

# Mentor-mentee Relationship Using Video Elicitation Interviews

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To explore aspects that define successful mentor-mentee relationships in medical education from a mentor and mentees' perspective.

**Study Design:** Qualitative study.

**Place and Duration of the Study:** Bahria University Health Sciences, Karachi campus, from May to October 2022.

**Methodology:** Data were collected using observations of mentoring sessions by recording videos, video-elicitation interviews for mentors and focus group discussions for mentees. Mentor Evaluation Tool (MET) questions were used during focus group discussions to gain detailed feedback from mentees on mentors and additional questions were added regarding the mentoring sessions' organisation and environment. During video-elicited interviews with mentors, an interpersonal process recall strategy was used to explore factors that define a mentor-mentee relationship. Video recordings of the mentoring sessions were used as an elicitation tool to guide the interviews. Giorgi's method was used for data analysis. Transcripts of observations by video recordings, video elicitation interviews, and focus group discussions were analysed first separately and then compared and integrated.

**Results:** According to mentors, the true essence of mentoring is mutual respect and confidentiality. Mentees suggested multiple mentors for professional development in different attributes.

**Conclusion:** The mentors' commitment to their mentees and the mentees' respect and trust is the foundation of a successful mentor-mentee relationship.

**Key Words:** *Mentor, Mentee, Relationship, Mentoring and Medical Education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a significant importance of mentoring in health professional education.<sup>1,2</sup> Mentoring has a positive impact on undergraduates as well as postgraduate medical students in achieving educational and professional outcomes.<sup>3,4</sup> The most important aspect of any mentoring program is the mentor-mentee relationship, which should be ideally non-judgmental and should provide a safe and confidential environment to mentees.<sup>5-7</sup> Previous studies focused mainly on the mentor's role, the characteristics of the ideal mentor and mentee, how to find a good mentor, mentoring types, the benefits of a mentor-mentee relationship, potential obstacles and possible solutions.<sup>8-12</sup>

There are limited research studies that focus on the evaluation of effective mentorship through reflection of mentors on their mentoring sessions.

Video elicitation interviews are a qualitative method for evaluating these interactions which have not been used in this context in any of the research on mentor-mentee relationships. Elicitation interviews use a stimulus, such as photographs, videos or written records, to prompt participants to discuss subjects in greater detail than they would during standard interviews. Previous studies have used video-elicitation for understanding physician-patient relationships and interactions. Few studies used video-elicited interviews to teach counsellors by reflecting on the counselling videos.<sup>13</sup> The objective of this study was to use video-elicited interviews from mentors to collect in-depth data on mentor-mentee interaction in order to encourage mentors to reflect on their abilities and different aspects of the mentor-mentee relationship and evaluate improving mentoring skills by reflection.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was done at the Bahria University Health Sciences, Karachi Campus, from May to October 2022. Ethical approval was taken from the Ethical Review Committee of Bahria Medical and Dental College (Ref-ERC-14-2022). Qualitative case study design was used for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in a real environment instead of a controlled setting. A flexible design and purposive random sampling was the sampling technique used. Inclusion criteria was Faculty

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members who were involved in mentoring for the last three years (mentors) and also gave consent. Mentees of all mentors who fulfilled the selection criteria were also involved. The exclusion criteria was faculty members who were not involved in mentoring for the last three years and mentors and mentees who did not give consent. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used for constructivist epistemology.

Data collection was done by observation of video-recorded interactions, semi-structured video-elicited interviews of mentors, and focus group discussions with mentees using questions from mentor evaluation tool (MET) and additional questions were added regarding the mentoring session's organisation and environment. Questions of mentor interviews were focused on five main mentoring competencies of effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, fostering independence, and addressing diversity. Five individual mentoring sessions were recorded. Informed consent was taken from mentors and mentees before recording these sessions. Good quality video recordings are required for video elicitation interviews; audio recordings can only capture verbal responses. The full range of verbal and nonverbal communication responses during mentor-mentee interactions are required to stimulate participant recall during interviews. The mentor and mentee were recorded in a single video frame. Video elicitation interviews were conducted as soon as possible after interactions because the mentors' memories were fresh at that time. An initial pilot video elicitation interview was done to identify unexpected but important comments, assess interview quality and reflect on possible changes required. Data collection was focused on recall and reflection of mentors on mentor-mentee interactions. The time of each recorded interaction was thirty minutes. Video recordings were shown to mentors and paused after every ten minutes. During each pause, participants were asked to give comments on that specific segment. Interviewers kept participants focused on the specific moments or events that they observed on the video recordings.

Giorgi method was used for analysis of transcripts of the focus groups and video elicited interviews. In the first step, the author read all the transcripts and compiled all information given by participants on the mentoring session. In the second phase, the author assessed and differentiated the views given by different participants. In the third phase, the author combined common theme units. In the fourth and final stage, the author synthesised the meaning of each theme. Video recordings and interview data were analysed separately and then compared. Integration of data from video recordings and elicitation interviews was done. There was constant reflection on interview transcripts and memos for any modifications needed in questions asked during interviews. For example, what is the impact of mentoring on a mentors professional development?

Data analysis followed stages of open, axial and selective coding through which themes were constructed. Interpretation of data analysis was shared with participants for member check

procedure. Integration of data from video recordings, elicitation interviews and focus group discussions gave in-depth exploration of phenomenon.

## RESULTS

Five mentors and thirty-two mentees fulfilled the criteria. Mentoring was described as a nurturing experience both by mentors and mentees. However, they suggested certain shortcomings in the process and also suggested multiple tools to improve it. According to mentors, the true essence of mentoring is mutual respect and confidentiality. Mentors need to create satisfaction and motivation in mentees for continued professional and personal development by reflecting on their previous and current progress. Mentees were mostly interested in particular goal setting by mentors but mentors were of the opinion that goals should be decided by mentees. However, mentors should facilitate mentees in achieving that goal. Mentees suggested multiple mentors for professional development in different attributes.

## DISCUSSION

The basic aim of this research was to explore factors responsible for successful mentor-mentee relationships. The findings of this research supported that formal mentoring programs are beneficial to all stakeholders for professional as well as personal development. Mentors and mentees gave positive perceptions towards the structured mentoring program being practised at this institute. Mentees were mostly interested in particular goal setting by mentors but mentors were of the opinion that goals should be decided by mentees. However, the mentor should facilitate the mentee in achieving that goal. Previous literature suggests that mentees are usually satisfied with connection, communication, and support provided by mentors. It is the same with this research participants but they did give certain suggestions to improve the mentor-mentee relationship.<sup>14,15</sup>

Many previous qualitative studies criticised the shortage of designated time provided by the institute to support mentoring sessions for mentees and mentors. Mentees' responses regarding mentors' abilities and mentoring process were satisfactory; unlike few previous studies which highlighted deficiencies in them. Mentees supported multiple mentors with different expertise for better professional development. However, they did not mention any issue regarding the difference in personality of the mentor and mentee and its impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring session. Few previous researches do mention interpersonal issues between mentees and mentors and how these issues were affecting the successful development of mentor-mentee relationship.<sup>16</sup> Mentors and mentees both acknowledged that the ability to establish a respectful professional relationship is the basis of successful a mentor-mentee relationship. Mentoring relationship is mutually beneficial to both mentor and mentee.<sup>17</sup>

Awareness about video-recordings may change mentor behaviour, which can cause bias in the study. Video-elicited interviews technique is logistically demanding and time-consuming

but gives in-depth exploration to understand the phenomenon under study *i.e.* exploration of aspects affecting a successful mentor-mentee relationship. However, it is a single-centric research which is a limitation of this study. Prolonged engagement, triangulation of data collection methods and member-checking procedures were employed for credibility and reflexivity. Hence, ensuring the trustworthiness and conformability of the research study. This research will guide medical educationists to establish a structured program to train mentors on how to reflect on their mentoring sessions and understand the mentees' perspective of mentor-mentee interaction for future improvement in these sessions.

## CONCLUSION

Mentoring sessions are highly beneficial to both mentees and mentors. Mentees learn from experienced mentors and mentors gain innovative ideas from mentees. The mentors' commitment to their mentees and the mentees' respect and trust is the foundation of a successful mentor-mentee relationship. Mentors need to create motivation in mentees for continued professional and personal development by reflecting on their previous and current progress.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL:

Ethical approval was taken from the Ethical Review Committee of Bahria University Health Sciences campus.

## PATIENTS' CONSENT:

Informed consent was taken from mentors and mentees who participated in the study.

## COMPETING INTEREST:

The author declared no competing interest.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION:

KF: Design, data collection, analysis, and write-up.

AU: Design, write-up, and review.

All the authors have approved the final version of the manuscript to be published.

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