

Mentoring Undergraduate Students:

International Trends in Research and Prospects for Mentoring at Japanese Universities

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Abstract

Mentoring has a long history in Western cultures, including in universities. However, despite its obvious benefits, its uptake and development have been slower in Japan. This study reviews theoretical and conceptual research on mentoring undergraduate students in universities from international perspectives, and investigates how a mentoring culture could be developed in universities in non-Western countries, such as Japan. The study also carefully examines mentor-mentee relationships to reveal how precisely mentoring achieves student development. A case presented in this study shows that mentorship requires emotional investment by both mentor and mentee and personal caring and commitment to professional development. It is confirmed that mentoring has a wide range of benefits for undergraduate students including increasing their chances of completing their course and preparing them better for a professional career. There were several challenges, however, due to cultural and social issues prevent mentoring penetration in Japanese universities. The survey revealed that students are less likely to talk openly about personal issues and tend to hesitate to approach mentors for consultation. Mentoring awareness is still quite low in Japan, but needs appear to be high. Mentoring is effective to meet the needs of diverse students, as well as respond to the various challenges the universities are facing. Therefore, along with the establishment of a formal program, the study recommends that the Japanese universities to make an effort to create an environment where informal and casual mentoring penetrates.

Key Words: Informal and Formal Mentoring, Undergraduate Mentorship,
Mentoring in Japan, Tripartite Student Support,
Global Human Resources Development

1. Introduction

Mentoring has a long history in Western culture, and its positive effects have been long recognized in many institutions in various ways, having developed independently with a mixture of theory and practice.

The basic principles of mentoring are the same as they have always been, but the study of mentoring is becoming increasingly broad and deep, and the approaches and expectations for mentoring in the university setting vary substantially among different study areas, particularly between STEM subjects and the arts and humanities (Kent L. Gee et al., 2017). Further, differences in mentoring approaches also appear between different countries.

Mentoring has long been considered an important aspect of development and retention strategies for undergraduate students in Western universities. Prior research has found that mentoring efforts are positively related to a variety of developmental and academic outcomes, such as, for example, increasing retention and promoting academic success, including adjustment to a new environment, degree completion, and graduate school enrollment for students, particularly from underrepresented minority populations (Gloria Crisp, et al., 2017). It has also been found that mentoring is an effective means of promoting social justice, equity, and diversity. In the US, mentoring is considered part of broader strategies for improvements in academic, social, and economic prospects, as well as engaging with a range of national challenges to strengthen communities and the national economy.²⁾

Limitations of Mentoring Studies

Mentoring research features some limitations, in that some definitions and concepts used in the field are closely tied and, yet, insufficiently clarified. Moreover, while the state of the university and the specific support needed by university students differ in different countries, no research has investigated its relative effectiveness. Furthermore, most work has focused on formal mentoring programs on university campuses (Erickson et al., 2009), without looking carefully into mentor-mentee relationships, the overall influence on development in the long term, or how precisely mentoring achieves student development.

2. Promoting Mentoring Culture in Other Countries

This study reviews recent and foundational theoretical and conceptual research focusing on mentoring undergraduates in universities to help understand undergraduate students' mentoring experiences and outcomes from an international perspective. In addition, this study investigates how mentoring culture could be developed in non-Western countries, such as in Japan, and provides principles of mentoring and a conceptual framework for it to guide the development and implementation of mentoring expansion in Japanese universities. Likewise, it presents a set of specific recommendations and evidence-based practices drawn from our mentoring experiences. The author hopes that this article will accelerate the development of both theory and practice of

mentoring in Japan, where mentoring has not yet fully penetrated culturally, socially, or educationally, with the hope of further development through examining the current state of Japanese mentoring using the existing understanding of mentoring.

3. Principles of Mentoring

Definition of Mentoring

There is no one single definition that reflects the diversity of mentoring relationships. Although definitions of mentoring in academia do of course vary in different studies and programs, the following four characteristics can be identified. 1. Mentoring relationships focus on the growth and development of students and appear in various forms, 2. Mentoring experiences may include broad professional, career, and emotional support, 3. Mentoring relationships are personal and reciprocal, 4. Mentors generally have more experience, influence, and achievements within the educational environment than their mentees (Crisp and Cruz, 2009). As noted, mentorship uses multiple approaches to respond to a given situation, depending on the specific settings, goals, and country. Here, we investigate the benefits and impact of the mentoring relationship in the university setting for both mentor and mentee.

Understanding the Differences between Mentoring and Coaching

It is notable that most studies do not distinguish between mentoring and other forms of supportive relationship in academia, such as coach and advisor. The terms mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably. While both focus on learning and development, they can be quite different roles. For example, the University of Auckland's Strategic Plan (2013–2020) clearly distinguishes between mentors and coaches. Mentoring relates primarily to the identification and nurturing of the potential of the whole person. It may be a long-term relationship, where goals may change but are always set by the learner. Feedback comes from within the mentee, and the mentor only works to develop insight and understanding grounded in intrinsic self-observation and becoming self-aware. Coaching, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with (often short-term) performance improvement in a specific skill area. Intermediate or sub-goals are typically set at the suggestion of the coach. A mentor may incorporate coaching techniques but will often share their experiences and be able to direct their mentee to relevant resources or to open doors (University of Auckland, 2014).

Stages of Mentoring

The mentor and mentee should recognize the natural stages of the mentoring relationship to allow themselves to think purposefully and communicate effectively about maximizing the relationship benefit and navigating transitions. Such stages are given different names and interpretations depending on the type of mentoring, Kram's four stages are most commonly used, namely, Initiation, Cultivation, Separation, and Redefinition, as shown in Figure 1. (Kram, 1983).

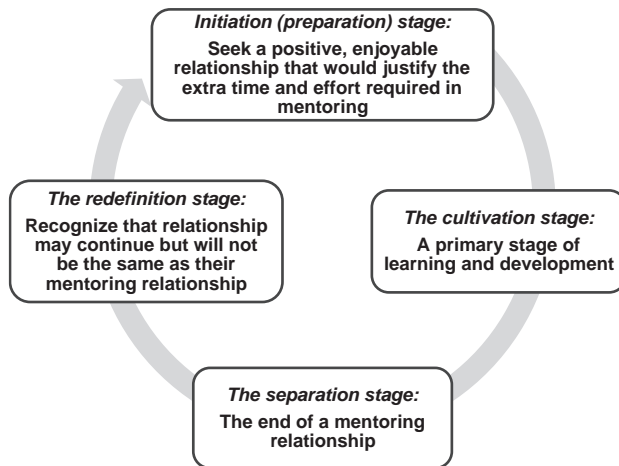


Figure 1: Four Stages in a Mentoring Relationship

4. International Trends in University Mentorship: Theory and Practice

University mentoring began as part of a formal hierarchical approach, where only faculty, and especially senior faculty, would coach junior members and students. These programs were meant to address specific issues, such as introducing students or faculty to the university, showing them important locations and resources. Other goals included improving academic performance among a certain group, such as underrepresented groups. One notable case is that of the Women's Center at a university in the United States, begun as an informal program to improve the performance of female students (Putsche et al., 2008). Access to social capital is particularly important in mentoring students from underrepresented groups, who are less likely to have networks of informed insiders investing in their success than those from majority groups. These characteristics have been found to be fundamental for effective mentoring relationships.

Today, many universities have formal mentoring programs. In the UK, over 30 % of universities offer mentorship programs for students and new faculty (Collings, Vivien, and Ruth, 2014). This also includes peer-to-peer mentoring, where more senior students mentor their juniors. The growing need for mentors from the restricted pool of senior faculty has led to this development. Another trend is the inclusion of non-academic issues, including post-academic employment and social challenges within hierarchical mentoring programs.

Recent studies have shown that mentoring is perceived by undergraduate students as consisting of four types of interrelated forms of support: including psychological and emotional support, degree and career support, academic subject support, and first-year adjustment (Gloria Crisp, et al., 2017). Mentoring is a valuable tool that provides students with the emotional and instrumental support they need to reach their academic goals. By providing accurate information, guidance, and encouragement, mentors play an important role in students' academic aspirations, helping them prepare for university and advising them on making a successful transition from high school to their college campus (Levine and Nidiffer, 1996). Additionally, mentoring helps

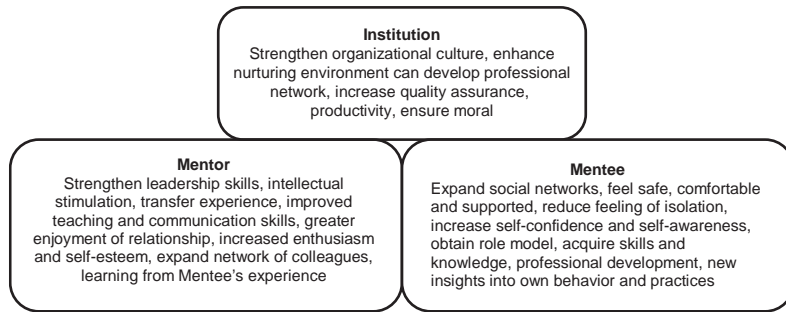


Figure 2: Summary of Mentoring Benefits

students feel connected and engaged on campus, which can improve their outcomes (Pascarella 1980).

There are numerous documented benefits of mentoring. As noted, mentoring benefits mentor, mentee, and institution, and some specific benefits appear in Figure 2.

Types of Undergraduate Mentorship

Most research has focused on formal mentoring programs on university campuses (Erickson et al., 2009). However, mentoring may be informal and develop spontaneously and naturally (Eby and Allen, 2008). Likewise, the amount of contact in a relationship and its duration of also differ, with some relationships lasting over a decade. Although traditionally, mentoring has been provided in person, an increasing number of e-mentoring programs are being implemented in universities and include a combination of technologically mediated and face-to-face interactions with one individual or in a group. In this section, we investigate both informal and formal mentorship. Table 1 describes the features of both informal and formal mentoring.

Table 1: Definitions and Characteristic of Informal and Formal Mentoring

Stages of Mentoring	Informal Mentoring	Formal Mentoring
Initiation	Develop naturally and not a part of structured program	Facilitated and supported by the organization, structured and intentional
Access	Initiated by mentees or mentors	Open access for all who apply
Selection and Matching	Self-selection for mentors and mentees	Strategic matching of mentors and mentees
Outcomes and Goal	Individual goals but not necessary strategically aligned	Connected to a strategic objective,
Orientation and Training	Usually, no formal training / orientation	Provides training, guidelines and additional information, support over the duration of the relationship
Review and Evaluation	No formal review of effectiveness	Formal review / evaluation process exists
Duration	Flexible, may be occasional or can be long-term	Take place at regularly scheduled times over an extended period
Implementation	Flexible and can change in response to emerging goals	Follow a carefully planned program. Limited to modifications within the purpose of the program.

Impact of Informal Meeting

As indicated above, the majority of mentoring studies have focused specifically on formal mentoring programs and largely ignore natural mentoring relationships. However, the literature notes that mentoring may be informal, spontaneous, and natural. Mentoring relationships may have many forms, durations, functions, and sources (Lunsford, Laura Gail, et al., 2017)

Informal mentoring relationships are far more common than formal ones. A survey found that 83 % of responding mentors had informally established relationships with students, while only 17 % worked through formal mentorship programs (McLearn, Colsanto, and Schoen, 1998). In either case, the relationship is generally initiated by the mentee.

The measure of the impact of mentoring on college success largely comes from studies of informal mentoring and includes the following findings. Faculty mentoring has a positive impact on student persistence and academic achievement (Crisp and Cruz, 2009). It helps prepare them for success in their professional careers. Mentoring minority students doubles their likelihood of persistence relative to non-mentored minority students and increases their GPAs (Crisp and Cruz, 2009). Mentoring improves students' university transition, by either helping them attend university or supporting their continuance to degree completion. A UK study found that unmentored students were four times as likely to consider leaving university than mentored students.

Importance and Effectiveness of Formal Mentorship in Undergraduate Students

The study and practice of mentoring continue to develop, conducted by a multidisciplinary and international group of scholars, focusing on a variety of educational contexts and target populations. Mentorship programs are significant to students in different ways. Ambiguity and uncertainty impact student self-esteem and social and academic life. Departing an old social network to join a new one initially results in decreased social support. This loss of support is reduced for students with mentors who encourage them and guide them in building new networks. Formal mentoring programs are thus essential for building student confidence, to increase retention and motivation. Programs support and enable success, not only in academics but also in social life at the university and in securing employment after school.

Recently, attention has focused on mentoring outcomes for specific student groups. A formal mentoring program generally has a clear purpose, a structure, and expected outcomes. Many stakeholders, including faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates, are involved in student support.

The study points to four types of undergraduate mentoring programs, as shown in Table 2. It provides into the distinguishing characteristics of each type of program in terms of focus, purpose, program characteristics, forms and structures, and expected outcomes.

Table 2: Summary of four types of undergraduate mentoring programs

	Context	Purpose	Characteristics	Form and Structure	Expected Outcomes
1	Orientation/ Retention	Transition to College	Academic and Social Skills	Cocurricular- living-learning communities	Retention and persistence, engagement
2	Underrepresented/ Minority	Degree completion, persistence to graduate studies or professions	Academic, emotional, sociocultural support	Academic and curricular	Retention and persistence, engagement, academic performance
3	Peer mentoring	Academic, career, psychological development	Socialization to college, discipline, or program	Academic and curricular	Retention, engagement, academic performance
4	Research and honors	Prepare a diverse workforce, institutional recruitment	Disciplinary knowledge, research process	Curricular: thesis, independent study, class: Cocurricular: reading or social groups	Retention GPA, research self-efficiency, belonging

Source: Gloria Crisp, *et al*, *Mentoring Undergraduate Students*, 2017

Difficulties of Undergraduate Student Mentoring

When evaluating undergraduate mentoring, it is important to understand that this is often the students' first experience with mentoring. This means that students are often ill prepared to benefit from their mentor's time and attention. Such mentoring is remains worthwhile and beneficial, but it may pass more time in the Initiation than in the Cultivation phase. Prior study shows that undergraduate mentoring success can be attributed to mentee motivation, mentoring-forward and team-based mentoring environments where students have access to multiple mentors at different levels, and a culture with an expected scholarly product of an undergraduate research experience.

Although there are numerous positive outcomes to mentoring undergraduate students, mentoring may not always benefit them and may even hinder graduate students' success. For example, recent work has found that female graduate students experienced feelings of self-doubt as a result of negative experiences with advising and mentoring, including difficulty engaging with a quality mentor. The study reveals that mentors should have a wide range of qualifications apart from their technical background, such as good professional level and training experience, as well as willingness, communication skills and other individual characteristics related to their personality (S. S. Pisimisi & M. G. Ioannides, 2005). Mentoring relationship largely depends on the quality of mentor; furthermore, it should be recognized how mentoring can be experienced similarly or differently in different student groups. Several notable differences appear in mentoring according to individual and socio-cultural differences, including gender, age, and culture.

5. Promoting Mentoring Environments in Japan

Research shows that the approach to mentoring varies across countries. Most mentoring research focuses on Western countries, and not enough research has examined mentoring ideas in other countries. In this section, a study of mentoring conducted at Japanese universities is presented. Ultimately, the mentoring relationship in Japan should be carefully examined to determine how its mentoring culture can be developed.

Student Support in Response to Changes in the Mentoring Environment in Japanese Universities

Recently, university administrators and faculty have noted that students' academic abilities, motivation, and interpersonal skills are declining³⁾. Student counseling reports quantitative issues, such as the increase in the number of consultations, and qualitative issues, such as the increase in challenging consultations. The result is a challenge that cannot be accommodated with simply by waiting for an independent visit.

Other issues facing Japanese universities are internationalization and the accompanying need for global human resources development⁴⁾. University enrollees are diversifying, including foreign students from many countries⁵⁾, older students of various ages and backgrounds, and disabled students. Moreover, the number of Japanese youths studying abroad is the highest in 2017, exceeded 100,000 for the first time, increasing nearly three times compared to 2009. Student diversification as well as change in the quality of college life is expected to continue, but relevant university support is often inadequate; better student support that responds to the needs of diverse students is urgently needed.

Tripartite Student Support Model

The Japanese has a tradition of student personnel services that provides general student support from admission to graduation. Student psychological counseling and educational support feature individual interviews with specialized counselors. These counselors, faculty members, and administrative staff form a tripartite model, in which broad-based consultation is provided. In this way, faculty and staff are involved in entire-student support.

Mentoring-like Efforts at Japanese Universities

In Japan, the term mentoring is not officially recognized, but a similar human resources development practice is. There have been a limited number of university mentoring initiatives, and little progress has been made. In the place of mentoring, the Brother Sister System (or the Elder System) and OJT (On-the-Job Training)⁶⁾, an important concept in Japanese human resources development practice, is the main alternative, but few universities are implementing it. Some examples include, support for students in science majors or for foreign students and mentoring systems in science and engineering graduate schools, teacher training courses, and nurse training courses. These do not reflect mentoring study and research but are implemented to

meet the actual needs of universities.

Key Survey Findings

The following key findings are from a study of mentoring at Kwansei Gakuin University. The study was conducted by questionnaire survey distributed to 194 of undergraduates in their 1st to 3rd year studying in the School of Policy Studies⁷⁾.

1. Understanding of the Term Mentoring

Only 6 out of 194 surveyed knew the word mentoring. None had a clear concept of it, often considering it to be related to corporate human-resource development. More than half of the students who had heard of mentoring confused it with coaching or counseling.

2. Problems Faced by University Students

Many students face problems related to academic success, their ability to graduate or earn credits, their relationships with friends and peers, future job hunting and career prospects, and self-confidence. Some of these issues directly relate to the Japanese peculiarity that recruitment occurs directly after graduation from university. The Japanese labor market is rigid, and if students miss the opportunity to find a job immediately after graduation, they risk not beginning a career path. Many students consider that existing solutions are insufficient and do not help students resolve their issues.

3. Preferred Mentoring Method if Available

After being given a description of mentorship, almost 90 % of respondents said that they would participate in mentorship if available. In person and electronic communication were the top methods preferred by students. Most students prefer to work in individual units rather than in group dialogue. Many students indicated that a machine that could be consulted more easily than a formal program would be desirable (many comments referred to pressure). Many respondents said that experienced teachers as mentors would be preferable to peers.

Their Japanese culture might keep the students from becoming active and speaking directly; few have a habit of communicating on an equal footing with teachers and superiors. It is also worth noting that several students felt guilty about consulting on private issues with other people. Many commented that they felt a resistance to consulting personal things with others.

6. Nurturing a Mentoring Environment in Japanese Universities:

A Case of Japanese University

In mentoring research, the way that mentoring influences and shapes the student experience and how it contributes to learning and development, are little studied. A more detailed analysis of the relationship between mentors and mentees shows mentee growth and changes in the

mentoring relationship. Here, the practice of mentoring in a Japanese university is shown.

Mentoring Experience in Global Career Program in Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU)

Global Career Program (GCaP) was introduced in 2014. This program is one of the leading programs offered in KGU, providing highly motivated students who pursuit for a global career with professional development opportunity and academic achievement support with hands-on experiences focusing on international policy and global issues such as human rights, the environment, poverty, and social innovations⁹⁾. The program has specific purposes and expectations: acquisition of specialized knowledge leading to a global career; improvement of advanced English proficiency; participation in overseas study and international fieldwork; acquisition of solid research skills and advanced academic writing skills; and advanced English presentation skills.

Table 3: Mentoring Program Information, Global Career Program, Kwansei Gakuin University

Purpose	Program completion, Avoid drop-outs
Expected Outcomes	Academic performance, retention, achieve global career
Matching Process	Coordinator matches mentor and mentee based on their academic interest, career prospects, personality and other personal trait
Mentoring Style	Agreed between two parties, face-to-face, e-mail
Orientation	Briefing session organized, provide useful information
Review/Evaluation	Regular follow-up on progress
Duration	Align with Global Career Program, until program completion

GCaP had 48 registered registrants from 2014 to 2019 academic year. Mentoring was introduced to GCaP in 2016. Initially, because only a small group of students were involved, it was considered unnecessary. Rather than introducing formal mentoring, we promoted an environment to encourage informal and flexible support founded in the student's initiative. However, few students actively in pursued informal mentoring, so the decision was made to set up a formal program to offer comprehensive support to students. Table 3 shows the details of the GCaP mentoring program.

The following case presents the main areas where a university student needs mentorship and the effective outcomes of mentorship offered.

Case of Yumi

Yumi approached the mentor in her first year. She is a highly motivated and energetic student, eager to learn at university. She was interested in travel overseas and wanted to have experiences at college that would lead to her future. This was the beginning of informal mentoring with her. First-year students have strong beliefs and the ability to act but have little

experience of making concrete plans. The mentor proposed she identifies specific goals until graduation and develop a four-year plan. During face-to-face meetings and e-mail exchanges with the mentor, she began to clearly consider her direction. Her vague yearning for overseas travel became focused on specific academic interests. She decided to study abroad at a university in Singapore. During mentoring, her weaknesses became clear to her, and discussed what could be done about them. During her second year, she was selected for GCaP candidate and became able to study abroad in Singapore for her 3rd year. She began mentoring at GCaP in her 2nd. While studying in Singapore, she needed to consider her academic completion while completing a research project. During her undergraduate years, she was concerned about her graduation thesis and balancing her academic work and job hunting. She faced setbacks. However, thanks to regular mentoring, she has steadily grown and changed. She overcome many difficulties; her positive attitude and mental stability were nurtured. Even after graduation, she continued to develop herself for her long-term career outlook and regularly reported her status to her mentors. After graduation, this relationship evolved from a formal to a new informal mentoring.

This case shows that mentorship relates to the choice of two parties to engage in the relationship, with the knowledge that the engagement occurs over a series of interactions and involves a variety of support. Furthermore, it is confirmed that mentorship requires emotional investment by both parties and personal caring and commitment to professional personal development. Both parties have responsibilities in the relationship, and both should share an interest in pursuing it.

Both formal and informal mentoring assisted Yumi's achievements. She had visible achievements, such as excellent academic outcomes and GCaP program completion, which could lead to stable employment. Moreover, her non-academic achievements, such as the wide range of vision gained as a citizen of the world, positive attitude about continuous future-oriented effort, and leadership, which prompted her to mentor her juniors.

Students can, like Yumi, set goals after their mentors expose them to the whole course and indicate its usefulness in their life. It does not relate to a minimum number of meetings but to a combination of formal and informal, regular and continuous meetings. It is confirmed that mentorship engagement occurs over a series of interactions and involves different types of support.

Numerous conditions must be met for mentoring to be successful. Ultimately, mentoring should be a student-led relationship, but there are differences in its progress, depending on the nature of the student. For the maximum benefit of mentoring, it is necessary to follow the mentoring stage presented in section 3 step by step, while keeping pace with the mentees. In addition, establishing the relationship and building trust are critical for mentoring success.

7. Conclusion–For Japan's Future Development

This study reviewed theoretical and conceptual research on mentoring undergraduate students in universities from international perspectives, to help understand their mentoring experiences and outcomes. It also investigated how a mentoring culture could be developed in universities in non-Western countries, such as Japan. The case presented here given the main areas where a university student needs mentorship and the results of such programs. Yumi was seeking a mentor, and the university was ready to provide one and had planned for it, which helped the encounter be successful. Students are always in need and willing to have mentors to assist them in complex university life and education. Students like Yumi show that there are complex academic and social issues within the university that they cannot manage on their own.

Despite the diverse problems they face, few students take advantage of the university's formal student support system. As the survey results reveals, Japanese students tend to hesitate to approach mentors for consultation, and many students prefer to consult informally and/or casually. Therefore, it is necessary for the universities to make an effort to create a new environment where students can easily consult.

As noted above, the benefits of mentoring are large and lasting. The mentoring stages, from Initiation to Redefinition, improves academic achievement and professional preparedness, establishing close-knit and supportive academic and professional communities. Mentoring is also effective for enhancing support to the socially vulnerable, including foreigners and persons with disabilities, furthermore, mentoring can respond to the various challenges the universities are facing.

Universities are very susceptible to the external environment and social conditions, and it is necessary to practice the development of human resources who will lead the country in the future. For quality assurance, flexible and positive efforts to support diverse students are crucial, not only for supporting students, but for benefitting the university to ensure the quality of education.

Mentoring awareness is still quite low in Japan, but student needs appear to be high. The environment universities are facing is changing drastically. Ambiguity and uncertainty impact student self-esteem and social and academic life. Mentoring is essential for building student confidence, to increase retention, promoting academic success, and maintain high motivation. The study confirm that the traditional tripartite student support model is insufficient. Therefore, along with the establishment of a formal program, it may be necessary to create an environment where informal and casual mentoring penetrates.

NOTES

- 1) The author is currently acting as a principle director of Gloal Career Program at the School of Policy Studies, Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU) located in Hyogo prefecture in Japan. Formally, worked as a human resources specialist in several international organizations such as UNESCO, ILO, and ADB, and was responsible for the planning and implementation of a mentoring system for international civil servants.

- 2) This is a compelling report informed by the first-ever nationally representative survey of young people on both informal and formal mentoring, as well as a literature and landscape review and insights from key leaders in business, government, and education. This report provides insights on young people's perspectives on mentoring in three areas: (1) Mentoring's Connection to Aspirations and Outcomes; (2) The Value of Mentors; and (3) The Availability of Mentors. The findings are consistent with a powerful mentoring effect as demonstrated by the life experiences of the young people surveyed and mentoring's link to improved academic, social and economic prospects.
- 3) For details, refer to the survey report on *"How to improve the student counseling system at universities"* (March 2007) by JASSO (Japan Student Services Organization, Independent Administrative Agency).
- 4) Regarding the internationalization of universities for global human resource development, see *"2013 Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Estimated Requests-Focusing on the Higher Education Bureau Main Items"*. In this document, it is indicated that the goal is to develop a comprehensive system for cultivating global human resources who can be active in the future.
- 5) JASSO (The Japan Student Services Organization) surveys the status of enrollment of foreign students at higher education institutions in Japan every year. According to the survey on enrollment status of international students, the number of international students in 2018 is 298,980 (up 31,938 (12.0 %) from the previous year).
- 6) The Brother Sister System is an employee education method widely introduced in Japanese companies, where senior employees provide advice and listen to new employees of concerns about work and human relationships at work. On the other hand, OJT covers all employees and primarily focuses on education for the task at hand, and support employee education through daily work.
- 7) Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU) is one of the prestigious private schools located in Hyogo prefecture, Japan, founded in 1889 by American missionary. KGU has 13 graduate schools and 10 undergraduate schools. The School of Policy studies (SPS) was established in 1995. The school motto is "Think Globally, Act Locally", to achieve an integration of theoretical and practical studies to promote the coexistence of human beings with nature, and to foster the power to take action in solving the world's problems. It has 4 departments such as department of Applied Informatics, Urban Studies, International Studies and Policy Studies. In SPS, more than 280 students traveled abroad to engage in overseas study and other international field activities in 2018. <https://global.kwansei.ac.jp/>
- 8) Annually, ten students are selected based on English ability, GPA scores, an interview and document screening. Those successful students will go through both extensive academic and professional training until graduation. The GCaP classes involve intensive English discussions and presentations with heavy assignments given to the students including English research presentations and writing technical reports and essays in English.

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