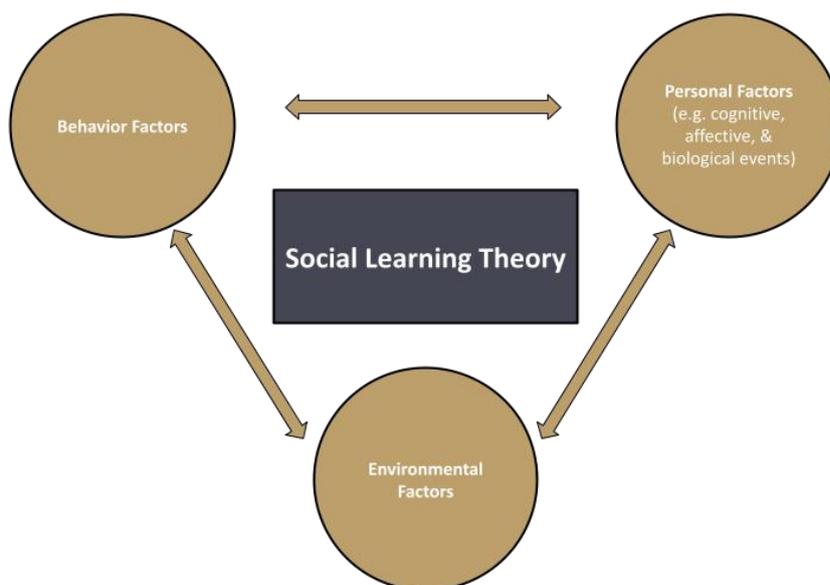
Research across professional disciplines such as medicine, law, and business highlights mentoring as a key factor in student success. Studies suggest that mentored students demonstrate higher academic achievement, improved self-efficacy, and stronger professional commitment. In accounting education, mentoring supports students in understanding professional norms, ethical responsibilities, and workplace expectations.

2.3 Gaps in Accounting Education Research

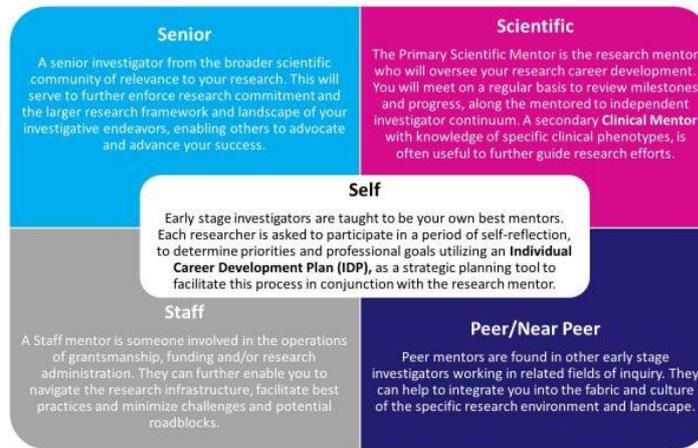
Although accounting education literature acknowledges the importance of experiential learning and professional engagement, structured mentoring programs remain underexplored. Existing studies indicate that mentoring positively influences retention and career outcomes, but systematic frameworks tailored to accounting education are limited.

3. Theoretical Framework

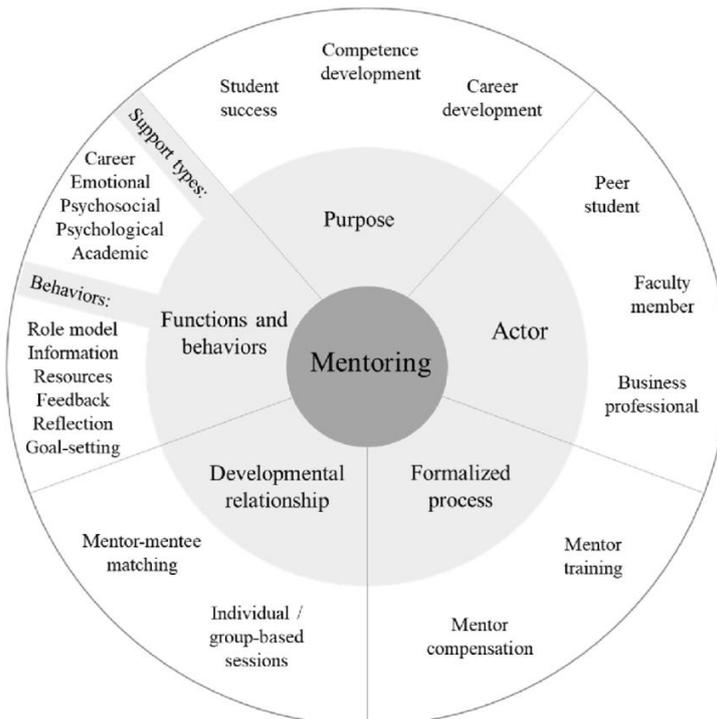
This study draws upon **Social Learning Theory** and **Career Development Theory**. Social learning theory emphasizes learning through observation, interaction, and modeling, which are central to mentoring relationships. Career development theory explains how mentoring supports career exploration, decision-making, and professional identity formation.



Matrix Mentoring Model*



*Adapted from Byington CL et al. Acad Med. 2016;91:497–502.



Together, these theories provide a foundation for understanding how mentoring enhances learning and professional growth in accounting education.

4. Types of Mentoring in Accounting Education

4.1 Faculty–Student Mentoring

Faculty mentoring focuses on academic guidance, research exposure, and professional ethics. Faculty mentors help students navigate complex accounting concepts, develop critical thinking, and prepare for professional certifications.



4.2 Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring involves senior or high-performing students supporting junior students. This model fosters collaborative learning, eases academic transitions, and creates a supportive learning community within accounting programs.

4.3 Industry Mentoring

Industry mentoring connects students with practicing accountants and finance professionals. These mentors provide real-world insights, career advice, and networking opportunities, enhancing students' understanding of professional practice.

5. Benefits of Mentoring in Accounting Education

5.1 Academic Development

Mentoring supports deeper understanding of accounting concepts through personalized guidance and contextual explanation. Students benefit from improved study strategies, time management, and academic confidence.

5.2 Professional Identity and Ethics

Through mentor interactions, students internalize professional values, ethical standards, and workplace behaviors. Mentors serve as role models, demonstrating ethical decision-making and professional responsibility.

5.3 Career Readiness and Employability

Mentored students are better prepared for internships, interviews, and professional examinations. Mentoring enhances employability by developing communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and career clarity.





6. Challenges in Implementing Mentoring Programs

Despite its benefits, mentoring in accounting education faces several challenges. These include limited faculty time, lack of formal mentoring structures, mismatched mentor-mentee expectations, and inconsistent student participation. Additionally, institutions may lack resources to train mentors or evaluate mentoring outcomes effectively.

Cultural and gender dynamics may also influence mentoring relationships, affecting communication and trust. Addressing these challenges requires institutional commitment and structured program design.

7. Mentoring and Learning Outcomes in Accounting Education

Empirical evidence suggests that mentoring positively influences learning outcomes such as academic performance, engagement, and retention. Students who receive mentoring demonstrate higher motivation, improved self-regulation, and stronger commitment to accounting careers. Mentoring also contributes to reduced dropout rates and enhanced student satisfaction.

Furthermore, mentoring supports lifelong learning by encouraging reflective practice and continuous professional development, which are essential in the evolving accounting profession.

8. Proposed Mentoring Framework for Accounting Education

This paper proposes a **Structured Accounting Mentoring Framework (SAMF)** comprising three interrelated components:

1. **Academic Mentoring:** Concept clarification, study skills, and research guidance
2. **Professional Mentoring:** Career planning, ethical development, and industry exposure
3. **Personal Support:** Confidence building, motivation, and psychosocial guidance

The framework emphasizes mentor training, clear objectives, regular interaction, and continuous evaluation to ensure effectiveness.



9. Implications for Educators and Institutions

Accounting educators should integrate mentoring into curriculum design and student support systems. Institutions must recognize mentoring as a core educational activity and provide incentives, training, and resources for mentors. Collaboration with professional accounting bodies and industry partners can further strengthen mentoring initiatives.

Policymakers and accreditation agencies should encourage mentoring as a quality enhancement mechanism in accounting education.

10. Conclusion

Mentoring plays a vital role in accounting education by supporting academic achievement, professional socialization, and career readiness. In an increasingly complex and globalized profession, mentoring complements formal instruction by addressing students' developmental and professional needs. By adopting structured mentoring frameworks, accounting institutions can enhance educational quality, student satisfaction, and graduate success. Future research should empirically examine mentoring models across diverse educational and cultural contexts.

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