



# Mentoring and job satisfaction in Malaysian SMEs

Job satisfaction  
in Malaysian  
SMEs

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Building on social exchange theory, this paper aims to hypothesize the direct impact of mentoring on employees' job satisfaction.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A survey method was used to gather the information that was required in this study to examine the relationship between mentoring and employees' job satisfaction among employees from small and medium enterprises in Malaysia. A total of 200 questionnaires were sent out to executives of the middle and lower management level from the 21 selected small and medium enterprises. A total of 156 Malaysian executives participated.

**Findings** – The results show that there was a positive relationship between career mentoring and all dimensions in job satisfaction such as co-workers, job itself, promotion and supervisors. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between psychosocial mentoring and three aspects of employees' job satisfaction, namely co-workers, job itself, and promotion.

**Practical implications** – This study has helped to establish a foundation for the study of job satisfaction and mentoring. The foundation established has generated more knowledge and arguments on mentoring in the workplace to enhance performance. This paper contributes to the literature on the relationship between mentoring and employees' job satisfaction.

**Originality/value** – Considering the potential cascading effect that a good relationship can have on subordinates' job satisfaction, the paper shows that previous researches may have underestimated the impact of mentoring on job satisfaction.

**Keywords** Job satisfaction, Mentoring, Career guidance, Small to medium-sized enterprises, Malaysia

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Substantial research reports supports the vital role mentoring plays for numerous important organizational and individual outcomes. Hence, to promote healthy employee relationships, organizations need to consider how mentoring is related to their job satisfaction. Mentoring and job satisfaction are key issues for organizations to address in order to function effectively. Past literatures on leadership argues in favor of informal mentoring relationships where young executives establish relationships without prompting or monitoring from HR. According to Noypayak and Speece (1998), as businesses become competitive, the issue of how managers gain cooperation and compliance from subordinates becomes a critical issue. However, work environment influences may facilitate or constrain the benefits of having mentoring relationship (Higgins, 2001). It is especially true in organizations such as manufacturing companies with potentially hundreds of mentor or mentee relationships. In fact, having a proper

