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SOCIAL CAPITAL & MENTORING

RETHINKING IMMIGRANT MENTORING WITH A DECOLONIZED PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Mentoring programs that provide newcomers with information about Canadian work norms and culture have the potential to positively impact the integration of skilled immigrants into the Canadian labour market. Past research on immigrant integration has highlighted the benefits immigrants receive from mentorship programs, such as support, empathy, encouragement, counseling and friendship, collegiality, and career satisfaction. Less is known about the benefits that mentors receive from these programs. This highlights a crucial gap in understanding the reciprocal benefits of mentorship and its impacts on mentors. This paper shares findings from a research study on "Facilitators and Barriers to Mentorship Programs for Newcomers to Canada" to highlight the benefits mentors gain in the form of social capital and, in doing so, to emphasize the need to decolonize existing mentorship programs and incorporate Indigenous values in mentorship practices. A decolonizing agenda is crucial to addressing historical and ongoing systemic inequities and promoting inclusive and equitable mentorship practices.

Keywords: decolonization, mentorship programs, social capital, mentor benefits

Introduction

Canada welcomed 468,817 immigrants to the country in 2023 (Statistics Canada, 2023). The number is expected to rise to 500,000 immigrants in 2026 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023). Despite their high skills and qualifications, most immigrants face challenges in the Canadian workforce due to barriers like unrecognized foreign credentials, required Canadian work experience, language disadvantages, discrimination, and lack of labor market information (George & Chaze, 2009). These barriers result in Canadian newcomers being forced to look for work outside their fields or apply for entry-level positions (Lai et al., 2017), which results in negative health and financial outcomes for the new immigrant (Creese & Wiebe, 2012; Asanin Dean & Wilson, 2009; Premji & Sakhya, 2017) and an economic loss for Canada (Bannerjee et al, 2019; Reitz et al., 2014). This is problematic because it perpetuates socio-economic disparities and limits the full potential of skilled immigrants to contribute to the Canadian economy and society.

Mentoring programs that provide newcomers with information about Canadian work norms and culture have been known to positively impact the integration of skilled immigrants into the Canadian economy (Reeves, 2017). Mentorship programs can benefit immigrants by providing support, empathy, encouragement, counseling, friendship, collegiality, and career satisfaction. (Shan & Butterwick, 2017). Less is known about the benefits that mentors receive from these programs. The limited research indicates that mentors also benefit from mentorship programs. Benefits accrued to mentors, for instance, include networking, professional development, and personal satisfaction (Shan & Butterwick, 2017). Understanding these benefits is crucial as it can enhance the effectiveness and appeal of mentorship programs, thereby improving support structures for immigrants. Moreover, recognizing the reciprocal benefits can help to address systemic barriers by fostering a more inclusive and mutually beneficial environment for both mentors and mentees.

Conventional concepts of immigrant mentorship programs are characterized by a hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee. Eurocentric values largely influence these programs, which position the mentor as the more dominant figure, perpetuating power norms and a "savior" mentality (Indspire, 2021). This paper presents findings from a qualitative study on the social capital mentors gain by mentoring newcomers to Canada. The authors of this paper suggest that mentorship programs can learn from Indigenous perspectives on mentorship that emphasize reciprocal learning and mutual benefits for both mentors and mentees. The Indigenous worldview of mentorship prioritizes respectful and reciprocal relationships that honour sociocultural contexts, fostering vital elements such as vulnerability, trust, and confidence (Indspire, 2021). This approach underscores the significance of nurturing these qualities within the mentorship relationship, acknowledging their pivotal role in supporting meaningful and impactful relationships (Indspire, 2021). Using this lens allows us the opportunity to challenge the existing view of mentoring programs, where the immigrant is seen as the sole beneficiary,

and highlights the reciprocal nature of mentoring relationships for all parties. Decolonization dismantles power imbalances from colonization, rethinking hierarchical mentorship to create equitable, reciprocal interactions. This approach honors Indigenous perspectives, allowing mentors and mentees to share knowledge and learn equally, enriching the experience and promoting social justice and inclusivity.

This paper is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, the next section reviews the existing literature related to mentorship programs and benefits to mentors, including on their social capital. The third section details the methodology of the research that informs this paper. The fourth section provides the profile of participants and highlights the results of the study. The fifth section discusses the findings in light of the existing literature. The last section details the implications of these findings for practice.

Literature Review

Mentorship

The concept of mentorship has a rich historical lineage, tracing its origins back to Homer's Odyssey. Historically, prominent mentor-protégé relationships have flourished across diverse professions (Eby, Rhodes, & Allen, 2007). Yet, scholars within this domain have struggled to make significant headway in establishing a uniform definition and conceptual framework for mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). As our study is interested in highlighting the benefits accrued for mentors in the mentorship process, we understand mentorship to be "a professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the relational partners through the provision of career and psychosocial support" (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2019, p. 16).

Traditionally, mentoring is based on the idea of knowledge transfer in a hierarchical, one-way relationship (Geeraerts et al., 2015). Traditional mentoring includes the provision of career and psychosocial support by an experienced mentor to a relatively less experienced protégé. The literature has tried to classify the different types of mentoring. For instance, Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) list nine distinct forms of mentoring: formal mentoring, informal mentoring, diverse mentoring, electronic mentoring, co-mentoring or collaborative mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, multilevel mentoring structure, and cultural mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Social Capital

The concept of social capital is multifaceted and shaped by various perspectives. At its core, social capital represents the repository of resources embedded within an individual's social network (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009) that play a pivotal role in providing the individual with access to various opportunities and resources (Portes, 1998). The benefits of social capital are plentiful. It consists of nurturing community engagement, fostering

belonging, and facilitating reciprocal exchanges and trust among individuals (Anheier, Gerhards, & Romo, 1995; Gold, 1995). Two primary types of reciprocity exist: specific reciprocity, involving individual-level exchanges, and generalized reciprocity, where actions are performed without immediate expectations of returns, promoting trustworthiness (Putnam, 2001). Social capital provides access to resources and opportunities often inaccessible through other means, such as job referrals or emotional support. It is nurtured by community engagement and participation in various organizations, promoting a sense of belonging (Anheier, Gerhards, & Romo, 1995).

An alternate perspective emphasizes the dual impact of social capital, contending that while it benefits certain individuals, it simultaneously deprives opportunities from specific social groups. This concept also highlights the potential for social inequalities when networks are exclusive, or privilege-based (Behtoui & Neergaard, 2012). For instance, in job seeking or promotions, social capital can exclude outsiders, as network members support themselves, disadvantaging those without the "right" connections. Consequently, social capital becomes a pivotal factor in generating distinct outcomes for individuals who possess similar human capital, such as educational qualifications and labour market experiences (Behtoui & Neergaard, 2012).

Additionally, social capital can be acquired through both formal and informal networks. In the case of newcomers to Canada, formal networks encompass organizations that provide services to address unique and diverse settlement needs, while informal networks comprise friends and family whom newcomers can turn to for assistance (George & Chaze, 2009). Social capital's breadth and depth rely on network composition and effective communication, akin to economic investments. It transforms into various capital forms, allowing individuals to access benefits through social networks, emphasizing the importance of relationships, trust, and reciprocity (Portes, 1998).

Literature differentiates between bridging and bonding social capital. Bonding social capital is typically associated with close-knit and homogeneous groups, such as family, close friends, or members of a particular community or organization (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Bonding social capital fosters a sense of trust and solidarity among individuals who share similar characteristics or experiences. It often leads to the exchange of emotional support and resources within these tightly connected networks. While bonding social capital is valuable for creating a sense of belonging and emotional security, it can sometimes reinforce existing social norms and limit exposure to diverse perspectives (Wallace & Pichler, 2007). Bridging social capital pertains to connections between individuals who are not necessarily close friends or colleagues but share some common interests or affiliations. These bridging networks often involve people with diverse personal characteristics (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Bridging social capital can play a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion, sharing information, and promoting collaboration across diverse social boundaries (Wallace & Pichler, 2007).

Mentorship Programs and Economic Integration of Immigrants

Immigrant refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group (Statistics Canada, 2023). The category of economic immigrants generally includes individuals who are selected based on their ability to contribute to Canada's economy. This can be through various means such as meeting specific labor market needs, owning or managing a business, making substantial investments, creating employment opportunities, or meeting provincial or territorial labor market requirements. Economic immigrants are assessed based on factors like education, work experience, language proficiency, and other criteria that indicate their potential to integrate successfully into the Canadian economy (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Many factors pose barriers to the effective economic integration of skilled immigrants to Canada including lack of information and guidance; lack of recognition of foreign credentials and work experience; employers' requirement for "Canadian experience"; lack of language skills; and discrimination (Chaze & Medhekar, 2017; Kaushik & Drolet, 2017). To succeed, newcomer professionals need to learn how to function effectively in a completely new environment with different ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (Reeves, 2017). Immigrants are required to demonstrate not only "hard skills" (technical abilities) but also "soft skills" such as the ability to navigate workplace norms and cultures and understanding of unwritten rules of the workplace (Lai et al, 2017; Sakamoto et. al, 2010). Lack of information and guidance has been identified as one of the major barriers to effective social and economic integration of skilled immigrants.

Literature on immigrant integration highlights two mentorship types: informal (friends, family, community) and formal, both providing guidance, information, and resource access. Emphasizing the importance of personal connections and shared experiences for immigrant professionals in Australia, Peeler and Jane (2005) suggest that informal mentoring arrangements often prove more beneficial for immigrants in their journey of adaptation and integration. Formal mentorships are planned, structured, and intentional services for newcomers and target gaps, and resolve problems in programs and organizations. Formal mentorship programs for immigrants can assist immigrants in expanding their professional networks, refining their job search techniques, deepening their professional insights, and acclimating to the Canadian workplace culture (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018).

Immigrant mentorship, as described by George and Chaze (2009), encompasses the guidance and support provided by established immigrants or members of the receiving community to newcomers. This form of support may take various shapes, including both informal networks where individuals assist each other in navigating the challenges of immigration and settlement, and formal mentorship programs. Peeler and Jane (2005)

emphasize the value of ongoing supportive relationships between newcomers and more knowledgeable members of the community in the Australian context. They suggest that such relationships can serve as a bridge, helping immigrants navigate the transition between their past understandings and unfamiliar practices in the new environment.

Research has well documented the positive outcomes of formal mentorship programs for immigrant mentees. Mentoring programs have the potential to guide newcomers about these new ways of functioning and impact the integration of skilled immigrants into the Canadian economy (Reeves, 2017). An evaluation of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) Mentoring Partnership (TMP) program in Ontario found that newcomers who participated in the three-month mentoring program were almost two times more likely to find quality employment and four times more likely to have increased their professional networks compared to those who did not participate in this program. 85 percent of participants had found such employment within six months of undertaking the program and 77% of newcomer participants found work in their own or related fields within six months of the program. Mentorship programs can help immigrant mentees receive occupation-specific career advice, practical job search tips, proof-reading cover letters and introductions to the mentors' networks, and increase their self-confidence (TRIEC, 2020; Zizek, 2017). Mentors can help newcomers set expectations and provide the immigrants with insights into workplace culture in Canada, while also motivating and encouraging them (TRIEC, 2020). The impact of the mentorship program is most profound on newcomer women and those who are unemployed (TRIEC, 2020). Mentorship programs also benefit the employing organization (TRIEC, 2018).

The limited scholarship on the benefits of mentorship for mentors indicates that mentorship also provides benefits to mentors. Klinge (2015) suggests that mentoring transcends mere professional ties, enabling mentors to become confidants and furthering the development of their protégés. Interviews with mentors involved in a program geared toward the economic integration of newcomers in British Columbia (Shan & Butterwick, 2017) revealed that mentors gained life and work knowledge through the interactions with their mentees. Mentors experienced fulfillment and personal growth, feeling more positive, self-confident, and empathetic. Other research on mentorship programs in Canada have found that mentors appreciated giving back to society while enhancing coaching, leadership, and intercultural communication skills, and gaining a new appreciation of diversity (TRIEC, 2020; Zizek, 2017). Some mentors had been immigrants themselves and valued the prospect of helping other immigrants navigate employment-related hurdles. Mentors shared that participating in the mentorship program had allowed them to better appreciate the talent and experience that immigrants can bring to the workplace and had improved their ability to work more effectively with their own colleagues from different cultures (TRIEC, 2020).

Mentoring relationships are reciprocal with both mentors and mentees gaining from the flow of information and knowledge (Shan & Butterwick, 2017.; Young, Haffejee, & Corsun,

2018). Clutterback et al (2012) posit that diversity mentoring enriches mentors' understanding of different individuals, reveals systemic barriers, and benefits organizations by showcasing the value of diverse teams. Based on their study of mentoring relationships between White student mentors and newcomer refugees to the United States, Young et al. (2018) conclude that such relationships may have positive effects on cultural intelligence and empathy for mentors. Such competencies are essential for people working in increasingly diverse societies.

In a mentee-mentor relationship, coloniality can be reinforced through the perpetuation of dominant cultural norms, values, and power dynamics. This often occurs when mentors, consciously or unconsciously, impose their worldview and standards onto the mentee, potentially marginalizing or disregarding indigenous or minority perspectives. Such dynamics may replicate colonial hierarchies by prioritizing the mentor's cultural norms and experiences, thereby influencing and shaping the mentee's understanding and development within the relationship.

Previous research extensively explores the benefits of mentorship for mentees, yet there remains a notable gap regarding the benefits experienced by mentors, particularly in mentoring newcomers. Further research and studies are needed to comprehensively understand this aspect of mentorship dynamics. Our research not only emphasizes emotional and social benefits, but also uncovers additional advantages not identified by previous studies, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of the diverse gains for mentors.

Methodology

Research Design

This study reports on the findings emerging from qualitative interviews with 25 professionals who mentored newcomers as part of the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership (TMP) program in Ontario, Canada. These interviews were conducted as part of a larger Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded study that explored facilitators and barriers to immigrant mentoring and was carried out in collaboration with the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership program in the Greater Toronto Area. The larger study employed a convergent mixed-method design, utilizing surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The choice of mixed methods—qualitative interviews supplemented by surveys and focus groups—was motivated by the need to triangulate data sources and perspectives. Qualitative interviews allow for in-depth exploration of mentors' experiences, capturing rich, detailed narratives. Surveys and focus groups provide quantitative and complementary qualitative data, respectively, enhancing the breadth and depth of insights into the complexities of mentoring dynamics. This methodological approach ensures robustness in capturing both the breadth and depth of mentor experiences within the TMP program.

Research Purpose and Rationale

The central purpose of this research is to investigate the facilitators and barriers encountered by mentors participating in the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership program. Subordinate research questions focus on understanding the motivations of mentors, identifying effective mentoring strategies, and exploring the impacts of mentoring on mentors themselves.

Sampling

The research team conducted an anonymous online survey using Qualtrics XM targeting professionals who had experience in both mentoring and not mentoring newcomers to Canada. To reach potential participants, we distributed flyers containing a survey link through various channels, including social media and our professional networks. For those who had experience as mentors, we offered the opportunity to engage in a follow-up focus group discussion or in an interview, while participants who had never mentored were invited to take part in follow-up interviews. Those who expressed interest in the follow-up sessions were requested to provide their contact information, including their names and email addresses, to facilitate the delivery of the required information and consent forms for the interviews and focus groups.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection spanned from March to May 2022 and yielded 388 survey responses. Fifteen interviews and five focus groups were carried out to gather insights from 25 mentor participants. Interview and focus group participants received a $30 gift card as an honorarium. Interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed using Otter AI.

Quantitative survey data was analyzed using SPSS. Qualitative data analysis employed grounded theory procedures (Corbin & Strauss 2015). Grounded theory involves a systematic process of data analysis that begins with basic description of the findings, moves to conceptual ordering, and culminates in theorizing. This process relies on detailed coding procedures, which allows researchers to move from raw data to theory development (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Interviews transcribed on Otter AI were anonymized and coded to identify emerging themes or dimensions. Some of the strategies used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research included peer debriefing, audit trails, and thick descriptions (Padgett, 2017).

Ethical Safeguards

The survey was anonymous. Confidentiality measures included IP address protection and participant de-identification. If participants opted to receive an honorarium for completing the online survey or wished to engage in interviews/focus groups, they were required to disclose their names and email addresses in another form, unlinked to their survey responses The study received ethics approval from the Sheridan College Research Ethics Board (#SREB No 2022-02- 001-003).

Results

The table below presents a summary of the 25 mentor participants—reflecting diverse professional fields, years of experience, and mentoring involvement. Most notably, a significant proportion of these participants (49%) were immigrants themselves. The fact that nearly half of the mentor participants in the study are immigrants themselves highlights the valuable perspectives and experiences that immigrants bring to mentoring relationships. This demographic insight is crucial as it underscores the richness of diverse backgrounds and cultural insights these mentors can offer. Immigrant mentors often bring unique perspectives on adaptation, resilience, and navigating professional landscapes, which are invaluable for mentees facing similar challenges. Understanding this demographic composition is important as it emphasizes the role of diversity in enhancing mentoring effectiveness and cultural competence within professional settings.

Interview and focus group data show that mentors to newcomers to Canada benefit from the quick gratification they receive in witnessing the direct impact of their mentorship, developing friendships, personal fulfillment, understanding newcomers' challenges, community support, career advancement, increased connections, volunteer rewards, mutual benefits, and continuous learning.

Quick Gratification through Witnessing the Direct Impact of Mentorship

Mentoring provided quick and tangible rewards, allowing mentors to witness the direct impact of their guidance. When mentees secured jobs within 10-11 weeks, mentors felt a deep sense of accomplishment. Engaging in mock interviews, résumé reviews, and job applications together, mentors shared the journey and celebrated their mentees' successes, which filled them with profound satisfaction and fulfillment.

Table 1

Profile of Participants

Identifier	Gender	Field of work	Number of years in the current field	Length of time mentoring	Number of mentees to date
ME1	Male	Engineering	21 years	28 years	Not indicated
ME2	Male	Engineering	20-25 years	2 years	5
ME3	Female	Engineering	17-18 years	2.5 years	5 years
ME4	Male	Engineering	11	5 years	15
MMK1	Male	Marketing	<5 years	Not indicated	4
MMK2	Male	Marketing	20-25 years	Not indicated	Not indicated
MMK3	Female	Marketing	5-10 years	2 years	2
MMK4	Female	Marketing	40 years	Not indicated	Not indicated
MI1	Female	IT	11	1 year	2
MI2	Male	IT	7	<2 years	2

MI3	Male	IT/HR	8	1 year	5
MI4	Male	IT	20	5-6 years	8
MI5	Female	IT	40 years retired 4 years ago	16 years	Not indicated
MI6	Female	IT	30 years	4 years	2
MI7	Male	IT	< 5 years	4 years	17
MI8	Male	IT	40 years	10 years	11
MM1	Female	Finance	4	4	6
MM2	Female	Banking	12	6	2
MM3	Male	IT	21	13	30
MM4	Male	Finance	21+ years	10 years	12
MM5	Female	Finance	20 years	Not indicated	4
MM6	Male	Sales/Software	< 5 years	3-4 years	3
MM7	Female	Banking/Financial Services	5.5 years	4 years	4
MM8	Female	Banking/Financial Services	Over 25 years	<3 months	1
MM9	Male	Finance	5-10 years	5 years	6

Note: Table 1 presents participant profiles, detailing their gender, field of work, number of years in the current field, length of time mentoring, and number of mentees to date.

Developing Emotional Bonds and Friendships

Mentorship extended beyond a professional connection, as some mentors developed emotional bonds and friendships with their mentees. These relationships were grounded in a shared understanding of the challenges newcomers face in settling into a new country. The act of helping someone find their footing in a new country, particularly during the challenging early years, held a special place in mentors' hearts. One of the participants, MM1 stated:

> *It was my daughter's birthday party, and I invited him and his wife to my daughter's birthday party just to see how it is like in Canada, especially because I knew that they have no family, no friends, not many friends in Toronto. (MM1)*

Mentorship fostered a sense of belonging and social connection for both mentors and mentees, filling the void of missing ties in Canada. Emotional bonds often extended beyond formal periods, forming lasting friendships and ongoing support.

Personal Satisfaction and Sense of Fulfillment by Making a Positive Impact

Many mentors found fulfillment in knowing they had made a positive impact on someone's life, along with knowing they were helping newcomers adapt to their new

environment. Mentors derived satisfaction from assisting individuals as they navigated the challenges of settling in a new country and in their pursuit of employment. One of the participants MM9 shared:

> *I was it was just it was really touching to hear him say that he felt that he was just an old shell of himself, right? He just lost all purpose and didn't feel valued enough. Right. So, it was very touching to hear that and I'm very glad to see him like on the path to you know, feeling more settled here.* (MM9)

Mentors like M14 found purpose in assisting newcomers who initially felt lost or undervalued, guiding them toward a more settled life in Canada. Another mentor (M18) derived satisfaction in the fact that their mentorship not only helped not only the immigrant mentee to secure a job but also indirectly benefited the mentees entire family.

Enhanced Insight into Newcomers' Employment Challenges.

While most participants were immigrants and understood newcomers' employment challenges, mentoring provided deeper insights into these barriers. Participants NM6 and NM13 described how cultural disparities can hinder newcomers in their job search. NM6 shared that mentors could offer assistance to newcomers in navigating these challenges by understanding the role of a warm introduction in the job search process or how to use LinkedIn effectively.

Creating Chains of Support and Guidance in the Community

Some participants believed mentorship has a ripple effect, with mentees becoming mentors, creating a chain of support. For mentors like MM8, the process also fostered personal and professional growth. MM8 felt this was similar to improving skills like cooking and perpetuating community development.

> *So, it's, it's just like learning to cook or something like this. You know what I mean? Like it's just part of as you do it, you get better, and you become a better cook. And others are watching you cook, and they will become better cooks. It's, to me it's just such an important part of development.* (MM8)

Career Advancement and Professional Development

Mentorship significantly impacted the mentors' professional development and career advancement. Participants found that mentoring individuals from different countries enriched their leadership skills by exposing them to diverse cultures and faiths, enhancing their understanding of various behaviors and perspectives. This exposure made them more effective leaders within diverse teams. Some mentors used their positions to hire their mentees, recognizing their potential and skills. The experience improved mentors' networking and resume-building abilities and helped them stay current in their fields.

Additionally, some mentors' volunteer hours were recognized as Professional Development Units (PDUs) for certifications such as Project Management Professionals.

Increasing Professional Connections

Mentoring newcomers to Canada provided mentors with valuable networking opportunities and the chance to further their own professional connections. The mentorship process involved assisting mentees with job searches and networking, which enabled mentors to refine their own networking skills for their career development.

Mentors realized that this reciprocal relationship extended beyond the mentorship period, as individuals they had mentored years ago could become future colleagues, supervisors, or managers, creating a network that benefits both mentors and mentees.

Volunteering Rewards

Volunteering as a mentor offered its own set of rewards, with some mentors receiving recognition and incentives from their employers or organizations, which served as an added motivation to engage in such initiatives. In some cases, employers recognized the value of mentorship and rewarded mentors for their efforts. For example, one mentor spoke of a company program that rewards employees with 40 hours of mentoring and volunteering a $500 grant used as a charitable contribution to a charity of their choice.

Long Term Mutual Benefit

The mentor-mentee relationship was perceived to be a two-way street, fostering mutual benefit in the long term. It was a situation where both mentors and mentees found substantial value in the mentorship relationship, creating a positive and constructive cycle of learning and growth. Participant ME4 said "Think about it: why do you keep it transactional and just help someone just once versus helping them on a long-term basis, and as a better ROI for both the people, you know."

Continuous Learning

Mentors discovered that engaging in mentorship provided continuous learning and exposure to diverse experiences, keeping them current in their fields. This involvement enhanced their leadership and cross-cultural skills, making them valuable assets to their organizations. Mentorship facilitated career growth by refining their skills and maintaining their relevance in an evolving job market.

In summary, our study found that mentorship benefits mentors by fostering continuous learning, mutual benefit, and professional growth. It exposes mentors to diverse experiences, enhancing coaching, leadership, and cross-cultural skills. This symbiotic relationship benefits both mentors and mentees. Volunteering as a mentor provides tangible rewards, such as employer grants for charitable contributions. Mentorship aids mentees with job searches while honing mentors' networking skills. Working with diverse

individuals enriches mentors' leadership abilities, sometimes leading to hiring mentees, and improves mentors' networking and resume-building skills. Moreover, mentors felt gratification and a sense of personal fulfillment from helping their immigrant mentees and their families and developed friendships and networks through the mentorship process.

Discussion

The findings of our study demonstrate that mentors stand to gain social capital from their mentoring engagements. Our research found that the benefits experienced by mentors include the immediate impact of their help towards mentees, emotional connection, continuous learning, career advancement, mutual benefit, networking, ripple effect of mentorship and personal satisfaction. Mentoring provided mentors with a sense of immediate fulfillment as they observed their mentees securing jobs within a short period of time. Similar to the findings of past research (Grella, 2017), our study found that mentoring was a mutually beneficial relationship where both mentors and mentees derived value from their shared encounters and hurdles. These findings allow us to challenge traditional notions of mentorship that focus only on the benefits to mentees.

Our study found that mentorship extended past professional bonds, as certain mentors developed profound emotional connections with their mentees. These bonds were built on mutual recognition of the difficulties newcomers encounter when adapting to a foreign country. Such deep emotional bonds occur due to the shared experiences and backgrounds, which create a strong foundation for empathy and understanding. These bonds signify a profound level of trust and mutual respect, often leading to a more impactful and transformative mentoring experience. When mentors and mentees share similar backgrounds, it helps to bridge cultural gaps and creates a safe space for open communication and support. Our findings concur with that of Ramaswami and Dreher (2007) who propose that mentoring benefits mentors through feedback and information exchange, creating a reciprocal relationship. Psychosocial mentoring and role modeling involve mentors enhancing their protégés' self-esteem and confidence by demonstrating respect, empathy, and appropriate attitudes and behaviors (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). This approach often leads to the development of emotional connections and the mentors' becoming confidants to their protégés, fostering a deeper sense of purpose and belonging for the mentees.

Consistent with Ghosh & Reio (2013) and aligned with Fletcher and Ragin's arguments (2007), our study revealed that mentorship contributes to career advancement by enhancing inclusive leadership skills. This improvement stems from exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives, leading mentors to excel as leaders within diverse teams. While previous studies have consistently highlighted the positive impact of mentorship on individuals' leadership skills, positions, and other related benefits, our research uniquely

contributes by revealing a significant increase in mentors' social capital, particularly manifested in social and emotional advantages.

As our research has shown, far from being a relationship where the mentor is a savior to mentees, the mentorship relationship has mutual benefits. This calls for a less hierarchical conceptualization of mentor-mentee relationships, in keeping with Indigenous perspectives on mentorship. The authors of this paper suggest that existing immigrant mentorship programs can benefit by incorporating a decolonization lens. Such a lens has the potential to reshape existing conceptualizations of mentor-mentee relationships. Addressing decolonization within mentorship is crucial for recognizing and valuing Indigenous perspectives which are often overlooked in mentorship programs. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives would require that mentors appreciate and respect the diverse backgrounds of their mentees. Such perspectives foster a more holistic approach to mentorship, which values relationality, community, and reciprocity. Indigenous mentorship models emphasize the importance of cultural continuity and the transmission of traditional knowledge, ensuring that mentoring relationships are not only professional but also deeply personal and culturally resonant.

The implications of our study's findings suggest significant shifts are needed in the design and perception of mentorship programs for newcomers. By highlighting the reciprocal nature of mentorship, our findings challenge traditional understandings of mentorship relationship that tend to focus solely on mentee benefits and encourage a more holistic approach that recognizes mentor advantages. This redefinition can enhance mentor recruitment and retention, as mentor professionals see tangible rewards such as social capital, emotional satisfaction, and career advancement. Emphasizing continuous learning and professional development through mentorship can appeal to industries prioritizing lifelong learning for their employees. Additionally, mentorship strengthens organizational and community networks, fostering a culture of mutual support and collaboration. Mentorship's immediate and long-term impacts, such as mentors witnessing mentee success and experiencing professional growth, highlight the value of sustained engagements. Policymakers and program developers can leverage these insights to create initiatives that better support mentors, offering incentives like professional development credits and recognition awards.

Implications for Practice

Our findings offer distinct perspectives by revealing that mentoring not only benefits mentees, but mentorship yields considerable benefits for the mentors as well. This discovery stands out significantly, as prior research has predominantly focused on the benefits accruing to mentees, with less attention to the positive outcomes experienced by mentors. Mentorship programs too, may often gloss over these benefits to mentors and tend to highlight the many advantages of such programs for mentees only, perpetuating

hierarchical relationships and power imbalances between mentors and mentees. We suggest that it is important for mentorship programs to conceptualize mentorship relationships through a decolonized lens that prioritize non-hierarchical approaches and recognize the numerous benefits mentorships provides both mentees and mentors. Practitioners working in these programs need to actively confront Eurocentric viewpoints and undertaking the task of decolonizing their mindset, and that of others, concerning mentoring practices.

Decolonized mentorship programs honour the knowledge and contributions of both mentors and mentees, embracing Indigenous principles such as mutual recognition, respect, sharing, and shared responsibility (Indspire, 2021). Incorporating Indigenous values into mentorship programs for newcomers holds the promise of fostering mutual appreciation within relationships and enhancing community-wide benefits. By integrating Indigenous principles such as community building, reciprocity, and holistic support, these programs can foster deeper connections and a sense of belonging for newcomers. This approach not only addresses power imbalances but also enriches the mentorship experience by valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences of both mentors and mentees. Embracing decolonized methodologies ensures that mentorship programs contribute to the broader goals of social inclusion and equity, benefiting individuals and communities alike.

Cultural sensitivity must be built into mentorship programs for newcomers. This will allow mentors to understand and respect the diverse backgrounds, and experiences of their mentees, fostering a supportive environment for mentees to navigate their settlement in a new country. Cultural sensitivity can help mentors recognize the unique challenges faced by diverse immigrants and tailor their support, accordingly, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of mentorship relationships. When mentors are not adequately supported or trained, it can impact their ability to provide meaningful assistance. Mentors who lack proper training may struggle to address the complex needs of newcomers, potentially leading to ineffective guidance or inadvertent cultural insensitivity. This could hinder the establishment of trust and rapport between mentors and mentees and hamper the success of the mentorship program. Additionally, proper training and opportunities for mentors within decolonized mentorship programs tailored for newcomers can substantially augment the social capital of these individuals. The success and sustainability of mentorship programs for newcomers rely heavily on providing mentors with adequate training, support, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Governments need to invest in programs that include cultural sensitivity training for mentors.

Conclusion

This paper explored the social capital benefits mentors gain from mentoring new immigrants, based on interviews and focus groups with 25 mentors. These benefits include immediate gratification, emotional connections, personal satisfaction, community support networks, career advancement, volunteering rewards, and ongoing learning. The study highlights the need to decolonize mentorship programs by integrating Indigenous values that respect the knowledge and contributions of both mentors and mentees and embrace values of mutual recognition, respect, and shared responsibility.

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