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Article

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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Fostering employability through mediation of protégé career self-efficacy of Pakistani bankers

Muhammad Shaukat Malik¹ and Muhammad Kashif Nawaz^{1*}

Abstract: Mentoring at its best is a life-altering relationship, and mentors play a pivotal role in protégé career upward progression. In a dynamic labor market, securing internal employability and also finding a better opportunity outside the organization that matched interests and skills are critical factors for individual career advancement. In line with this, the existing study probed to investigate the linkage between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and protégé perceived employability (internal and external) through the mediation of protégé career self-efficacy. In line with this, the data were collected from 373 staff working in conventional and Islamic banks in Pakistan. Data were analyzed through PLS-SEM. The finding shows that mentoring functions (traditional and relational) were directly associated with protégé employability. Likewise, the results also indicate that protégé career self-efficacy mediates the proposed path. In the current study, both traditional and relational mentoring functions are investigated as the antecedent of career self-efficacy and perceived employability contributes to the existing literature.

Subjects: Business, Management and Accounting; Human Resource Management; Employment Relations

Keywords: traditional mentoring functions; relational mentoring functions; perceived employability; career self-efficacy



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Mentoring at work is considered a life-alternating connection between mentor and protégé. Mentoring could serve as a resource reservoir that can supply the requisite support to protégé for a successful navigating career in the dynamic working environment. The protégé must be proactive to build, maintain and sustain the relationship with the mentor to gain maximum support in times of need. Further, individuals must take ownership of their careers and should be in the driving seat and analyze opportunities both within and outside the organization. Mentoring is the best tool that can guide individuals for successful career navigation. One of the reasons fewer women participated in the labor market, particularly at the senior management level, is the lack of mentoring support. Further, there is a strong need that individuals and organizations must be made policies to deal with the challenges in cross-gender mentoring relationships specifically after the #Metoo movement.

1. Introduction

The traditional view of an individual career is single lifelong employment within the same organization, where employee age was the main criterion of the developmental yardstick. Over the past decades, HRM practices, career patterns, and the labor market have changed considerably, weakening the employment relationship (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). Various new career notions have emerged since 1990, such as protean (Hall, 2004), boundaryless (Arthur, 1994), and sustainable career (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015). The contemporary career is highly unpredictable, non-linear, transitional, distinctive, and very personal (Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng et al., 2015). There is a strong wish for upward swift career mobility among the younger generation compared to previous generations (Lyons, et al., 2015). In the contemporary world, employees could not rely on their employers for career development and become the owner of their careers (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015). Individuals may want to capitalize on their capabilities by finding more rewarding and/or challenging employment somewhere else (De Vos et al., 2017) and employability is the prerequisite for successful career progression (Arthur, 2014).

A career becomes more flexible, and the organization's role in navigating the individual career is no longer valid. This development challenges how employees can be facilitated and motivated to take their career ownership and safeguard their career potential throughout career life. Various stakeholders such as mentors, organization policies, and the labor market affect an individual's career. Ultimately, individuals can navigate their careers by adopting various career choices that align with their skills and interests. Individuals must proactively assess the different options by analyzing the cost and benefits of each market opportunity (Lent & Brown, 2019). The opportunity for better employment might be in existing and protégé wider professional network that may cross the boundaries of the organization and even industry.

Bandura (1982a) highlights that sources of self-efficacy are verbal persuasion which refers to the person being persuaded by other individuals (mentor) so that they can finish the job efficiently and vicarious learning involves observing the other individuals having a common interest. Thus, it is critical to investigate the antecedents that boost the protégé's career self-efficacy among protégés to navigate their career in internal and external organizations. Personal, behavioral, and environmental factors build the protégé's career self-efficacy. Prior literature identified some antecedents such as occupational expertise (De Vos et al., 2017), organizational competences development practices (Moreira et al., 2020), servant leadership (Chughtai, 2019), human capital and labor market opportunities (Berntson et al., 2006), personality traits (Wille et al., 2013), and workplace learning (Van der Heijden et al., 2016), but few studies explored the mentoring as the antecedent of career self-efficacy (St-Jean & Mathieu, 2015; Kao, et al., 2021; Joo et al., 2018); furthermore, gaps exist in mentoring literature regarding predictors, mediators, moderators, and their outcomes (Eby et al., 2013). Hence, the current study was conducted to investigate mentoring as the antecedent of protégé employability in a dynamic labour market.

Mentoring might be an environmental factor that fosters career self-efficacy in protégé, resulting in progress within the same organization and/or securing better employment outside the organization. A relational attachment based on the relational need-fit theory proposed by Ehrhardt and Ragins (2019) provides a theoretical basis for this study which is different from general support, which protégé and mentor attached when their relational needs, i.e., career self-efficacy and employability, are met through dyadic relationship. Protégé is attached to a mentor to get benefits such as career and personal support when they have a strong psychological attachment to a mentor. The protégé's needs, such as career advancement, are met by mentor support. Therefore, the current studies add novel contributions to mentoring literature by exploring a theoretical model based on relational attachment based on the relational need-fit theory which is different from general social support.

Therefore, in this study, we inquire that mentoring functions (traditional and relational) as an antecedent of a person's career self-efficacy for proactively navigating their career by retaining the existing employment and identifying better career opportunities outside the organization's boundaries that match the protégé's interest and skill. Moreover, in the current study, the mediation of career self-efficacy is investigated between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and perceived employability (internal and external employability) based on relational attachment from a relational need-fit perspective (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019) to offer the empirical confirmation from developing countries, i.e., Pakistan banking sector.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

The relationship quality with colleagues, managers, mentors, and broader network influenced personal and organizational outcomes. The positive relationship literature highlights that social and mentoring support leads to personal and professional career advancement (Kram, 1985). Relationship theory proposes that positive connections with others help employees to chase better opportunities for career growth and development (Feeney & Collins, 2014). Positive quality connections with others are the critical resources for enrichment, vitality, and learning for individuals, groups, and employers to flourish, grow and thrive (Ragins & Verbos, 2007).

2.1. Mentoring functions

Mentoring is defined as a transmission of information, psychosocial support, and social capital from someone with wisdom, knowledge, and experience (mentor) to someone who has less (mentee; Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Kram (1983) proposed that two traditional career and psychosocial mentoring functions are exchange-based and average-quality relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Few studies also highlight career, psychosocial, and role modeling as overarching mentoring functions (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Viator, 1994).

The relational mentoring function is a fourth function that indicates the behaviors, characteristics, and attributes that might originate in high-quality mentoring relationships (Ragins, 2012). A relational mentoring function is characterized as a high-quality mentoring relationship, a generative and mutually dependent relationship that enhances the mutual growth, learning, and development in the professional domain of the mentee (Ragins, 2007). Relational mentoring is based on emotional bonding (Kahn, 1998), including emotional bonding, care provision, and receiving. It is the most beneficial mentoring relationship, such as mutual learning (Allen & Eby, 2003).

Relational mentoring theorists categorized mentoring relationships into dysfunctional, traditional, or relational based on quality levels (Ragins, 2012; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Dysfunctional mentoring relationships are of low quality in which sabotaging or bullying occasionally happen (Eby & McManus, 2004); traditional mentoring relationships are of average quality, where the mentee gets a career and psychosocial support of a mentor (Kram, 1985); and relational mentoring relationships are of high quality, where both mentee and mentor experience additional functions, such as learning, mutual growth and career development (Ragins, 2012). A relational perspective extends the mentoring from a one-sided, exchange-based relationship focused on mentee career outcomes to a dyadic communal relationship with affective and cognitive processes that lead to mutual growth, learning, and development for both mentor and mentee. This study investigates traditional (career, psychosocial, and role modeling) and relational mentoring functions as an antecedent of career self-efficacy and protégé's perceived employability (internal and external).

2.2. Career self-efficacy

The central features of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and self-efficacy are outcome expectations, goals, and actions. Career self-efficacy refers to an individual's perceived judgment to effectively engage in exploring and making career-related decisions; outcome expectations are the potential antecedent of engaging in the task such as making a better career decision. While goals refer to actions to perform, actions refer to the actual level of engagement in making career decisions and explorations. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations are considered a basis for stimulating goals and actions and consequently assisting in determining career decisions (Ireland & Lent, 2018).

The notion of mentoring can be related to two of the four self-efficacy sources (Bandura, 1997): verbal persuasion and vicarious experience. Likewise, Tierney and Farmer (2002) explained that managers or supervisors are the potential drivers with two sources of self-efficacy judgments. Mentors act as role models to assist vicarious learning. Generally, mentors are influential in the workplace with advanced knowledge and experience and are dedicated to assisting mentees' upward mobility and career assistance (Scandura & Williams, 2004). Self-efficacy is not a trait but a cognitive judgment or appraisal of potential performance abilities. Hence, self-efficacy can be measured through a certain type of behavior. Bandura argued that the efficacy judgment system is not a universal trait but a unique combination of beliefs related to certain types of behaviors (Bandura, 2005). Therefore, assessment must proceed after carefully outlining and defining the interest domains of behavior.

2.3. Perceived employability

At the start of the twentieth century, the notion of employability was proposed to explain the probability of being employed. Employability is a multidimensional concept, and researchers have achieved a lack of consensus regarding common definitions (Pool et al., 2014). Employability is the ability to secure and maintain a job both within the same employer (internal) and outside the current organization (external employability; Vanhercke et al., 2014). In other words, employability as a crucial personal resource that helps people build confidence in a dynamic job market illustrates the insecurity and unpredictability (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015). The employment concept considers static, whereas employability focuses on the future and dynamic nature. Clarke (2017) highlighted that employability promotes the probability of successful mobility within internal and external labor markets that are matched with existing features and offer opportunities for the development of capabilities and skills that boost future employment opportunities and lead to career and job satisfaction.

The perceived employability of protégés is divided into perceived external and internal employability (De Witte, 2005). Earlier refer to employee perception that employee must secure new employment in another organization and eliminate the current employment. Perceived internal employability refers to the employee's perceptions of their competencies to successfully perform different functions within the same organization when the existing job is eliminated (De Witte, 2005).

Another study highlights that highly talented employees choose to stay with the same employers in traditional organizational arrangements (Kostal & Wiernik, 2017). It is believed that as long as organizations offer a better perspective for career advancement, upward mobility, and salary raise, their staff would prefer to stay with the same employer. Forrier et al. (2015) suggest that internal career opportunities offered to their staff lower the external job transitions. Employees may believe that their employer still has career advancement while leaving might involve high risks and/or acquiring new competencies tailored to a new organization (Clarke, 2013; Forrier et al.,

2015). In this case, the individual may not wish to lose the benefit of the competencies already acquired and the career progress achieved within the employing organization.

Declining job security among younger generations of employees altered their focus away from organizational careers toward career self-development and multiple-job experiences (Lyons, et al., 2015; O'Shea et al., 2014). Lyons et al. (2015) highlight that the younger generation was making moves in all directions compared with the preceding generation, and moving career paths upward remains the norm. The younger generation's career pattern suggests a strong wish for swift upward mobility compared to the previous generation. Moreover, employees may want to capitalize on their expertise by searching for challenging and/or more rewarding jobs elsewhere (De Vos et al., 2017). Further, employees who do not feel valuable within their current organization and thus have a low level of perceived internal employability may be more likely to engage in the job search as an adaptive career strategy (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011).

2.4. Mentoring functions and protégé perceived employability

Prior literature revealed that there are several benefits of mentoring for protégé. Allen et al. (2004) highlight that a person engaged in a relationship with a mentor gets more personal and professional benefits than non-mentored persons. Further, mentoring produced more career-related benefits in informal than formal mentoring (Underhill, 2006). In a relationship, the role of mentor and protégé varies, and both achieve various personal and professional benefits (Bozeman & Feeney, 2009). Moreover, Eby et al. (2008) found that mentoring predicts distinctive behavioral, motivational, attitudinal, health-related, relational, and career outcomes. Mentoring predicts various benefits for protégé, such as affective well-being (Chun et al., 2012), career success (Allen et al., 2006), job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Moreover, the mentoring function also leads to several benefits for the mentor: job satisfaction, performance, and career success (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Further, mentoring/coaching also acts as an organizational factor that leads to job performance (Lee & Lee, 2018). Likewise, mentoring support also predicts career success among bankers in Tunisians (Ouerdian & Mansour, 2019).

The results of extensive studies across different disciplines, professions, and continents facilitate employee socialization (Allen et al., 2017; Son, 2016), student confidence, and motivation (Fayram et al., 2018), student job search self-efficacy (Hamilton et al., 2019), young entrepreneurs (Ting et al., 2017), and career planning of professionals (Tench et al., 2016). Therefore, from the above, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Traditional mentoring functions have a positive and significant relationship with the perceived employability of the protégé.

H2: Relational mentoring function has a positive and significant relationship with the perceived employability of the protégé.

2.5. Mediating of protégé career self-efficacy

Bandura (2006) highlights that self-efficacy is not a personal trait and must be evaluated in a task or particular domain of study. Further, the author suggested that vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion are critical for building career self-efficacy. Through vicarious experience, the protégé closely observes the mentor and how the mentor successfully performs some particular task, whereas, through verbal persuasion, the protégé persuaded by a mentor that they have the requisite capability to finish the job successfully (Bandura, 1982b). Eby et al. (2013) put forward that mentoring has been studied for a long time but has a relatively scattered and small knowledge base. Moreover, gaps exist in mentoring literature regarding predictors, mediators,

moderators, and their outcomes and also a lack of consensus regarding outcomes of formal and informal mentoring relationships. Furthermore, St-Jean and Mathieu (2015) argue that mentoring relationships are most effective in predicting protégé self-efficacy when they perceive high similarity. They also assessed the mediation of self-efficacy between mentoring and employee outcomes.

Kao et al. (2021) evaluated that mentoring functions are positively linked with protégé job search behavior and self-efficacy; further, self-efficacy mediates the relationship. Further, Joo et al. (2018) ascertain that formal leadership mentoring would assist in developing self-efficacy among protégé to motivate them to lead. Further, self-efficacy mediates the relationship. The individuals who proactively navigating their career would be able to make better career planning (Direnzo et al., 2015), better able to achieve goal-related to their career (Rahim & Siti-Rohaida, 2015), and are more engaged in discovering their career opportunities and better managing their career (Herrmann et al., 2015). It has been revealed from earlier studies that protean career behavior has been a critical predictor of various career-related outcomes (Li et al., 2019). From above, it is clear that mentoring is an antecedent of career self-efficacy which further leads to various career-related outcomes. Therefore, from above, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3: Career self-efficacy of protégé mediates the path between traditional mentoring functions and perceived employability of protégé.

H4: Career self-efficacy of protégé mediates the path between relational mentoring functions and perceived employability of protégé.

2.6. Theoretical framework

The current study summarized the literature on mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and protégé perceived employability (internal and external) through the mediation of career self-efficacy. Traditional mentoring functions comprise career, psychosocial, and role modeling. A research framework was proposed on the relational need-fit perspective (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019), which highlights that protégés meet their needs such as career self-efficacy and perceived employability through the support provided by a mentor. Therefore, in the current study, both traditional and relational mentoring functions are being studied as an antecedent of career self-efficacy and perceived employability. These dyadic relationships are ideal when the protégé's needs match with a supply of mentor support. Hence, mentoring is a strong predictor of protégé career self-efficacy and protégé perceived employability. Figure 1 shows the theoretical model for the current study.

3. Research design

3.1. Methodology

The current study's population was staff employed in 25 conventional and Islamic banks of Pakistan (State bank of Pakistan, 2020a). Islamic banking in Pakistan has achieved a deposit-based market share of 18.3% as of 31 December 2020 (State bank of Pakistan, 2020b). A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather the responses from 373 employees through a simple random sampling technique. The 77 respondents belong to Islamic, whereas 296 were from conventional banks.

The demographic information of respondents is presented in Table 1. The table shows that 89.01% were male, while females comprise 10.99%. The 33.51% of employees were classified in the age group between 20 and 29 years, followed by 30.29% falling between 30 and 39 Years,

Figure 1. Theoretical model.

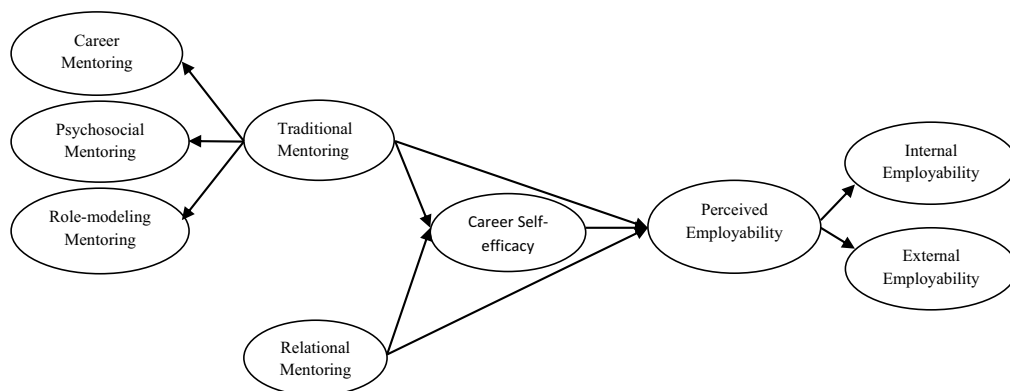


Table 1. Demographic information

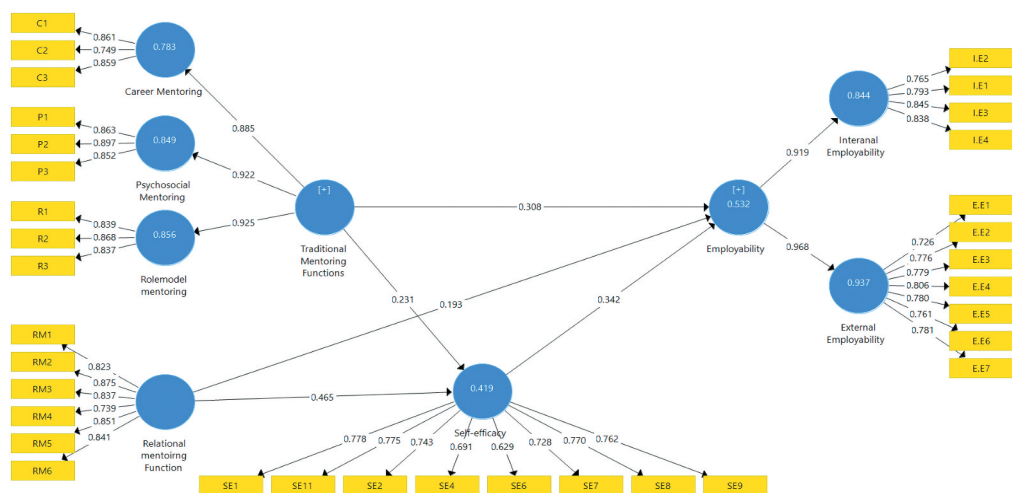
	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	332	89.01
Female	41	10.99
Age		
20–29 years	125	33.51
30–39 years	113	30.29
40–49 years	99	26.54
50 years and above	36	9.65
Education		
Master	239	64.08
MS/M.Phil	106	28.42
Other	28	7.51
Total respondents	373	100%

26.54% falling between 40 and 49 Years, and 9.65% falling between 50 years and above. The education profile of respondents shows that 64.08% held a master’s degree, and 28.42% held MS/ M. Phil. and 7.51 hold other professional qualifications.

3.2. Variables measurement

Measurements used in this study were adopted from the literature, more particularly. Short-form scale (MFQ-9) developed by Castro et al, (2004) was used to measure traditional mentoring functions. Career, psychosocial, and role-modeling mentoring are measured by three items each. However, relational mentoring functions were measured using 6-item scales developed by Ayoobzadeh (2018). Career self-efficacy was measured using an 11-item measure developed by Kossek et al. (1998) and recently validated by (Ye et al., 2018). Employability will be measured with

Figure 2. Measurement model.



an 11-item scale developed by Rothwell and Arnold (2007). Four items show internal employability, whereas seven are related to external employability. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on 5 points Likert scale.

4. Data analysis

Second-generation multivariate PLS-SEM was used to analyze the data (Ringle et al., 2015). PLS-SEM is suitable for forecasting and can handle complex models with various structural relationships, provide precision for PLS-SEM estimation with larger sample sizes, works well with single and multi-item measures, and also efficiently works with both reflective and formative measurement models (Hair et al., 2016). All latent variables were reflective in this study. Firstly, the reliability and validity of measures were estimated via the measurement model, and in the next step, path coefficient and the significance were evaluated through the structural model.

For the reflective measurement model shown in Fig 2, the reliability and validity of measures were evaluated. More specifically, the indicator reliability of all studied constructs was assessed through outer loading. The standardized value of the outer loading of each item was >0.70. In this study, the value of all outer loading was higher than the threshold value except for CS3, CS5, and CS10 which exclude from the final data.

In the next step, the internal consistency was assessed through Cronbach's alpha value. The value must be greater than the threshold of 0.70 and the results show that the values shown in Table 2 were between 0.764 and 0.920, and hence, internal consistency is established in the current study.

Another criterion used to evaluate the internal consistency reliability was composite reliability. The threshold value of the composite reliability coefficient should be higher than 0.70. The composite reliability (CR) values ranged between 0.856 and 0.924 presented in Table 2 indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency.

For the estimation of convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was recommended (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All studied constructs' outer loading and AVE values were employed to estimate the convergent validity. Convergent validity is how a measure is related to

Table 2. Assessment of reflective model

H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman
Career mentoring		C1	0.861	0.764	0.864	0.680
		C2	0.749			
		C3	0.859			
Psychosocial mentoring		P1	0.863	0.841	0.904	0.759
		P2	0.897			
		P3	0.852			
Role-modeling mentoring		R1	0.839	0.805	0.885	0.719
		R2	0.868			
		R3	0.837			
	Traditional mentoring functions			0.915	0.930	0.597
Relational mentoring function		RM1	0.823	0.929	0.908	0.687
		RM2	0.875			
		RM3	0.837			
		RM4	0.739			
		RM5	0.851			
		RM6	0.841			
Career self-efficacy		CS1	0.778	0.881	0.904	0.542
		CS2	0.743			
		CS4	0.691			
		CS6	0.629			
		CS7	0.728			
		CS8	0.770			
		CS9	0.762			
		CS11	0.775			
Internal perceived employability		IE1	0.793	0.826	0.885	0.657
		IE2	0.765			
		IE3	0.845			
		IE4	0.838			

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman	H. Freeman
External perceived employability		EE1	0.726	0.888	0.912	0.598
		EE2	0.776			
		EE3	0.779			
		EE4	0.806			
		EE5	0.780			
		EE6	0.761			
		EE7	0.781			
	Perceived employability			0.920	0.932	0.557

other constructs and measures of the same variable (Hair et al., 2014). The AVE value should be >0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). Findings indicate that all AVE values were higher than the threshold value of 0.50; hence, convergent validity was established. Furthermore, the construct validity was estimated, meaning that every studied construct should be distinctive from other studied constructs (Bagozzi et al., 1991). It is recommended to use of the Fornell-Larcker test (Fornell & Larcker's, 1981), heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler et al., 2015), and cross-loadings.

Discriminant validity was estimated through the Fornell-Larcker test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). From this condition, the value of the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlations with all other constructs. Table 3 shows the result, which indicates that discriminant validity was established.

The second criterion, HTMT, is recommended for evaluating correlation among latent variables if the value of HTMT is below 1, indicating that the variable is distinctive from other variables (Haider et al., 2018). All values shown in Table 4 indicate that these were below 0.90. Therefore, it is concluded that the discriminant validity was established.

Another criterion is employed for discriminant validity evaluation. Item loading should be higher than items cross-loading (Götz et al. 2010). In the current study, the loading of items was higher than their cross-loading. The findings are shown in Table 5. Hence, discriminant validity was established.

In the next step, the structural model was evaluated through bootstrapping shown in Fig 3. Firstly, the collinearity problem was evaluated through structural model estimation. Collinearity means a higher correlation among the studied variables (Hair et al., 2014). The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used for the standard criterion. For avoidance collinearity, the value of VIF should be below 5. The results indicate that values ranged between 1.722 and 2.311, which shows that their collinearity was not found in our data.

In the next step, path coefficients of the hypothesized linkage were estimated through the PLS algorithm, and their significance was calculated via a standard error by bootstrap test. A value of

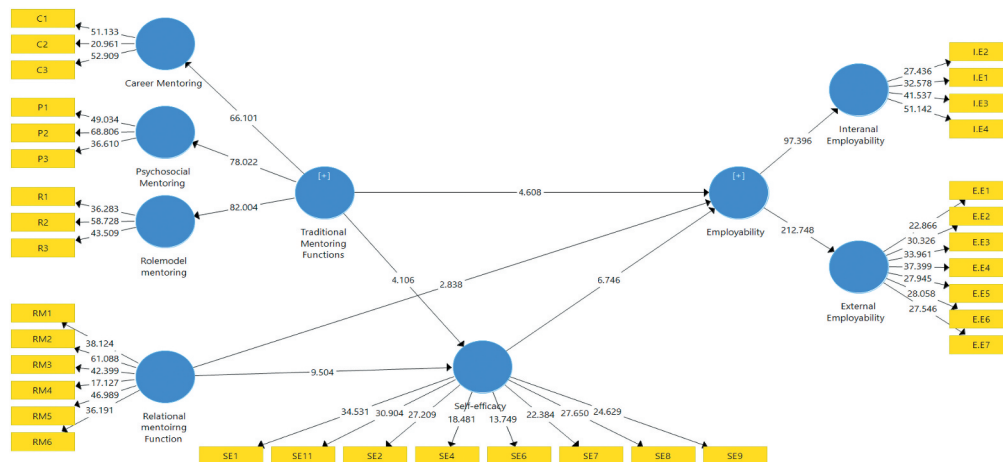
Table 3. Fornell–Larcker criterion

	1	2	3	4
Traditional mentoring	0.773			
Relational mentoring	0.696	0.829		
Career self-efficacy	0.555	0.626	0.736	
Perceived employability	0.632	0.621	0.634	0.747

Table 4. HTMT criterion

	1	2	3	4
Traditional mentoring				
Relational mentoring	0.759			
Career self-efficacy	0.586	0.668		
Perceived employability	0.686	0.676	0.665	

Figure 3. Structural model.



t-statistics greater than 1.96 ($p < 0.05$) shows a significant relationship. Next, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated. Values of R^2 are shown in Table 6, showing the level of variance explained by the exogenous variables. Hair et al. (2014) recommend that standard values of R^2 are 0.25 (weak), 0.50 (moderate), and 0.75 (substantial). In particular, mentoring functions (traditional and relational) caused a moderate level of variance in career self-efficacy and is substantial in the perceived employability of the protégé.

Table 5. Cross loading

	Career mentoring	Psychosocial mentoring	Role model mentoring	Relational mentoring	Career self-efficacy	Internal perceived employability	External perceived employability
C1	0.861	0.562	0.608	0.552	0.473	0.592	0.551
C2	0.749	0.484	0.509	0.394	0.240	0.313	0.380
C3	0.859	0.689	0.669	0.606	0.543	0.561	0.548
P1	0.629	0.863	0.499	0.538	0.390	0.473	0.441
P2	0.631	0.897	0.602	0.565	0.427	0.477	0.408
P3	0.591	0.852	0.528	0.526	0.459	0.446	0.387
R1	0.583	0.687	0.839	0.499	0.376	0.419	0.395
R2	0.637	0.724	0.868	0.602	0.532	0.522	0.483
R3	0.630	0.609	0.837	0.528	0.366	0.512	0.443
RM1	0.537	0.823	0.509	0.823	0.506	0.562	0.511
RM2	0.576	0.875	0.847	0.875	0.564	0.587	0.560
RM3	0.542	0.837	0.876	0.837	0.477	0.511	0.532
RM4	0.471	0.739	0.863	0.739	0.384	0.458	0.439
RM5	0.509	0.851	0.732	0.851	0.553	0.560	0.517
RM6	0.524	0.841	0.618	0.841	0.598	0.503	0.522
CS1	0.532	0.490	0.501	0.605	0.778	0.641	0.617
CS2	0.484	0.369	0.433	0.513	0.775	0.558	0.539
CS4	0.292	0.320	0.313	0.372	0.743	0.380	0.332
CS6	0.415	0.330	0.384	0.445	0.691	0.445	0.447

(Continued)

Table 5. (Continued)

	Career mentoring	Psychosocial mentoring	Role model mentoring	Relational mentoring	Career self-efficacy	Internal perceived employability	External perceived employability
CS7	0.304	0.316	0.301	0.383	0.629	0.366	0.302
CS8	0.278	0.314	0.275	0.411	0.728	0.409	0.358
CS9	0.308	0.323	0.317	0.372	0.770	0.367	0.320
CS11	0.311	0.333	0.329	0.464	0.762	0.360	0.351
IE1	0.438	0.403	0.418	0.448	0.473	0.793	0.574
IE2	0.465	0.406	0.435	0.456	0.400	0.765	0.578
IE3	0.522	0.469	0.506	0.544	0.568	0.845	0.653
IE4	0.528	0.451	0.488	0.525	0.573	0.838	0.740
EE1	0.433	0.289	0.366	0.407	0.407	0.526	0.726
EE2	0.481	0.363	0.374	0.417	0.417	0.590	0.776
EE3	0.392	0.331	0.388	0.419	0.419	0.601	0.779
EE4	0.477	0.385	0.417	0.474	0.474	0.712	0.806
EE5	0.469	0.320	0.362	0.382	0.382	0.595	0.780
EE6	0.492	0.432	0.451	0.492	0.492	0.615	0.761
EE7	0.528	0.432	0.453	0.517	0.517	0.622	0.781

Table 6. Summary of structural model assessment

	R²	t-Value	P-value	Assessment
Career self-efficacy	0.419	11.510	0.000	Moderate
Perceived employability	0.532	14.822	0.000	Substantial

Table 7. Hypothesis testing

Path	β	S. error	t-value	P-value	Decisions	Confidence interval	
						2.50%	97.50%
TMF-> EMP	0.308	0.070	5.508	0.000	Supported	0.241	0.520
RMF-> EMP	0.193	0.065	5.372	0.000	Supported	0.222	0.479
TMF-> CSE	0.231	0.060	3.868	0.000	Supported	0.113	0.343
RMF->CSE	0.465	0.051	9.110	0.000	Supported	0.362	0.566
CSE->EMP	0.342	0.051	6.678	0.000	Supported	0.245	0.442
TMF-> CSE-> EMP	0.079	0.023	3.475	0.000	Supported	0.039	0.128
RMF-> CSE-> EMP	0.159	0.031	5.186	0.000	Supported	0.106	0.222

The relationship between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) is positively linked with the perceived employability of the protégé.

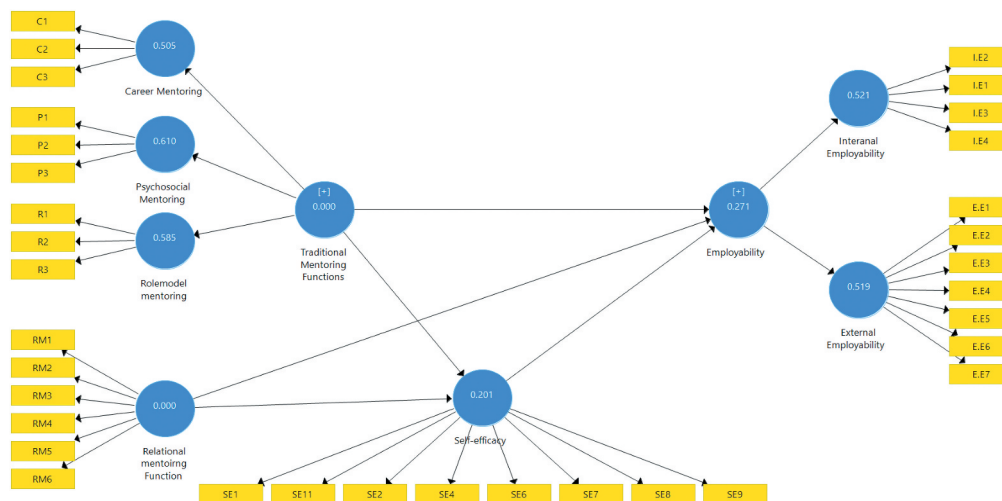
To test mediation, the criterion recommended by Hair et al. (2016) was used. Career self-efficacy complementary mediation mediates the path among mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and the protégé’s perceived employability. The results indicate that career self-efficacy mediates the path between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and the protégé’s perceived employability.

Table 7 shows the summary of hypothesis testing. The path coefficient (β) and P-statistics for the hypothesized link between traditional mentoring and protégé perceived employability were 0.308 and 0.000, respectively. A P-value of less than 0.05 indicates that traditional mentoring significantly impacts the protégé’s perceived employability. Hence, H1 is supported.

The path coefficient (β) and P-statistics for the hypothesized link between relational mentoring and protégé’s perceived employability are 0.193 and 0.000. A P-value of less than 0.05 indicates that relational mentoring significantly impacts the protégé’s perceived employability. Hence, H2 is supported. Further, the Path coefficient and p-statistics in the mediation of career self-efficacy were 0.079 and 0.000. The P-value was less than 0.05. This indicates that traditional mentoring has a significant relationship with the protégé’s perceived employability through mediating career self-efficacy. Hence, H3 is supported. Lastly, the path coefficient (β) and P-statistics for the hypothesized link between relational mentoring and protégé perceived employability through indirect path is 0.159 and 0.000. The p-statistic was less than 0.05, showing that there is a significant relationship. Hence, H4 is supported.

Evaluating each predictor construct’s effect size (f²) on the endogenous construct is vital for significant path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014). The effect size (f²) is employed to estimate the

Figure 4. Blindfolding test.



changes in the magnitude of R^2 , excluding the particular predictor's variable from the model. Additionally, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are supposed as small (S), medium (M), and large (L) sizes, respectively. The finding shown in Table 8 indicates all f^2 values.

Moreover, the predictive relevance of Q^2 for the evaluation of model quality should be estimated (Hair et al., 2014). Blindfolding test was used to estimate the predictive relevance of Q^2 shown in Fig 4. The value of Stone-Geisser's Q^2 was used (Geisser, 1974). Q^2 values are estimated through the average redundancy index of the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2014). More, value of f^2 are 0.02 small (S), 0.15 medium (M) and 0.35 medium (M) and large (L) sizes. The Q^2 values is shown in table 9.

5. Results and discussion

Mentor-protégé relationships are at their best acts as life-altering relationships. Protégé is attached to their mentor and experience more personal and professional benefits when they have a deep psychological attachment. These attachments are based on relational attachment from a relational need-fit perspective (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019). The earlier model on social support highlights what these relationships can offer while ignoring the fit perspective of the need and receipt through relationships. The protégé has different relational needs and is attached to the mentor to fulfill their needs. The relational need-fit perspective moves beyond the traditional view of social support without considering what the protégé wants or needs from the relationships (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). The protégé needs to secure employability both within and outside the organization. Protégé's career does not develop in isolation and significantly impacts other stakeholders, such as a mentor. Mentoring support is an environmental factor

Table 8. Effect size f^2

Hypothesis	f^2	Effect size
TMF-> EMP	0.100	S
RMF-> EMP	0.034	S
TMF-> CSE	0.047	S
RMF ->CSE	0.192	M
CSE ->EMP	0.145	M

Table 9. Predictive relevance Q^2

	SSO	SSE	Q^2
Career self-efficacy	2,992	2,391.318	0.201 (M)
Employability	4,114	3,001.122	0.271 (M)

that plays a significant role in the protégé's career development. Mentors supply the requisite resources through traditional and relational mentoring functions. The protégé-mentor relationship gets more generative and positive outcomes through their relationship when there is a fit between protégé needs and mentor support.

In an unpredictable job market, the proteges do not rely on their employers for career progression but must take ownership of their careers. Therefore, employees must be more efficacious to navigate their careers in the right direction effectively. Therefore, the protégé's need is to build their career self-efficacy, which is developed with the receipt of mentor support and ultimately assists the protégé in navigating their career to secure employment in internal as well as the external markets. Therefore, the model based on the relational attachment based on the relational need-fit perceptive was developed and tested in the current study. Thus, in the current study, the mentoring functions were studied as the antecedent of career self-efficacy and protégé's perceived employability.

Firstly, the current study was intended to probe the linkage between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and the perceived employability (internal and external) of the protégé. Traditional mentoring comprises career, psychosocial, and role-modeling functions. The results of the current study indicate that mentoring functions (traditional and relational) have a direct and significant relationship with the protégé's perceived employability. The traditional mentoring function has more impact ($\beta = 0.308$, $P = 0.000$) than the relational mentoring function ($\beta = 0.193$, $P = 0.000$) on the protégé's perceived employability. The mentor is believed to be a resource reservoir that provides career, psychosocial and relational support to the protégé. Therefore, the protégé has a mentor who can play a significant role in the career progression of both males and females. One of the reasons for the female behind the career is a lack of a mentor. Hence, the protégé must proactively build relationships with a mentor to secure the maximum and timely support needed for managing their career. Also, employers must design mentoring programs to retain existing employees to save the cost of recruiting, training, and placing the resource.

Next, our study aim was probed to the linkage between mentoring functions (traditional and relational) on the career self-efficacy of the protégé. The results of the current study indicate that mentoring functions have a significant and positive relationship with protégé career self-efficacy. It is argued that the support of a mentor leads to building efficacy via verbal persuasions and vicarious learning. Additionally, we advocate that mentors act as resource reservoirs, and protégé would get diverse resources through mentor support, and resultantly protégé would develop the efficacy that ultimately helps them to navigate their career. Building career self-efficacy through the mentor supports the protégé proactively navigating their career by taking ownership of their career (Direzzo et al., 2015) and actively searching for new career opportunities (Herrmann et al., 2015). We argue that a protégé who secured greater mentor support is better able to get the opportunity in the same organization elevation and pay raise and outside the organization that matched the interest and skills of the protégé. The current study found that traditional mentoring has ($\beta = 0.231$, $P = 0.000$) and relational mentoring ($\beta = 0.465$, $P = 0.000$) on protégé career self-efficacy. Relational mentoring has a higher impact on protégé career self-efficacy than traditional mentoring on protégé career self-efficacy. Hence, relational mentoring support is a stronger

predictor of protégé career self-efficacy than traditional mentoring, which aligns with the earlier study (St-Jean & Mathieu, 2015). The mentoring relationship varied in quality of relationships. Traditional mentoring is the average quality relationship that is dyadic and hierarchical, where the mentee gets career and psychosocial support from the mentor (Kram, 1985), while the relational mentoring function is of high-quality relationships which focus on mutual learning and growth of both mentors and protégé (Ragins, 2012). These high-quality relationships are characterized as an ideal scenario where both protégé and mentor experience generative and positive benefits from their relationship.

Lastly, the present study also explored the mediating effect of the career self-efficacy of protégé between mentoring functions (internal and external) and employability. The finding indicates the indirect relationship was significant between mentoring functions and the protégé's perceived employability. Hence, it concludes that career self-efficacy mediates the path between mentoring functions and the protégé's perceived employability, consistent with the earlier studies (St-Jean & Mathieu, 2015).

The results provide empirical evidence from the Pakistani context. According to career self-efficacy, the person is more efficacious in taking ownership of their career and successes in career progression. Mentor support is a vital resource to building efficacious among protégé, and ultimately, protégé with higher career self-efficacy will navigate their career effectively to secure internal employability and identify the better opportunity outside the existing organization. The results of the current study also support the career self-efficacy theory perspective that assists them in developing valuable resources as career self-efficacy through the support of a mentor will eventually lead to securing and maintaining the employees within an organization when the current job is being eliminated and/or find the better opportunity outside the organization with better perks and rewards that match the interest and skill of the protégé.

6. Conclusion & research implications

In the current study, both mentoring functions (traditional and relational functions) were investigated as exogenous of protégé career self-efficacy and protégé perceived employability. The current study provides empirical evidence from Pakistani bankers that connect the mentoring functions (traditional and relational) and protégé's perceived employability via the mediation of protégé career self-efficacy. The result shows that there is a direct and significant relationship between mentoring functions and the protégé's perceived employability. Furthermore, the findings highlight that protégé that gets more mentoring support will be more efficacious. In our study, relational mentoring was a strong predictor of career self-efficacy than traditional mentoring, as relational mentoring is a high-quality relationship. Protégé with more efficacy was able to secure and maintain employment within the organization, identifying better opportunities in the broader job market. Also, they evaluate the cost and benefits associated with new opportunities. The protégé might identify better opportunities outside the organizations that might be more challenging, better rewarding, and/or match the interest and skills of the protégé. Alternatively, Protégé might prefer to stay within the organization due to uncertainties in the external organization.

The protégé does not build their efficacious in isolation. The stakeholders in the protégé's broad professional network, such as mentors might have a strong influence on the career advancement of the protégé. When protégé needs are matched with mentor support supplies, this fit goes beyond traditional social support (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019). To attain greater benefits from these relationships, the protégé's needs and mentor supplies must be the best match. These meaningful relationships will assist protégés in successful career navigation in the same or outside of the organization. Hence, the protégé must proactively build a relationship with a mentor to get maximum support from the counterparty for successfully navigating their career. In a dynamic environment, the protégé must not only rely on his employers for career advancement but must be in the driving seat for successful career navigation.

The current study offers few theoretical and practical implications. The current study provides an in-depth study on mentoring functions and protégé's perceived employability. The finding of the study support that mentoring is a predictor of protégé's perceived employability. It was seen that mentoring functions build career self-efficacy among protégés that further reinforce perceived employability. Relational mentoring has a more significant effect on protégé career self-efficacy than traditional mentoring, and relational mentoring has a more significant effect on perceived employability than traditional mentoring. Results indicate that both traditional and relational mentoring produce similar results and patterns. Hence, it is pivotal to greater mentor recruitment and retention for mentoring programs' implementation, management, and success. The protégé and mentor are required to meet on-time irrespective of relationship quality in formal mentoring, but it is not the case in informal mentoring. Further, individual learning styles such as self-motivation and capability might be critical factors in the success of mentoring programs.

The current study also has several practical implications. Firstly, the protégé needs to offer basics to be engaged in mentoring programs. It is suggested that before engaging in the mentoring programs, the protégé's needs must be thoroughly identified and then provided with a mentor with matching skills. It is also helpful for employers to design mentoring programs. Moreover, the protégé must also be proactive in relation to the mentor to get maximum mentoring support for building their career self-efficacy, which ultimately leads to perceived employability.

This study also has a few limitations. The mentoring functions (traditional and relational) were studied as an antecedent of career self-efficacy and the perceived employability of the protégé. In future studies, other antecedents may be studied, such as the personality traits of protégé and supervisor support. In the future study, the sustainable career might be studied as the endogenous construct of mentoring functions. In the present study, career self-efficacy is tested as mediation; in future studies, another construct such as career adaptability and resilience of protégé might be investigated in other contexts. Lastly, the present study is cross-sectional, and a future longitudinal study is recommended to investigate the effectiveness of particular mentoring programs.

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