# Challenges and Opportunities of Mentoring Undergraduate Research Project: A Case in Gedu College of Business Studies, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB)

Nima Wangchuk

Faculty of Language, Gedu College of Business Studies Royal University of Bhutan

**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the mentors' perception on the challenges and the opportunities encountered by the mentors while mentoring the undergraduate research project in colleges under Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) with special reference to Gedu College of Business Studies. The study has been motivated by the realization that some of the mentors are reluctant to take the undergraduate research groups. Therefore, it is important to find out what are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by the respective mentors in the process of mentoring the research projects. To make the study more authentic and realistic, purposive sampling had been used and personal interviews were conducted to collect data for the study. The data collected through personal interviews were analyzed thematically. The study intends to highlight the most challenging factors and try to provide suitable recommendations. The findings of the study entails that the most challenging part of mentoring is time management and lack of students' knowledge on research. Most of the respondents find it difficult to adjust their time for research due to their teaching workload. Nevertheless, the study also found out that they also get various benefits and opportunities in the process of mentoring.

## 1.1 Introduction

Mentoring is a more formal type of relationship between a senior member of an organization and a beginner to help in the socialization and career development of many professionals. Effective mentoring has the potential to ensure continuity and enhance better development. It enhances overall growth of individuals and the organization. In a research context, mentoring includes any support for a person or group to develop and maintain their research profile and activities (Mentors supporting academics with their Research, 2019). Mentoring involves providing advice or guidance, which help students by bringing together ideas from different contexts to promote deeper learning. Mentoring should be done with the intention of empowering young inexperienced researchers that could rise through knowledge and skills (Organizational performance-definition and meaning, 2018).

Mentors are individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed in providing upward support and mobility to their student career (Hunt & Michael, 1983). Denicolo defines the characteristics of mentor as reliable, having confidence in students, encouragement, broad-mindedness and openness to share knowledge. The roles played by mentors can bring tremendous changes across the knowledge and experience of an individual. Students participating in undergraduate research project experiences many challenges. Therefore, the success of students in carrying out research depends upon the support rendered by their mentors. Although most studies tend to show that mentoring has a positive impact on academic success, the variability in defining roles and types of interactions has

made it difficult to fully evaluate the impact of mentoring on undergraduates.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Undergraduate research mentoring has received a great deal of attention in recent times. The primary mission is not merely carrying out research but training students how to undertake research. The knowledge-based global economy, with its wealth of information and opportunities, has increased undergraduate students' need for research skills and graduate students' desire for personal guidance. Research provides students with great experience and helps to sharpen both their thinking skills and knowledge of carrying out the research.

There are nine colleges including the two private affiliated ones under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS), all the final year students are mandatory to take Research Project (RES 302) and do the research on a specific topic. In order to carry out the projects, students take guidance and advice from the faculty members. As per the Research Methods in Business (RES 301) module guidelines, students are required to approach and finalize the mentor within the third week of delivery of class. The mentors are expected to provide support and guidance to their mentees in their final semester (6th semester). As expected most faculty members take the role of mentoring the undergraduates for a semester.

Hall, Ackley, Walkington and Stewart (2017) mentioned in their study that mentors are reluctant to undertake the research groups because of workload structure and lack of recognition by top management. In addition, a faculty

Tele:
E-mail address:  nimawangchuk.gcbs@rub.edu.bt

member of Neuroscience stated challenges as the lack of institutional rewards, such as workload credit and time allocated for mentors engaged in mentoring. Therefore, it is assumed that faculty members of GCBS are also facing some challenges as well as opportunities while mentoring the undergraduate research students. According to Poulsen (2004) stated that through the mentoring process, mentors get the opportunity to develop personal skills, professional competencies and gain new understanding of their own career paths. So, due to this mentors takes the responsibility of mentoring the undergraduate research group. Thus, it is also expected and assumed that GCBS faculty members gain some benefits while mentoring the undergraduate research.

However, in GCBS there has been no research conducted to find out the challenges and opportunities faced by the mentors while mentoring research project. Therefore, there is a need for the college management to take appropriate measures to effectively guide the students to improve the research skills. Therefore, this study is proposed to explore on the challenges and benefits of the mentors. It is also crucial that institutions of higher education harvest the essence and principles of meaningful research experiences (Sams, 2014) in order for more students to benefit. Whether students are mentored in a one-on-one approach or in a group environment, undergraduate research mentoring can offer significant benefits. Therefore, effective faculty mentoring is crucial to students' success in undergraduate research.

## 1.3  Research Questions

What are the challenges and opportunities encountered by faculty of GCBS while mentoring the undergraduates' research project?

## 1.4  Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to examine the overall challenges and opportunities faced by GCBS faculty while mentoring the undergraduates' research project and suggest suitable recommendations.

## 2.1 Literature Review

Mentoring is act of providing guidance and support by the mentors to the mentees. It is important for the development of an educational institution to up bring the new workforce through effective mentoring by experienced mentors. Mentoring often involves career socialization, inspiration and belief in each other, and promoting excellence and passion for work through guidance, protection, support, and networking (Lechuga, 2011). Professionals involved in mentoring should not be bias in judgement and mutual respect should form the basis of mentoring relationships. Various challenges and benefits encountered by mentors in their mentoring activities were examined by many researchers. The concept of mentoring is related to overseeing someone's career and professional development. Therefore, the purpose of mentoring is to groom potential learners for the purpose of gaining necessary experience and skills for better performance.

According to Aigbavboa, Nkomo and Thwala (2018), the challenges faced by mentors in mentoring can lead to overdependence, deception and harassment. Mentoring is done with the intention of empowering mentees so that it could help them to develop knowledge and become experienced one. Nichols (2016) mentioned that having experience and practice do not always guarantee that anyone can become mentor. Mentors should be individuals who have showed leadership qualities and those who have guided the mentees. Mentoring has the potential to ensure that individuals gain knowledge and lead to growth of individuals.

Mentor regards mentoring as a necessary component of their work to ensure that the students were well prepared academically (Lechuga, 2011).

Prem kumar and Wong (2007) noted that mentors can develop effective mentoring relationship by creating an active environment by taking time to listen carefully without judging. According to Stone (2007) strong interpersonal characteristics, recognizing the achievement of each other, accepting risks and being available when required are some of the attributes of an effective mentor.

## 2.2 Challenges in Mentoring the Research Project
## 2.2.1 Time management

Adedokun, Bessenbacher, Burgress and Dyehouse, (2010) pointed out that timing and scheduling seems to be the greatest challenges faced by the mentors. Mentors observed that they were unable to spend time as much as they would like to train personally, motivate and interact with their students. They highlighted the challenges of balancing their teaching and research responsibilities with mentoring undergraduate research.

Dolan and Johnson (2009) found that mentors involved in mentoring the mentees in research encounter obstacle like lack of time to mentor undergraduate research. It is often not included in the faculty teaching loads can be a drawback for faculty who participates. Zydney, Bennett, Shahid and Bauer (2002) found that fifty percent of faculty were spending at least three to five hours per week supervising mentees in addition to their regular work. As a result, they are unable to adjust their time to provide effective support to the mentees.

Corley (2013) found difficult to conduct major research project at the time of academy year. While mentoring the researcher at the time of academy year, a professor can facilitate and ongoing research project in which professor are interested. Collaborating with the researcher on research project allows mentors with heavy teaching loads to think about their research.

## 2.2.2 Lack of research skills

Some professors described their lack of mentoring skills as a factor that hinders effective mentoring of the research project. Hamlin and Saga (2011) suggested that the effectiveness of any mentoring depends on the characteristics of the parties involved on whether the parties involved know how to take advantage of the opportunities presented. But when mentors are inadequately trained, they are unable to guide and support well.

Huwe and Johnson (2003) stated that mentors do not always have the competencies nor required training to effectively mentor the research projects. The mentors must be competent enough and should have proper training to produce quality work of the mentees.

## 2.2.3 Lack of recognition

Prunuske, Wilson, Walls and Clarke (2013) found that lack of recognition for mentoring undergraduate students as challenging one. Mentors don't get any recognition and promotion for taking extra responsibility apart from regular duties and it is only considered partly as charity work.

Hall, Ackley, Walkington and Stewart (2017) mentioned in their study that faculty are reluctant to undertake the research groups because of workload structure and lack of recognition. In this study, a faculty member of Neuroscience said that challenges as the lack of institutional rewards, such as workload credit and time allocated for mentors engaged in mentoring.

## 2.2.4 Lack of student's knowledge

Research is not easy, partly because the students should

be able to think well and work independently. Students need a certain curiosity and a certain passion to get to the root of the research problem. Mentors expect the students to think and concentrate, and not be distracted.

Behar-Horenstein, Roberts and Dix (2010) talked about his difficulties with getting mentees to know how to work with collected data. The mentors usually get excited for the new effort but they know that few things need to be in place so that it can be successful. The strategies include providing a daily agenda and scheduling an expert to train the team on how to use the data analysis software.

## 2.1 Benefits of Mentoring the Research Project
## 2.3.1 Maintaining good interpersonal relationship

Mentoring involves spending time together between the mentor and the mentees. In the process, both the personal and professional relationship is developed.

There is a strong belief that the relationship between mentoring the students through research groups and teaching can be highly beneficial for faculty members at an institution of higher education (Jenkins, Healey, & Zetter, 2007).

Mentors must provide friendly environment so that mentee feels comfortable to share and express their opinions, interests and goals. It is done in such a way that support is offered by listening, asking relevant questions, stimulating the mentee's thinking so that they arrive at answers to their problems. Mentors also provide needed ideas, knowledge, tools and techniques that could enhance productive thinking and better performance.

Hamlin and Saga (2011) found that mentors have essential characters such as active listening skills, asking questions, setting clear goals as well as building and maintaining close relationship with mentees through trust. As a result, mentors are able to build strong bond with mentees.

The mentoring relationship benefits both mentors and mentees in many ways, which include development and growth of professional skills. Researchers had demonstrated that mentors- mentees relationship plays an integral role in shaping students' research training, their professional identity, and career dedication (Padilia, 2016).

## 2.3.2 Satisfaction and career development of mentor

Mentors get personal satisfaction when the students are able to obtain good marks in the final evaluation and when mentees work is being published. Moreover, providing guidance to mentees enable mentors themselves to carry out their personal research effectively.

Abrams, Potter, Townson and Williams (2009) stated in their study that mentoring the students had helped them to explore their own potential, discovering both their abilities and limits. Moreover, the study found that mentor gets the satisfaction and pride in the students' accomplishments and referred students gain as their own gains.

While mentoring, mentors themselves are also benefited as they get additional experience and can perform their own research work productively with high professional qualification and knowledge. Mentoring helped mentors to enhance confidence and enjoy their work life.

Undergraduate research offers opportunities for professors. Research with undergraduate students is the purest form of teaching and faculty who support undergraduates often report an increase in the quality of their work life (Myers J. , Sawyer, Dredger, Barnes, & Wilson, 2018).

Buddie and Collins (2009) states that working with mentees on undergraduate research gives personal satisfaction as they see mentees rowing and developing professionally. The mentors themselves experiences professional and

intellectual growth as a result of supervising the undergraduate research. Mentees can help mentors to think outside the box and bring fresh perspectives to new research topics.

Ackley, Hall, Shananah, Streward, and Walkington (2017) reported that faculty who supervise undergraduate research projects were more likely to enjoy career gains that arise from research productivity, basic benefits, and the personal satisfaction of contributing to positive outcomes for students. Mentors were able come up with new solutions for their own work habits as well and expand their own research interests. Also, develop their research skills in new directions in order to mentor their mentees effectively.

Sams (2014) stated that mentoring is a mutually beneficial for developing relationship. Mentor- mentee interactions increase the mentor's own knowledge, and in institutions that value these relationships, the mentor's standing within the organization improves. It broadens interpersonal skills through productive interactions with diverse students and develops future talent.

Arzensek and Kosmrlj (2017) concluded that among soft skills, good communication skills and teamwork orientation as well as mentors' support were recognized as prevalent attributes of high quality mentors. They are not only equipped with discipline and research specific knowledge, but also develop soft skills such as teamwork, communication, especially argumentation. With this, they gain confidence and are able to identify with career of a researcher. While being included in various projects, it develops several employability skills which is useful in their future careers.

Beltman and Schaeben (2012) found that mentors enjoyed passing on their knowledge and experience to new students as they get positive feedback from mentees. They felt rewarded as mentees often expressed gratitude for their mentor support.

Poulsen (2004) stated that the mentor benefits from seeing problems and challenges from another person's prospective through communicating their own experience and opinions. Through the mentoring process, they have the opportunity to develop personal skills, professional competencies and gain new understanding of their own career paths.

## 2.3.3 Enhance mentoring-ship skills

When mentor takes research groups for many years, they are able to enhance their mentoring-ship skills. Mentoring is often associated with leadership roles or the advancement to different positions in the organization. Corley (2013) stated that mentoring the researcher will collaborate the intellectual between professor and college student. It might serve to strengthen the professor's research agenda. Being a mentor can enrich one's life on a personal and professional level like building leadership skills. It also helps to develop mentor's ability to motivate and encourage others.

## Research Methodology
## 3.1  Research Design

This research is an exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is defined as a research used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem but will not provide conclusive result. The tool used to conduct exploratory research is personal interviews. It involves talking to people with expertise in the respective areas that can help to achieve objectives more easily. Semi-structured interviews are used which is less formal in the pre-determination of structure of

the interview schedule. It provides participants with a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts.

The study is based on qualitative research. It engages the target audience in an open-ended interview and explores "what, why and how" questions. It also provides directional data about the target audience. To fulfill the objectives of the study, primary data is collected by interviewing the individual faculty.

### 3.2 Sampling Design

The method of purposive sampling is used to develop the sample of the research under discussion. According to this method, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject.

### 3.3 Research Approach

The research approach that was followed for the purposes of this research is the inductive one. According to this approach, researchers begin with specific observation, which are used to produce generalized theories and conclusions drawn from the research. The reasons for occupying the inductive approach is that it takes into account the context where research effort is active, while it is also most appropriate for small samples that produce qualitative data.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Primary data was collected by interviewing the faculty members. According to Creswell (1998), he recommends the suitable sample size for qualitative research as 5 – 25. So, for the current research, researchers have chosen fifteen faculty that are taking the research group currently. Researchers are able to gather the required information within four days of working hours.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The data which was collected is analysed and interpreted thematically. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes that are important and interesting in the data to address the research. Thematic analysis is a flexible data analysis plan that qualitative researchers use to generate themes from interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They provide a six step process for identifying, analysing and reporting qualitative data. It is used to analyse data about what faculty have said in interviews. The responses given by the faculty of GCBS is used to draw themes accordingly.

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration

This research work is based on true information collected from the faculty members of GCBS. All the information collected has been provided with proper references. Manipulation and plagiarism of data from others work and source has been strictly avoided. The work is purely original and the data collected from the faculty members were kept confidential.

### 4. Results and Discussion

**4.1 Result**

**4.1.1 Challenges of Mentoring**

| Theme 1: Time Management | Theme 2: Lack of student's knowledge |
|---|---|
| Insufficient time for mentoring | Lack of research knowledge |
| Increased workload | Gap between theoretical knowledge and practical |
| Unable to meet at schedule time | Interest and seriousness of the students |
| Last moment submission | Lack of delivery quality of RES 301 |
| Affect the teaching schedule | No knowledge on academic writing |
| Unable to give equal time to all group | Lack of preparedness |
| More number of groups | |
| Sacrifice the private time | |
| Busy schedule | |
| **Theme 3: Lack of recognition** | **Theme 5: Others** <br> Lack of student's commitment |
| Unsatisfactory IWP | Lack of resources |
| No publication | Communication gap |
| **Theme 4: Lack of research skills** | • Time duration <br> • Does not incorporate comments |
| No proper training and development on research skills | Different perceptions between mentors and evaluators |
| No adequate knowledge on research | • Lack of motivation <br> • Plagiarism |
| Lack of research skills of mentors | |

**4.1.2 Opportunities and Benefits of Mentoring**

| Theme 1: | Theme 2: |
|---|---|
| • Learning (Academic and Professionalism) <br> • Explore knowledge <br> • Update research knowledge <br> • Opportunity for personal research <br> • Enhance  knowledge Combine learning <br> • Intellectual gain | • Interpersonal Relationship <br> • Professional relationship Personal relationship <br> • Increase network <br> **Theme 3:** <br> • Personal Development of Mentors <br> • Personal satisfaction <br> • Improves mentoring-ship <br> • Build team work <br> • Leadership quality <br> • Improve communication skills <br> • Emotional gain |

**4.2 Discussion**
**4.2.1 Challenges**
**Time Management**

Time management can be defined as the difficulties faced by the mentors to manage time between their teaching profession and mentoring the undergraduate students. Mentors should be able to maintain balance between their teaching profession and their personal life. However, when they are mentoring the undergraduates they have to sacrifice their time for mentoring which can actually be used for preparing for the lesson.

It was observed that mentors have been facing challenges to manage time. They have to plan and organize time between teaching and mentoring undergraduate research.

*'I usually make schedule (time table) to meet the students. In that way, my teaching time is not disturbed. However, students do not turn up for the discussion.' (L14)*

In GCBS, there is no separate time allocated for RES302 where the mentors are required to schedule their own time for discussion. This also increases the workload of both the faculty and students whereby mentoring and studying of the module have been a problem of priority.

*'There is no separate time allocated for us to formally meet for the discussion. We usually meet after the working hour (after fifth period) and during that time both of us are exhausted. The students are not able to come with the good ideas as well as I am not able to provide quality time.' (L2)*

From total respondents of fifteen, majority of staffs (thirteen) faced challenges to balance time between teaching and mentoring the undergraduates. This is mainly because there is no formal time being allotted to teach this module separately.

Secondly, increasing workload is another emergent issue for the staffs where eight of them responds that taking up undergraduate research module increases their workload.

*Even though we have been teaching same module for many years, we still need time to prepare for the lesson. ...and mentoring the students adds up to the work load.'* (L13)

Further, the time constraint and workload leads to numerous procrastination practices for academicians. Similarly, seven respondents expressed that the students are found to keep their work at last moment.

*'As per my experience in mentoring the research group, most of the students keep their work at the last moment (two-to-three days before the submission), where we are not able to access their work thoroughly.'*(L14)

*'My mentees are not willing to do the work before-hand and does the work at last moment.'*(L4)

Therefore, the mentoring of undergraduate research on top of the normal teaching programs have proven that the mentors are confronted with time management problems, increasing workloads and students working at zero hours.

**Lack of Student's Knowledge**

Lack of student's knowledge can be defined as students not having acceptable subject knowledge especially in RES301. Lack of student's knowledge in research is one of the most challenging part that the mentors face. Every mentor expects their students to have enough knowledge learnt in RES 301. Twelve out of fifteen respondents said that students lack the adequate research knowledge and hence they are not able to conduct their research well.

*'We expect every student to have basic knowledge on RES 301 because they have already learnt in fifth semester. However, I presume that they have taken the RES 301 lightly. It is because they even don't know what to include in the problem statement.' (L13)*

*'In my opinion module tutor of RES 301 taught the students well but they have failed to equip the students to implement the knowledge in RES 302.'(L10)*

Without the theoretical knowledge, students will not be able to carry out the research project in the final semester. When the student doesn't have the basic knowledge, it adds extra burden to mentors. Moreover, it hinders the quality of the work being done. But in reality, there exist gap between the theoretical knowledge and doing work practically.

*'I feel that students have difficulty in applying the theory knowledge in practical field, so there exist the gap between the theory and the practical knowledge. Due to this, I have to spend extra time to teach them from the beginning.' (L3)*

Seven out of fifteen respondents said that there exists a gap between theoretical and practical knowledge in students.

**Lack of Proper Recognition**

Lack of proper recognition can be defined as not giving a proper credit to mentors in return for mentoring the undergraduate students. Mentors usually have to spare extra time and effort in mentoring the research group. However, recognition given for taking extra workload seems to be inadequate.

*'The effort that we put in mentoring and the recognition given by them does not match. I personally feel that college management should provide separate reward other than IWP.'(L5)*

In GCBS, mentors are given marks in Individual Work Plan (IWP) as recognition. In IWP rating, mentors are given three marks for taking one research group and at the maximum each mentor can take up to three research group.

*'I prefer to do my personal research and earn ten points rather than taking three groups for nine points. Taking three groups is part of burden as I have to manage all groups.' (L9)*

It is being observed that mentors are not satisfied with the recognition given to them. Eight out of fifteen respondents said that rating given in IWP is unsatisfactory for them.

Ten respondents mentioned that publication of research work can act as a motivation factor for both the mentors and the mentees. However, since the management is not publishing the work in the known journal it demotivates them from working hard. They said that the students' work just lies on some corner in the college.

*'It is not fair to keep our work at the corner of the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages office. It should be used as reference and good research should be published.' (L2)*

**Lack of Research Skills**

Lack of research skill refers to the inability of the mentor to provide proper guidance and ideas. In GCBS there are no separate mentors who are specialized in field of research. Lecturers are the one who mentor the undergraduate research. Most of the lecturers mentor the undergraduate research project with the help of the knowledge they have acquire from the books and workshop.

*'... there is no distinguish between the fresh lecturers and senior lecturers in terms of mentoring. Both are taking the research group. In that case I think it hamper the quality of the research. Before taking research group by fresh lecturers I think they should be attached with senior lectures to train themselves.'*(L7)

Inadequate experience and training to mentors in research field hampers the way they provide advice and support. So, mentors are unable to give professional competence and due care to their mentees. Out of fifteen, seven respondents said that little knowledge of mentor's hampers the research project.

*'Since I am taking research group for the first time I am facing difficulties to provide proper guide. I think I need to take help from the senior lecturers because I can sense that I will face challenge in data interpretation.'*(L8)

On the other hand, six out of fifteen respondents feels that the GCBS mentors need to have the proper training on guiding the research groups.

*'... the training given every Wednesday is seeming to be not useful since they are teaching what we already know. It would have been better if they focus more on interpretation and using software rather than focusing more on theoretical area.'*(L15)

**Other Themes**

Lack of student's commitment can be defined as students not having interest and dedication in doing the work. Students simply do research to just complete their obligations. Students do not have enthusiasm from within to carry out the research work. All the respondents shared that students lack commitments to do the research project.

*'... the comments or feedbacks that we provide to the students to make the necessary changes are not usually incorporated by them. They come up with the same mistakes without making any changes. Even when they have made the changes there isn't any quality work done by them.'* (L13)

Lack of resources mean not having the adequate resources to supplement the academic works. Four respondents said that GCBS do lack the adequate resources, like journals, articles and network services to do the research project. As a result, mentors and mentees can't access to related journal to supplement to their research work.

*'Insufficient access to academic resources available in the college impacts the quality of work. I have observed that the students are facing tough time to search the related articles and same applies to us.'* (L11)

Communication gap happens when the meaning and idea intended by the mentors is understood in other way by the mentees. The good communication ensures that mentors understand what the students are doing. Moreover, the students can clearly convey the ideas to the mentors. As expected, there isn't much communication gap between them. Only two respondents said that there exists the communication gap. Researchers observed that the main causes of the communication gap are those who are using the third language.

*'For past nine years I have noticed that the ideas we give to them are not really incorporated in the project. It is because they have not understood what we have been trying to say.'* (L5)

Expectation from mentor indicates that the mentees expecting majority of the works to be done by the mentors. Eleven respondents stated that students expect most part of the work to be done by the mentors.

*'Ideas and main concept should be of students, whereas students expect mentors to do all the work and edition.'* (L4)

Short duration means not having enough time to complete the research project. In GCBS, RES302 is usually done in sixth semester which includes data collection and interpretations. Two respondents pointed out that students have limited time to study and collect data. Mentors have to adjust their schedule and corporate with groups. As a result, mentors cannot provide proper guidance to the group.

*'I think the time provided for the students to complete the research work is not enough.'*(L15)

Researchers observed that the four-month time duration for the completion of the research project is not enough because students have other modules which mean they have other works to complete. Thus, students are not able to give full time for research project and due to this, it affects the quality of the work. Therefore, mentors have to put more effort to improve the quality of the work.

**4.2.2 Opportunities**

**Learning**

Learning is the process of acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge, behaviour, skills and values. Mentors not only face challenges while mentoring but also gain benefit. They learn new things by referring different materials. For example, if mentor's field is finance and if the research topic is related to marketing, such mentors have little knowledge about other field and they have to work hard to understand and learn about the topic.

All the respondents expressed that mentoring helps in gaining, exploring and updating the knowledge. The respondents even said that it creates opportunity for personal research.

*'While mentoring we are able to keep track of research by referring different research book. In addition to that, most of the students come up with new topic which is not familiar to us. So, in that case we have to refer the different books and journal. In the process we are able to know what is happening in and around us.'* (L1)

*'The topics that students bring are sometime very interesting that it gives idea for us to conduct the further research. The data that they collect can be referred for our own research.'* (L5)

*'It enhances my knowledge on research as it gives me an opportunity to explore and learn many new things that are beyond my field.'*(L6)

Through research, mentors are able to learn new things on a daily basis. So, this adds extra knowledge to them and when they do their own research work, it offers a great help to them.

*'I feel mentoring is a good opportunity for me as it provides a platform to go beyond my knowledge and improve my existing knowledge and skills. It also makes me feel confident while doing my own research work as I get experience from mentoring.'* (L7)

*'Students coming up with new ideas is a good initiative as it provides a platform for both of us to present our views and have a two-way learning.'* (L10)

Eleven respondents said that mentoring does not always mean guiding the mentees. It also includes getting opinion from students and learning from each other. Mentors observed that they are able to produce a productive work when students participate more and communicate with each other. In this way, both of them are able to express their own views and as a result they are able to produce a better result.

**Interpersonal Relationship**

Maintaining a good interpersonal relationship can be defined as spending time together for a long time and knowing each other. Maintaining a proper relationship between mentors and mentees is must while doing a research project. It helps in developing professional and personal relationship between mentors and mentees

> *'I make schedule for meeting with students within working hours and also I invite students at home if they need more time with me.' (L2)*

Mentoring involves spending time together between the mentor and the mentees. In the process, both the personal and professional relationship is developed. A lot of time is spent in the process of doing research between mentor and mentees. This helps mentor to know their mentees personally and professionally.

Out of fifteen respondents, nine respondents said that they are able to maintain personal relationships with the mentees. Personal relationships are the relationships that are informal, having involuntary interaction between mentors and mentees. The mentors believe that they gain good personal relationship with the mentees for their own benefits.

> *'I am still in touch with my research groups and when I visited the Tax Department for my personal work earlier this year, they were ready to help me.'(L8)*

Professional relation is the relationship that exceeds when one person requests and is granted professional help from a qualified source. All the respondents agreed that they are able to maintain professional relationships with mentees. They mentor the mentees within office hours and help them whenever needed.

> *'We get close over a period of time and get to know more about each other which make us comfortable to guide and control easily.'(L3)*

**Satisfaction and Personal Development of Mentors**

Personal satisfaction can be defined as getting personal satisfaction when the students get better marks in the final evaluation and when mentees work is being published. Students obtaining better results gives them a sense of pride and satisfaction. All the respondents are said to have gained personal satisfaction when their mentees perform well.

> *'I feel apologetic when my group fails in final evaluation which is done by the external judge. On the other hand, I also feel that I am doing good in terms of mentoring the groups when they perform well.'* (L3)

Enhancing mentoring-ship skills can be defined as adding extra knowledge, skills and experience to their existing knowledge. All of them said that it helps in improving their mentoring ship. They said that as number of year increases by being a mentor, they get more experience on mentoring the groups. When mentor takes research groups for many years, they are able to enhance their mentoring-ship skills.

> *'I see there is a difference in terms of the quality of work produced between the mentors who take mentoring responsibility and the one who have not*

> *taken the research group in previous years. As I take mentoring responsibility for years, it improves my mentoring-ship skills.'* (L9)

Mentors spend most of their time with their research group and in a course of time, they are able to interact and understand each other well. So, it helps them to understand what they are lacking and later when they take another research group, they are able to fill those gaps. Thus, it helps mentors in developing their mentoring-ship skills.

**4.3 Conclusion**

The study sought to explore the challenges experienced by the mentors while mentoring. The challenges associated with mentoring are enormous but there are also some benefits they gain in the process of mentoring. Major challenges of mentoring are related to time management as there is insufficient time for mentoring because of workload and they have to maintain their time between teaching and mentoring. However, a good mentor should be willing to sacrifice time for mentees but one should take into consideration that the mentees do not become too dependent on the mentor. Another challenge is the lack of students' knowledge on research as RES 301 was not enough for the students to understand the basic knowledge of research. Apart from the challenges, the mentors also get to explore and update their existing knowledge and skills.

**4.4 Recommendations**

By identifying the challenges faced by mentors, the following recommendations are made from the mentors' point of view to improve the quality of mentoring the research wok in GCBS:

● We observed that the average class taken by the mentors in a week is eight excluding the research group. There is a need for separate time for the research so that mentors can spend more time with their mentees to produce a quality work. Those taking research group should be given less teaching workload as compared to those who are not taking any research group.

● Since students are provided only with RES 301, they are not able to implement it practically. The time allotted for the research is only four months and it is not enough for the students to learn research within limited time period. So, extra seminars should be conducted for the students by inviting the experts.

● The resources available in college are very limited for the purpose of research and many respondents feel the need of access to resources is very important. So, college should provide access to online journals for both mentors and mentees so that they can learn through online anytime.

● There should also be a proper relationship between management and mentors so that there is no communication gap. Mentors who are taking research group for the first time should be attached with senior mentors because they are not able to give proper guidance to their mentees.

● Training and development program regarding research are conducted for the lecturers. However, only theoretical knowledge is being taught which they think is insufficient as they already have the theoretical knowledge. So, they aspect practical learning to be initiated so that they can guide the mentees properly. Moreover, there should be a separate fund allotted for the purpose of research so that adequate training and development can be provided for the mentors.

● The study also suggests that the college management needs to provide incentives and recognition to mentors that devote time in mentoring undergraduate research groups.

## 4.5 Limitation of the Study

Since the study is limited towards the determination of the challenges faced by the faculty members in mentoring the undergraduates' of GCBS, it may not be conclusive for other colleges under the RUB. The study was purely based on qualitative method therefore, the opinions shared by the faculties are subjective. Similar study can be conducted through empirical findings to ascertain the challenges and opportunities. The does not accommodate the challenges faced by the mentees (students) hence, the same topic can be studied through students' perspective by other researchers in the future. The findings are exploratory and hope that the findings may serve as groundwork for the future studies.

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