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MENTORING AS AN HR INTERVENTION TO ENGAGE GEN Y EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

The significance of employee engagement in present turbulent business environment cannot be over-emphasized. In particular, the contemporary multigenerational workforce poses a serious challenge of employee engagement. The importance of mentoring in facilitating employee development, socialization, and is given due consideration in academic literature. However, the literatures on mentoring and employee engagement are largely independent. In this vein, this study explores the linkage between mentoring and employee engagement. After reviewing the limited literature in this domain a conceptual framework is proposed depicting possible relationships through testable propositions. To conclude implications are presented for human resource development (HRD) scholars and practitioners, emphasizing on the role of mentoring in fostering cognitive, affective, and social aspects of Gen Y employees' engagement.

Keywords

Mentoring, Engagement, Gen Y, Affective, Cognitive, Needs Satisfaction, Social Capital, Development

1. Introduction

Gen Y employees are starting their professional careers at a time of hyper-competition, turbulence, instability, and unprecedented changes. More so, the context of retiring Boomers further put the onus on incoming Gen Y employees to replace experienced senior employees. Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to engage them intellectually and emotionally to achieve organizational objectives. Also, organizations are competing globally for limited pool of talent; hence engaging incumbent employees is a top concern for HR managers. Also, the current multigenerational workforce, comprising of Baby boomers (1946-1960), Gen X (1961-1980) and Gen Y (1981-2000), makes case of engagement even more compelling as each generation has unique engagement drivers. Baby boomers are close to retirement age and within a decade, Gen X will also retire. India, being one of the youngest countries of the world boasts a Gen Y cohort of around 425 million, roughly one-third of its entire population, constituting nearly 25.47% of world's Gen Y population. It is predicted that by 2020, 64% of the Indian population would reach an average working age of 29 years (CII-Deloitte Gen Next Workforce Study, 2013). Therefore, Gen Y is both the present and future of the workforce. While Baby boomers and Gen X employees seek job security, Gen Y seeks challenging tasks, learning and growth, and empowerment as engagement drivers (Gilbert, 2011).

In this vein, developmental interventions like mentoring is gaining significant attention as employees are the catalyst for long-term growth and strategic competitiveness. The majority of mentoring literature reveals that mentoring has a positive influence on personal and professional development of mentees, apart from facilitating their socialization and relationship building (Kram 1985; Muellen, 1994). Apparently, these are the very aspects which are conceptualized to link with engagement of Gen Y employees. In simplest terms, engagement is heightened psychological state of cognitive, affective, and physical satisfaction of an employee to exhibit discretionary behaviors. Prior literature cites following drivers of engagement namely supportive environment, trust, communication processes, leadership, and career progression. However, Gen Y employees have different work values, attitude, and expectations from earlier generation of

employees (Howe and Strauss, 2000). In this view, it is vital to understand the motivational needs of Gen Y for designing effective talent management strategies.

They are brought up in the child-centric times, whereby parents have adopted inclusive style of parenting and raised them with self-esteem. They have frequently been asked for their opinions and included in family decisions (Eisner, 2005). Consequently, Gen Y employees seek inclusive style of management and prefer supportive and approachable leaders who practice coaching and mentoring (Lowe et al., 2008). They seek an atmosphere where supervisors and managers offer consistent feedback and instant recognition of their accomplishments (Hastings, 2008). They want their leaders to be accessible, nurturing, and concerned for their development and offer resources to advance their skills. Further, Gen Y employees have been shown to often change jobs and considered as the most demanding generation that places high expectations from organizations (Kim, Knight & Crutsinger, 2009). As Gen Y employees' begin to enter the workforce, short on experience and professional competencies, organizations are faced with new challenges as they try to find innovative solutions to develop this group of employees.

In addition, research has shown that Gen Y craves mentoring and continuous learning in order to upgrade their skills to remain employable and sought-after in talent market (Lougham & Berling, 2001). Literature indicates that one of the main attributes that Gen Y seeks in a job is provision of developmental opportunities (Terjesean, Vinnicombe & Freeman, 2007). As Gen Y has heightened growth need, provision of mentoring goes a long way in fulfilling their needs resulting in improved engagement and retention. In light of the growing concerns about engaging Gen Y talent, it seems important to explore how employees' developmental aspects taken care by mentoring influences their perception of engagement. Mentoring is increasingly recognized by organizations as important driver to engage and retain young employees (Lo & Ramayah 2011).

Therefore, there is a pressing need for organizations to recognize the developmental needs of Gen Y, and design HR interventions accordingly. This makes the case of developing and retaining Gen Y more significant and more of a business imperative. In this vein, mentoring is an effective learning intervention to facilitate personal and professional competency development. This results in the realization of the fact that organization is concerned towards their development leading to affective commitment with the organization creating an intention to stay forth. In other words, when Gen Y employees foresee their professional growth and personal development, they develop a sense of affective commitment to the organization, which in turn,

translates as intention to stay. Furthermore, recent research indicates that mentoring is an important driver to engage and retain young employees and found to be negatively associated with turnover intentions (Lo & Ramayah, 2011).

This study suggests a conceptual framework to draw the linkage between mentoring and Gen Y employees' intention to stay forth in the organization. This study opens new vistas on exploring how mentoring can influence positive employee outcomes. Although, intention to stay has received significant academic attention, but so far no study relates it with mentoring and competency development in Gen Y context. The paper begins with a review on mentoring, followed by development of a conceptual framework and finally discussion with implications for practice.

2. Literature review

2.1 Understanding the mentoring

Mentoring literature has connection with Greek mythology, as the term mentor firstly appeared in Homer's famous poem *The Odyssey* (Kram, 1985; Smith, McAllister, & Crawford, 2001). According to the poem, Mentor was the name of the trusted counselor who cared for Odysseus's son, Telemachus, while Odysseus was away from home. As a result of the caring and supportive environment that Mentor provided for Odysseus' son, the contemporary mentor symbolizes a "wise and trusted teacher or counselor" and one who "advises, guides, encourages, and inspires another person during an extended period of time" (Vance & Olson, 1998, p. 5).

In academic literature, Kram's (1985) seminal work on mentoring is the most dominant approach. She defined mentoring as "...a relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced adult that helps the younger individual learn to navigate in the adult world and the world of work" (p.2). Along the similar lines, Bozionelos (2004) defines mentoring as a "developmental relationship that involves organizational members of unequal status or, less frequently, peers" (p. 25). These relationships can be formal in which the organization matches mentors and protégés or they can be informal in which these relationships begin and develop on their own. Mentoring relationships can be supervisory or nonsupervisory (Bozeman and Feeney, 2007). While Carmin (1988) defines views it as " a complex, interactive process, occurring between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise which incorporates

interpersonal or psychosocial development, career and/or educational development, and socialization functions into the relationship” (p. 10).

Kram (1985) identifies two-dimensional concept of mentoring, Vocational (career support) and psycho-social (social support). Career support function includes making challenging assignments, promoting job related behaviors, fostering growth and providing protection, exposure, and visibility. Exposure and visibility offer new avenues whereby influential organizational members can acknowledge mentees’ competencies, abilities, and skills. Sponsorship may include endorsement of stretch assignments and lateral moves for mentees to accelerate their development. While, protection involves the mentor shields the mentee in situations of high risks of failure. In this vein, career support is shown to be more strongly associated with career development than psychosocial support (Allen et al., 2000). While, psychosocial support function promotes a sense of competence, clarity of identity, acceptance and friendship. Friendship leads to positive experiences and allows them to be at ease with a senior employee. Acceptance and confirmation builds a sense of positive self-regard among mentees. Counseling support promotes positive self-views through self-exploration. (Kram, 1985). Role frameworking allows mentees to observe mentors and learn from their actions. In this view, career function require mentor to take the role of sponsorship, protection, exposure, while psychosocial function by providing counseling, role-frameworking, friendship (Kram, 1985). However, further studies conducted conceptualized role frameworking as a separate mentoring facet (Scandura, 1992).

The extant literature reveals that up to 70- 90% of workplace learning in contemporary organizations occurs through mentoring and informal learning (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000), Consequently, many organizations have incorporated formal mentoring programs to their talent development strategy by assigning specific mentors to their employees . Past research indicates that mentoring is associated with distinct beneficial outcomes. The first category includes positive mentee outcomes including career outcomes of mentoring for protégés. It encompasses tangible or extrinsic career outcomes such as performance, compensation and promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992) and subjective career outcomes which are intrinsic or affective signs of career success such as increased self-confidence and career development of mentees (Kram, 1985), greater career satisfaction and commitment (Scandura 1992; Mobley et al. 1994), increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, particularly affective

commitment, engagement, job involvement (Allen et al., 2004; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Lynn Stallworth, 2003; Payne and Huffman 2005), lower turnover intentions (Allen et al., 2004; Joiner, Garreffa & Bartram, 2004), higher career expectations and easier socialization (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993).

The second category encompasses benefits achieved at the organizational level including the variables studied in organizational research. Several studies revealed mentoring to be negatively related to role stress (Nielson, Carlson, & Lankau, 2001), justice perceptions (Scandura 1992), withdrawal intentions (Scandura, & Viator, 1994) & withdrawal behavior (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Further, mentored individuals have greater career satisfaction & more positive job attitudes, organizations benefit from employee development and improved performance. One important criterion variable cited in mentoring literature is mentor related outcomes. Mentoring a less experienced junior person may provide a creative & rejuvenating life experience to mentor. By contributing to future generations, mentors pass on insider information which engenders a sense of inner satisfaction. Mentoring relationships provide mentors with mentally stimulating tasks whereby they stay creative to come up with new ideas to accelerate mentee overall development. This allows mentors to gain loyal support from their mentees (Wickman & Sjodin, 1997). The subsequent section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the role of mentoring to create an intention among Gen Y employees to stay forth.

Furthermore, mentoring in the form of assisting employees in locating their goals, organizing their work, highlighting drawbacks, taking a keen interest in their professional and career advancement, and offering advice as needed, has been positively related to work engagement. Mentoring relationships increase employee engagement by offering opportunities for dialogue and regular feedback. Mentoring also enhances employee communications and improves the quality of working relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates. These factors cumulatively contribute to improving employee engagement and ultimately lead to an increase in customer satisfaction, employee productivity and employee retention.

2.2 Employee Engagement

In current fast-paced and ever-changing business environment, organizations have turned their attention to workforce to achieve competitive advantage and stay sustainable. However, the challenge lies in fully engaging Gen Y employees, capturing their minds and hearts, as they are least engaged workforce segment globally (Anderson, 2011; Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 2003). In

academic literature, the seminal work on employee engagement is done by Kahn (1990). He defines employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Engagement is also conceived as a positive, affective-cognitive state composed of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al. 2002), whereby vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties; dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work, and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge; and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. In simplest terms, engaged employees are motivated, committed, and align themselves with their company's culture and business strategy (Coleman, 2005, p. 66). In simplest terms, employee engagement is a positive emotional connection to the work they do and a "thinking connection" to the belief in the goals, purpose and mission of that work. Employees want to feel proud, feel enjoyment, feel support, but more than that, they want to believe that their work matters, that they contribute, and that it resonates their values.

The concept of employee engagement has received wide attention in the practitioner world. Most of the contemporary literature on engagement comes from leading consultancies including Aon Hewitt, CIPD, and Gallup, which conducts Employee Engagement Index surveys across the world. A recent Gallup (2013) study conducted in 142 countries reveals that just over 13% global employees are actively engaged at work. In other sense, about one in eight workers is actively engaged, while the bulk of employees worldwide about 63% are not engaged. Previous research suggests certain enablers of engagement including career development, feedback, co-worker support, working climate, job control, innovation, meaningful work, and appreciation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Kahn, 1990). However, for Gen Y employees, supportive environment, developmental feedback, recognition of contributions, open and consistent communication, and sharing of ideas, knowledge, and views are key motivators to create engagement.

3. Conceptual Framework and Propositions

In this section, a conceptual framework of mentoring, and engagement of Gen Y employees will be introduced. This study presents a conceptual framework to explore the role of mentoring to engage Gen Y using the theoretical underpinnings of Social Exchange theory (SET). The basic principle of social exchange theory is that social relationships are emerged, maintained, or terminated with each other on the basis of the perceived ratio of benefits to costs (Emerson, 1976).

SET asserts that individuals develop, maintain and exit relationships based on their perceived costs and benefits. As an individual benefits from a relationship this generates a norm of reciprocity where the person who is on the receiving end of an exchange feels compelled to reciprocate to balance out the social exchange (Emerson, 1976). In mentoring relationships, the benefits exchanged follow social exchange framework, resources include career and emotional support, knowledge and recognition (Kram, 1985). Mentees gain two types of support as a result of participating in mentoring, which are at the focal point of social exchange process. Research has shown that the organizational initiatives to offer development and support indicate its commitment for employees. Moreover, when employees feel being taken care of, they follow the norm of reciprocity wherein they respond positively to supportive treatment of their organization through positive behaviors of feeling committed and engaged.

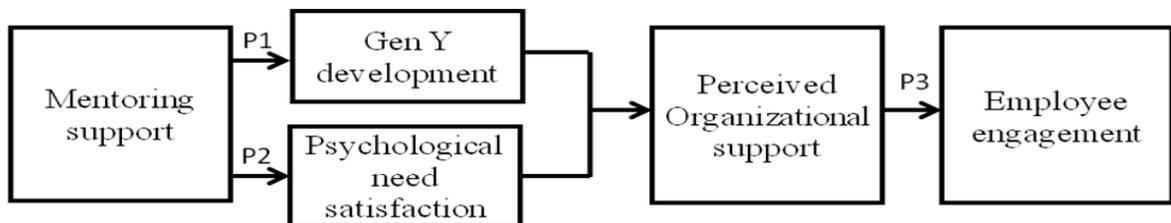


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3.1 Mentoring, Gen Y development, and socialization

Mentoring is often considered as a learning intervention involving pairing of an experienced mentor to a novice mentee. Mentors facilitate the mentee learning process and guide their personal and professional development through career and psychosocial support. Research reveals that mentoring has a positive impact on career development, sense of competence

through mentor support behaviors of exposure, sponsorship, protection, visibility and challenging assignments (Kram, 1985, Kram & Isabella, 1985). This results in enhancement of mentees' positive learning outcomes including overall development (Kram & Isabella, 1985). To this end, mentor guides the cognitive development of mentees by building their knowledge, attitude and competencies. This is achieved through sharing of organizational insights, expanding mentee networks, assisting in goal setting, and providing developmental feedback (Berezuik 2010). Being heralded as a knowledge transmission process, mentoring relationships offer opportunities for information exchange through dialogue, inquiry and regular feedback, which ensure that valuable information and developmental feedback is consistently provided to foster mentee development. This draws upon the information seeking and feedback seeking behaviors of mentees, being newcomers they often lacking work experience, hence they want to quickly gain insider information to self-socialize (Mullen, 1994).

Drawing from social learning approach, mentoring is a means for informal and observational/vicarious learning, wherein mentee learns by observing the mentor. In context of Gen Y employees, mentoring is more significant as they lack experience, however are ambitious and eager to acquire necessary competencies to ascend the career ladder. Gen Y employees enter the workforce with enthusiasm, energy and expectations; however lack professional skills and organization-specific knowledge. Therefore, mentoring is used as a crucial HR intervention to facilitate overall development of Gen Y employees by expanding their competency levels. To achieve this purpose, mentors have consistent social interactions with mentees involving information exchange process, to share information about their personal experiences, their work, failures, business secrets, best practices, and their understanding of organizational norms, values, and processes (Mullen, 1994). Such interactions in turn, encourage mentees to discuss openly about their difficulties, ask questions, and seek clarity and motivating them to take risks. This in turn, creates a positive learning environment, which supports organization-wide learning and enhances employees' competencies such as, career skills, functional skills, social skills, decision making, team development, leadership skills, initiative taking, opportunity identification, and networking. Access to this knowledge provides mentees the opportunity to develop more quickly than without mentoring support. Furthermore, mentoring builds a culture of learning and knowledge sharing. It enables to organize, create, capture and distribute knowledge. It hastens the process of tacit knowledge sharing by allowing mentees to have an easier access to internal

experts. Thus, it enables discovery of tacit knowledge of mentors which otherwise, is difficult to explore (Dreher & Ash, 1990). This is in agreement with the extant mentoring literature, which reveals a positive association between mentoring and organizational learning, and knowledge creation and sharing (Singh, Bains & Vinnicombe, 2002). Therefore, mentoring facilitates the development of Gen Y employees by promoting organization wide learning, knowledge creation and sharing.

Also, several of the studies on mentoring have emphasized its positive relationship with improved socialization of employees and development of social capital (Kirchmeyer, 2005). This is in agreement with the notion that mentoring improves communication and the quality of working relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates. Interestingly, prior literature indicates that quality of work relationships positively impacts employee engagement (Kahn, 1990). In this vein, mentors through enhancement of working relationships would positively influence engagement. Importantly, Gen Y employees have been shown to exhibit differences in work values, personality, attitude and behavior (Howe & Staruss, 2000). These differences make it difficult for them to socialize within organization, as organization culture and policies are typically in alignment with working style and values of older generation employees (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Consequently, facilitation of socialization by mentoring engenders a positive perception in Gen Y employees that the organization values their distinct perspectives and work ethics.

Further, mentors provide access into social networks that include repositories of knowledge not available through formal communication channels (Dreher & Ash, 1990). More so, in context of Gen Y employees, it provides a means to voice their concerns, overcome hurdles and find solutions, whereby they can freely discuss their issues with senior mentors and receive expert advice. In the process, it creates a psychological safe environment of belonging, understanding, support and encouragement for a diverse workforce. Mentors also use dialogue and feedback to help protégés resolve problems rather than provide solutions (Kram, 1985). This goes a long way in engaging the mentees. Consequently, mentoring is often viewed as a "fast-track" support mechanism to oversee the progress of mentees by experienced mentors. Thus we propose-

Proposition 1- Mentoring has a positive influence on a) development b) socialization of Gen Y employees.

3.2 Gen Y Development, Socialization, Psychological Need Satisfaction, and Employee Engagement

The perception of development and socialization in turn, satisfies higher order psychological needs of self-actualization, self-esteem, and need for belongingness of Gen Y employees. This creates a perception that the organization considers them important and allocates its resources to assist in their well-being and development. This is in agreement with prior engagement literature, which reports its strong positive relationship with psychological need satisfaction (Meyer and Gagne, 2008). Also, provision of learning and developmental opportunities at workplace is found to be essential for engagement of Gen Y employees (Tulgan, 2009).

In his view, affective engagement refers to being able to form ties with colleagues and superiors and to experience positive feelings of empathy, care and concern (Kahn, 1990). As engagement is a psychological state, employees are more likely to feel emotionally engaged, when their dominant growth needs are served and they feel being a part of something important. The easier socialization achieved through mentoring makes Gen Y employees socially ware and feel connected to peers and superiors. This in turn, satisfies their social needs and ultimately translates to feeling socially engaged.

In other words, in line with social exchange perspective, the perception of psychological need satisfaction evokes positive psychological responses of feeling engaged. As such, from Gen Y employees' perspective, when their higher order psychological needs are met, they feel an obligation to repay in terms of positive behavioral response of higher engagement. This is consistent with past research indicating that mentoring has positive effect on employee engagement (Wanguri, 1996). Hence, we argue that mentees with access to mentoring will exhibit higher levels of work engagement. In other words, there is a positive association between mentoring and engagement. Thus we propose-

Proposition 2- Perception of development and socialization has a positive influence on psychological need satisfaction of Gen Y employees.

Proposition 3- Psychological need satisfaction of Gen Y employees positively influences their affective, cognitive, and social engagement.

4. Discussion

This article aims to present a conceptual framework demonstrating the influence of mentoring on engagement of Gen Y employees. There is large body of research which suggests that Gen Y craves mentoring and continuous learning in order to upgrade their skills to remain employable and sought-after in talent market (Loughlin & Barling, 2011; Niam & Lenka, 2016, in press). Further, employees with high need for growth and achievement, who are developmental-oriented and have ambition to succeed, are more inclined towards mentoring (Aryee, Lo & Kang, 1999). Therefore, from Gen Y employees' perspective, mentoring is even more significant as mentor shows clear path of development and answer their quest for one-on-one feedback, and support. Along the similar lines, an annual global CEO Survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers, reveals that 98% of Gen Y employees believe working with a mentor is a necessary component in development. In fact, they ranked training and development three times higher than cash bonuses as their first choice in benefits.(Giang, 2011). In the same vein, 53% of Gen Y's said that a mentoring relationship would help them become a better and more productive contributor to their company. (Schwable, 2013).

Mentoring is often shown to foster young people's social and emotional development including positive social attitudes, satisfying relationships and perceptions of their self-efficacy (Rhodes, 2009). The proposed conceptual framework suggests that mentoring support serves higher order needs of Gen Y employees and engenders a perception of being valued and supported, which in turn, leads to feeling affectively and cognitively engaged. Once employees realize that organization is concerned about their wellbeing, development and other needs, it facilitates the development of a sense of belonging and reciprocity to respond positively to this favorable treatment by the organization and hence they are more likely to feel engaged. Thus, being motivated through higher order need satisfaction contributes to feeling engaged (Naim& Lenka, 2016).

Most commonly, mentoring occurs on a one-to-one basis where mentor and mentee set goals, meet monthly, and refine goals over the established time frame. However, progressive firms are designing innovative forms of mentoring. One approach is "peer mentoring," a gathering of like-minded individuals who can offer guidance for one another, much like Facebook. Another is multiple mentoring, whereby a mentee interacts with multiple mentors at a time as there is less likelihood that a single mentor could resolve all the issues of the

mentee. Further it seems more logical to receive inputs from different mentors for different goals. These are informal and short-term relationships which resonate well with profile of Gen Y. Alternatively, mentoring can also be group or one-to-many with the mentor meeting (in person or virtually) simultaneously with multiple mentees to discuss a selected topic. Participants benefit from the mentor's expertise as well as discussions with one another (Petrin, 2014). In situational mentoring, the relationship exists to address a certain issue, challenge, or opportunity, such as becoming comfortable with the new computer system; meetings happen frequently but for a shorter overall time. Another important aspect of mentoring particularly significant from Gen Y perspective is reverse mentoring. Reverse mentoring is an approach in which the responsibility to mentor lies with young employees wherein they assist senior employees on issues such as how to use emerging technology or social media trend. This enables senior employees to stay current in a changing environment by relying on younger colleagues, an approach popularized by former General Electric Chairman Jack Welch. A case in point is IBM's Blue IQ program wherein managers and top leaders are mentored by the younger employees. Other progressive firms like Cisco systems, Citi Bank, AmEx have also launched formal reverse mentoring programs. Reverse mentoring is increasingly becoming significant for Gen Y, it boost their confidence as they get opportunity to access senior members which are otherwise difficult to find. It offers opportunity to demonstrate their competencies in front of senior employees, thus improves their personal brand and reputation among senior members which in turn, helps in their career advancement and desire to stay with the organization. The rationale is to serve higher order needs of Gen Y employees including self-worth, self-exploration, recognition, feedback, emotional support, by implementing mentoring at workplace. Nonetheless, formal one-to-one mentoring is still relevant but for Gen Y it is better to adopt above-noted approaches to mentoring as it give them flexibility to select options from making it customized and hence more attractive. Meanwhile, it is also possible for Gen Y to be involved in different forms of mentoring simultaneously as it better serve their desire for continuous learning and support. (Petrin, 2014).

5. Implications

In our endeavor to study engagement of Gen Y, this paper has implications that extend into both research and practice. This study is based on underlying principle of social exchange

theory to explore the role of mentoring in retaining Gen Y employees. To realize its purpose, a conceptual framework is suggested. From theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to development of literature on role of mentoring in context of Gen Y employees. As evident from the mentoring literature, most studies have focused on objective issues such as career related outcomes, salary or promotion (e.g., Joiner, Bartram, & Garreffa, 2004) rather than on more intrinsic issues such as employee engagement and affective organizational commitment. Further, despite this robust stream of research elaborating the significance of mentoring relationships, little is known about the mechanism underlying the association between mentoring and protégé outcomes. In this regard, how mentoring influences employee job attitude is largely obscure. This study adds to this literature by proposing competency development and socialization achieved through mentoring relationships to be the underlying mechanism linking it with employee engagement. In addition, it is also a first study of its kind to link mentoring with employee engagement, particularly in Gen Y employees' context.

From managerial standpoint, this study provides HRD managers the insights on the psychological profile of Gen Y, which is different from prior generations. Therefore, in accordance with work values and expectations of this generation, managers need to adopt a mentoring style in order to harness the true potential of Gen Y employees. It also offers HRD professionals a strategy to engage this young generation of employees by presenting how mentoring influences feeling of engagement among Gen Y employees. Consequently, managers gain the means to ensure a continuous supply of more engaged and committed workforce. Employees are the driving force for organizational success and sustainability. The continuous development of employees through acquisition of knowledge, skills and expertise is essential for organizations to compete and sustain in present business landscape. Given the diversity of workforce, organizations are transforming their developmental interventions to stay appealing to different workforce segments, particularly Gen Y.

6. Limitations and Future Scope

Notwithstanding the theoretical contributions of this study, few limitations are identified that should be looked upon in future research work. Firstly, the framework proposed in this paper is a conceptual work and has not yet been empirically tested. Therefore, future work in this domain should conduct empirical studies to test and validate the conceptual framework.

Secondly, qualitative and quantitative research will be beneficial to elucidate the concept in organizational context. Thirdly, additional research should examine different forms of mentoring including group mentoring, peer mentoring and e-mentoring in the context of Gen Y. Studies should examine the most effective mentoring forms from both Gen Y employees' and organizational perspective. Fourthly, mentoring scale validation from Gen Y perspective is also an area that requires future investigation as most available mentoring scales were designed in quite different context. Finally, role of organizational level variables such as top leadership support and organization culture on effective practicing of mentoring can be investigated. In this regard, it will be useful to assess provision of incentives, rewards and recognition, and training offered to mentors.

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