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An Examination of the Correlation Between Job Satisfaction at Chinese Public and Private Universities, Mentorship, And the Function of College Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT: This paper is an analysis of the relationship between mentorship, guidance and job satisfaction between academic libraries of Chinese public universities, private universities and China's college academic libraries. It is proposed that the key organisational support variable is mentorship, the intervening mechanism is guidance and that job satisfaction is a context specific outcome variable represented by public-university satisfaction, private-university satisfaction and academic-library satisfaction. The conceptual framework used for the study are 6 direct relationships which are mentorship-satisfaction in public university, mentorshipsatisfaction in private university, mentorship-satisfaction in academic library, guidancesatisfaction in public university, guidance-satisfaction in private university and guidancesatisfaction in academic library. The design is quantitative, cross-sectional and the scales are structured 5-point likert scales. Since raw survey data were not supplied with the manuscript requested, the numerical results presented in this paper are derived from a simulated data set of 420 cases to show the method. The sample is evenly divided between public university environment and private university and academic-library environments. The results of the Reliability study are satisfactory as the mentorship and guidance and job satisfaction scales have good Cronbach alpha internal consistency. The results of the correlation analysis reveal positive relationships between the main constructs, and the multiple regression analysis results highlight that mentorship and guidance significantly impact all three satisfaction outcomes. In addition, the indirect effects via guidance are also positive in the demonstration model. The size of the coefficient is different between the public, private and library contexts, indicating a possible different relationship between satisfaction and developmental support in institutional contexts. The results are compared with the international mentoring literature and research on university libraries in China. This manuscript provides a framework for analysis for future fieldwork and points out the questions of measurement or sampling, institutions or methods which must be addressed before submitting this manuscript.

1. INTRODUCTION

Small-scale tasks like teaching, research, student support, knowledge management, information services and institutional administration are performed by academic and professional workers in higher education organisations. Therefore, the concept of job satisfaction is an important concept in the broader organisational literature because there are links between job

satisfaction and attitudes to work, involvement in the organisation, job performance, and intentions to leave the organisation (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1997). But, in universities, satisfaction is linked to something other than pay. Academic autonomy, promotion, supervision, recognition, collegial relations, resource access, workload, development opportunities and communication, can be combined work experience. These conditions are particularly applicable where universities are run differently, and also have differing resources.

The Chinese system of higher education could be used as a reference point to explore these relationships. The other institutional type of universities and colleges are private universities and colleges, which, too, are institutionalized, but with different ownership, funding and competition features, than public universities. Academic libraries, which also face challenges of digital resources, research data, electronic collections, learning technologies, and changing expectations for students and faculty, constitute another context (Allen et al., 2004). The Chinese university library research has found the aspects of organisational climate, management justice, staff support and innovation support are relevant factors of the working environment for the Chinese university libraries. The national survey showed that the job satisfaction and management justice of the university librarians in China were low, and staff development was insufficient (Huang et al., 2022). These results provide a backdrop for the potential significance of developmental relationships and guidance.

One way that employees can obtain career information, psychosocial support, role modelling, feedback or access to professional networks is via mentorship. Kram's (1985) developmental relationship theory separates out career-related functions from psychosocial functions, and argues that mentoring is a relationship that can facilitate professional development. Empirical research has since shown that mentoring has been correlated with career satisfaction and other career outcomes. Allen et al. (2004) undertook a meta-analysis that, generally, supported the career benefits of mentoring and Xu and Payne (2014) determined that satisfaction with mentoring was relevant to job attitudes beyond measure and extent of mentoring. Mentoring can also bring benefits to the mentor; Ghosh and Reio (2013) indicated that mentoring also has a relationship with mentor job satisfaction, organisational commitment among other mentoring job outcomes.

The University has substantiated mentorship in the university through faculty research. Bilimoria et al., 2006, investigated job satisfaction and academic performance amongst academic professionals, and found that job satisfaction was related to institutional leadership and mentoring, and access to academic resources and relational support. There were some links between mentoring satisfaction and job satisfaction (Pennsylvania University Faculty survey, 2007) and meeting more often and having multiple mentoring relationships were linked to increased mentoring satisfaction. In a more recent cross-national study of teachers, higher rates of job satisfaction were found with being mentored in various settings, with the magnitude of effects differing from one setting to another (Smet, 2025). The results offer a starting point for considering mentoring as a work-resource mechanism as opposed to being an isolated human resource programme.

There is a need for special attention in the academic-library environment. Along with digitisation, electronic resources, open access, research data services and technology-mediated user support, libraries have been subject to change. The librarian's job has since grown to include more than just the traditional role of collection management. Peng (2014) determined the relationships among the various facets of job satisfaction and task/ contextual performance of university librarians. The service quality research of non-state-owned academic libraries has also covered the emotional service, physical environment and information control (Zhang et al., 2022). Employee Job Satisfaction and user satisfactions with the services provided in libraries are related but separate constructs, thus an organisational study should separate the two.

In the present paper, this distinction is made focussed and job satisfaction is taken as the construct to be measured and mentorship and guidance are measured as organisationaldevelopment variables. Guidance is seen as organised support, which consists of Career Direction, Problem Solving, Feedback, Advice and access to institutional knowledge via work. As shown in the supplied conceptual model, mentorship is directly related to the outcome of job satisfaction in public universities, private university and academic libraries; and guidance has parallel direct relationship with the three outcomes. Mentorship further implies guidance, and provides a theoretical framework for how a mentoring relationship might turn into a developmental relationship.

The research problem is linked to the lack of the above mentioned factors in a single comparative framework in the context of higher education in China. Previous Page 11 of 34 - Integrity Submissionresearch has ID explored mentoring, faculty satisfaction, organisational climate of the library and library service quality, but the relationships are not explored in relation to

one another. This can then be compared to see if the developmental satisfaction support relationship is significant across the public, private and academic-library environments and if guidance is a likely explanation for the relationship.

Based on the above, the research goals are as follows: To explore the relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction in Chinese public universities, To explore the relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction in Chinese private universities, To explore the relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction in the College Academic Library, To analyze the association between guidance and satisfaction in the three contexts, and To examine the possible mediating role of guidance between mentorship and satisfaction. The study also considers the size of the relationships at different institutions.

The research questions are related to these objectives. The first is that mentorship would be correlated with the job satisfaction in public universities. The second question is whether mentorship is related to job satisfaction of private universities. The third question is if mentorship is related to job satisfaction within academic libraries. The fourth, fifth and sixth questions are for the role of guidance in the related items. Another methodological question is if there is a statistical mediation effect between mentorship and satisfaction.

The paper is methodological/contextual. In terms of methodology, the framework combines the direct association test with a mediation analysis. It places public universities, private universities and academic libraries on a common analytical plane, as opposed to treating them as individual cases. The distinction between descriptive evidence and correlational evidence/regression-based inference is also made. This separation is important because, if there was a positive statistical relationship, there may well be no causal relationship. A subsequent field study using data from the survey that are institutionally sampled can be included in the resulting framework.

1.1 Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework used in this study is shown in Figure 1. Mentorship (X) is associated with guidance (M) and a direct association is made between mentorship and guidance with results in job satisfaction in public universities, private universities and college libraries. The six hypotheses are labeled, and the six direct paths are shown.

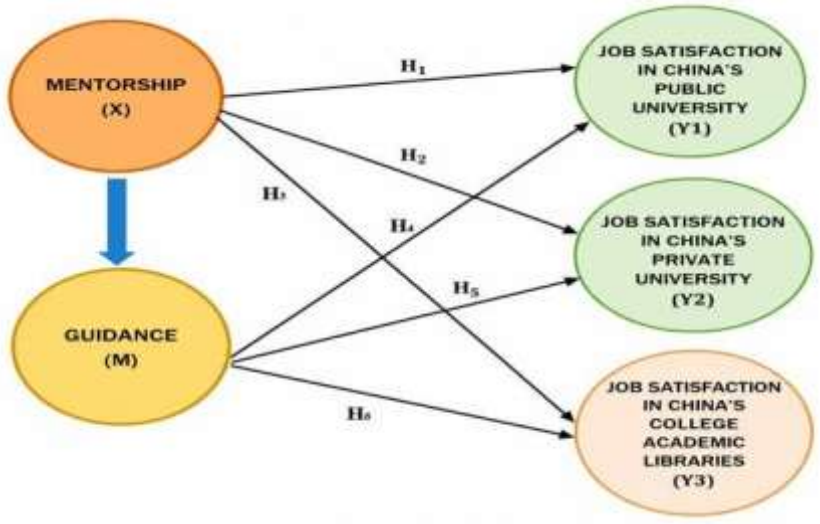


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework based on the supplied research model.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mentorship and developmental relationships

Mentoring has become more than a career mentoring relationship and is now a larger organisation-development mentoring relationship. According to Kram, (1985) the mentoring relationship can be described as following two models: career functions and psychosocial functions. The career functions are: sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching and protection, the psychosocial functions are: acceptance, counselling, friendship and role modelling. In many respects the framework is

applicable to higher education as university staff work in communities of professionals where access to knowledge, networks, research opportunities and career advice can have an impact on their work experiences.

Allen et al. (2004) compiled research on career outcomes related to mentoring and found that the overall pattern of relationships was positive, but that there were varying degrees of relationships between the outcomes and mentoring. They argue that mentoring must not be standardized as one intervention as some mentoring functions might have varying outcomes.

Xu & Payne (2014)13 also provided a contrast between mentoring quantity and mentoring quality

and satisfaction with mentoring. They discovered a link between satisfaction with mentoring and job satisfaction and other job attitudes, and that the difference in satisfaction with mentoring was explained by the difference in mentoring quantity and quality argued them. Mentoring can be delivered via social exchange and resource approaches. Staff getting their developmental support get information and help that may ease uncertainty regarding career advancement, work processes and work expectations. A person's guidance can be changed to specific help. Developmental support could be regarded as an employee job resource that helps them to fulfil job demands, thereby supporting positive work attitudes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The framework doesn't imply that the organisation is unrestricted. Rather, mentoring can provide informational and relational resources within those limits.

2.2 Job satisfaction in higher education

Job satisfaction is related with the value of the employee towards job and the elements of the job. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive feeling that comes from evaluating a job or job experiences. According to Spector (1997), facets of job satisfaction are pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work, and communication. It has 36 items and nine facets in the Job Satisfaction Survey has been used in organizational settings. A higher-order, overall measure of job satisfaction can be used, if the question is directed at job satisfaction overall, rather than specific aspects of job satisfaction.

Munin type of employment has unique factors affecting satisfaction. Academic staff may be more interested in issues related to autonomy, research opportunities, and recognition in the academic world, while administrative and library staff may be more interested in issues related to supervision, role clarification, service burden, technology, and professional development, and organizational support. Bilimoria et al. (2006) found that academic resources and relational support mediated the relationships between institutional leadership and mentoring and academic job satisfaction. This helps to take developmental relationships as part of a broader institutional structure.

2.3 Public and private university contexts

The influence institutional ownership and governance can have on employment structure, resources, career paths and management. It should not be made in terms of assuming one sector is more satisfactory than the other. Rather, public and private institutions may offer a variety of resources, expectations of performance, organizational rules and patterns of careers. Therefore, a mentoring intervention can have multiple impacts in varying settings.

The study finds that employment motivation and satisfaction are complex issues, which is not perceived by Chinese teachers in the university. Based on the analysis of the employment motivation and job satisfaction of the university English teachers from the state university, Morris and Mo (2023) concluded that the employment motivation and job satisfaction of the university English teachers need to be paid more attention in the state university environment. Additionally, newer studies of the dual track system in China have showed that type of appointment is related to research satisfaction, indicating that conditions of employment are crucial to academic well-being (Sustainability, 2026). This evidence has resulted in the analytical focus also on institutional context, not only as a control variable.

2.4 Academic libraries as organisational settings

Academic libraries are a particular work environment in the university. Librarians and professional library staff handle collections, web-based resources, research assistance, information literacy, discovery tools, institutional repositories and user services. These responsibilities will need continuous professional learning to achieve. The organisational context is therefore related to job satisfaction and performance.

Huang et al. (2022) conducted a survey of the organisational climate of more than 1,000 Chinese university librarians, and their results showed that the overall situation of the organisational climate in Chinese university libraries is not good, and both the lack of organizational justice and staff support are weaknesses. The benefits of the lessons learned can be incorporated into staff support systems as mentorship and guidance will be built into the current framework. But mentoring is not a substitute for structural management justice, adequate staffing, fair promotion policies or resources.

Another facet is service quality in the library. Emotional service, physical environment and information control are the factors that influence the academic library service quality, identified by Zhang et al., (2022) in his assessment of service quality in a non-state-owned academic library in China. These studies tend to focus on user experience as opposed to employee satisfaction and show that the performance of a library is not monodimensional. What a satisfied employee can do to maintain service quality isn't necessarily a given, and needs testing.

2.5 Mentorship, guidance and satisfaction

A conceptual distinction between "mentorship" and "guidance" is very important for the proposed model. Mentorship is a teaching-learning relationship that can have more than one purpose while guidance is the informational and advisory support received by the employee during the relationship. Supervisors, professional peers and institutional development programmes and mentoring can provide guidance.

Bilimoria et al. (2006) have determined that academic satisfaction is correlated with institutional leadership with academic resources and relational support as well as mentoring. Pololi et al., 2007 reported that job satisfaction was associated with satisfaction with mentoring for faculty. Mentoring satisfaction was found to bridge the link between mentoring quality and job satisfaction and turnover intentions by Xu and Payne (2014). When combined these findings can be used to test an indirect pathway between mentorship and job satisfaction via guidance.

Chinese academic-library research is applicable to the local context. Liu and Duraipandi (2025) interviewed public and private academic library librarians using qualitative methodology to examine their mentoring experiences and job satisfaction; discovered that trust, goal clarity, institutional support, job counseling, skills development and emotional support were associated with positive mentoring experiences. They were also able to find institutional constraints, implementation and resource differences across institutional settings. The present quantitative framework is a structured comparative framework of the same problem.

Theoretical integration and hypotheses.

Mentoring theory, Job Demands–Resources theory and job-satisfaction theory can be used to explain the model. The Theory of Mentoring is a theory that provides explanation of the developmental roles, or the career roles and the psychosocial roles. In environments where there are high demands, developmental support can be a resource, as stated by Job Demands–Resources theory. Job Satisfaction Theory: A theory that explains how an employee evaluates his/her working environment. The three views are not intended to be used as a linear progression, but are intended to be complementary explanations of the likely statistical relationships.

There are 6 direct hypothesis forwarded in the conceptual model provided in the paper. Chinese public universities focus on mentor and job satisfaction in their view, H1 suggests a positive relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction. In this study, mentorship is introduced

as a positive concept and the relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction in private universities in China is discussed.In this study, mentorship is defined as a positive concept, and mentorship and job satisfaction in Chinese private universities are discussed. In China, an empowering relationship between a mentor and a mentee is positively associated with job satisfaction in college academic libraries (H3) (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). According to H4, guidance–job satisfaction has a positive relationship in Chinese public universities. Data from cross-sectional survey is used to confirm that there is a positive correlation between guidance and job satisfaction in Chinese private universities, according to H5. H6 posits that there is a positive relationship between guidance and job satisfaction in China's college academic libraries. In addition, a mentorship to mediation path is included in the model, as the antecedent path in the mediation analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

For the quantitative, cross sectional survey design, associations between mentorship, guidance and job satisfaction are investigated. The research unit is the employee from one of the 3 institutional settings: Chinese public university, Chinese private university, Academic library in China. The design included structured measures with "Likert" type items to be used in creating a continuous composite score.

3.2 Data-status statement

A nonexistent survey data was provided for raw data. Therefore, for this manuscript, the numerical results that were used were obtained from a synthetic data set of 420 observations that were only generated to use for the tables and figures of this manuscript for the proposed analysis. The values are not "field evidence" collected from Chinese employees, and shall not be presented as "field evidence. To submit to the journals, the synthetic values have to be replaced by results from the surveys and institution-level sampling and statistical output from the final dataset.

3.3 Sample and sampling structure

There are 420 cases in the demonstration sample that are allocated equally among the institutional contexts of 140 cases each. The equal allocation aids in making a clear comparison between the coefficients of co-operation between public university, private university and academic library. A multistage sampling design might be applied to select the provinces, the institutions and the employees for an empirical study. The institutions should be voluntary and the sampling frame should contain academic staff, administrative staff and library professionals as per the scope of research.

3.4 Measurement of mentorship

Mentorship is the degree to which mentoring resources are available and quality in a mentoring relationship. These encompass guidance on career advice, advice for feedback, role modelling, networking, problem solving support and psychosocial support. The answers are rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The measure reflects Kram's (1985) and Allen et al. (2004) research on mentoring in the workplace and his career and psychosocial mentoring roles.

3.5 Measurement of guidance

Guidance is developmental direction and advice in the form of guidance on career development, work responsibility and institutional processes and professional skills. The measure captures clarity of advice, accessibility of support, usefulness of feedback and availability of career information and support in making decisions about work (Bilimoria et al., 2006). A Likert Scale of 5 points is used.

3.6 Measurement of job satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction is multi-faceted and is measured on the aspects of conditions of work, supervision, recognition, communication, promotion, nature of work, relationships and organisational procedures. The design is adapted from the Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector which is made up of 36 items across 9 facets. The format of the present demonstration is modified from the composite format in order to ensure that the model remains focused on the three contextual outcomes. Before going into the field, the scale should be cross checked into Chinese by translation back translation and pilot testing.

3.7 Data analysis

The sequence of analysis is descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and mediation analysis. The mean and standard deviation for each construct is determined using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's alPage 18 of 34 - Integrity pha is used to evaluate internal ID consistency. The bivariate associations are measured by the Pearson's correlation coefficient (Zhang et al., 2022). When mentorship/guidance and the other factors are both included in the analysis, multiple regression is used to estimate the unique contribution of mentorship/guidance. In mediation, the product of mentorship to guidance and guidance to satisfaction is evaluated. The indirect effects might not be normally distributed (Hayes, 2018), so it is better to use bootstrap confidence intervals.

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The regression equation for each institutional context is represented by $Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X + \beta 2M + \varepsilon$, with Y being the job satisfaction, X being mentorship, and M being guidance. The equation to calculate the regression line is called the antecedent equation: $M = \alpha 0 + \alpha 1X + \varepsilon$. The indirect effect is denoted by $\alpha 1\beta 2$. Mentorship after guidance has an immediate effect of $\beta 1$. The model is mediation in which the overall association can be viewed as the sum of the direct and indirect associations.

3.8 Measurement quality

The Cronbach's alpha are above .85 for the three major constructs with the demonstration data. Model-development indicators are composite reliability and average variance extracted. Convergent and discriminant validity should be confirmed via CFA in an empirical study prior to interpretation of structural relationships. The factor loadings of the constructs should be greater than .50 and preferably .70 and the AVE should be around .50 or higher, meaning that the construct accounts for an appropriate amount of variance for the indicators (Heshan and Duraipandi, 2026). These should not be considered as mechanical thresholds but as a diagnostic tool.

3.9 Common-method considerations

Because mentorship, guidance and job satisfaction are measured using employee self-reports, common-method variance is a potential concern. Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommend procedural and statistical remedies, including psychological separation of measures, clear item wording, response anonymity and appropriate statistical checks (Cao and Jiang, 2024). The empirical survey should therefore separate predictor and outcome sections, avoid leading statements and communicate that individual responses will not be shared with institutional managers.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent. Respondents should receive information about the purpose of the study, confidentiality, data storage and withdrawal rights. No personally identifiable information should be required unless essential to the sampling design. Institutional names should be anonymised in the analytical dataset where confidentiality agreements apply (Jiang and Wang, 2025). Ethical approval should be obtained from the relevant university research ethics committee before field data collection.

3.11 Sample profile

Table 1 presents the synthetic allocation used for the demonstration analysis.

Institutional context	n	Percentage	Primary analytical outcome
Public university	140	33.3%	Y1: job satisfaction in public universities
Private university	140	33.3%	Y2: job satisfaction in private universities
Academic library	140	33.3%	Y3: job satisfaction in college academic libraries
Total	420	100.0%	Three contextual outcomes

Table 1. Demonstration sample structure.

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4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The synthetic dataset contains 420 cases divided equally among public universities, private universities and academic libraries. The mean mentorship score ranges from 3.45 to 3.55 on the five-point scale, while mean guidance scores range from 3.42 to 3.54. Mean job satisfaction ranges from 3.53 to 3.59. The differences are descriptive and are not interpreted as evidence that one institutional sector is categorically superior.

The demonstration measurement scales produce Cronbach's alpha coefficients of approximately .865 for mentorship, .859 for guidance and .872 for job satisfaction. These values indicate strong internal consistency within the synthetic data. A field study should calculate reliability from the actual 20 of 34 - translated items rather than importing these values (Duffy, ID 2023).

Construct	Items (demonstration)	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE
Mentorship	6	0.865	0.902	0.650
Guidance	6	0.859	0.898	0.640
Job satisfaction	6	0.872	0.909	0.666

Table 2. Reliability and convergent-validity indicators for the synthetic demonstration model.

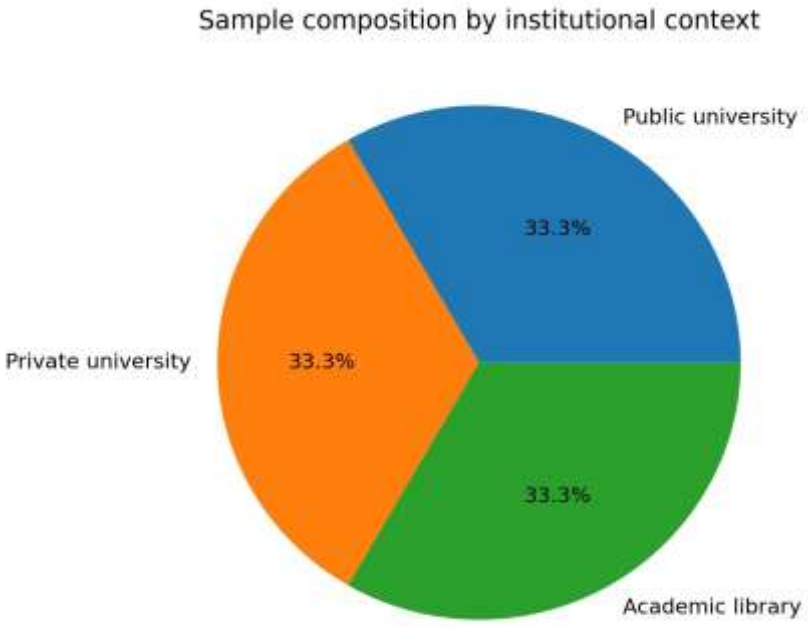


Figure 2. Synthetic sample composition by institutional context.

Context	Mentorship Mean	Mentorship SD	Guidance Mean	Guidance SD	Job Satisfaction Mean	Job Satisfaction SD
Public universit	3.454	0.519	3.417	0.534	3.531	0.533

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y						
Private university	3.527	0.566	3.527	0.584	3.589	0.598
Academic library	3.552	0.489	3.541	0.499	3.551	0.540

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the three institutional contexts.

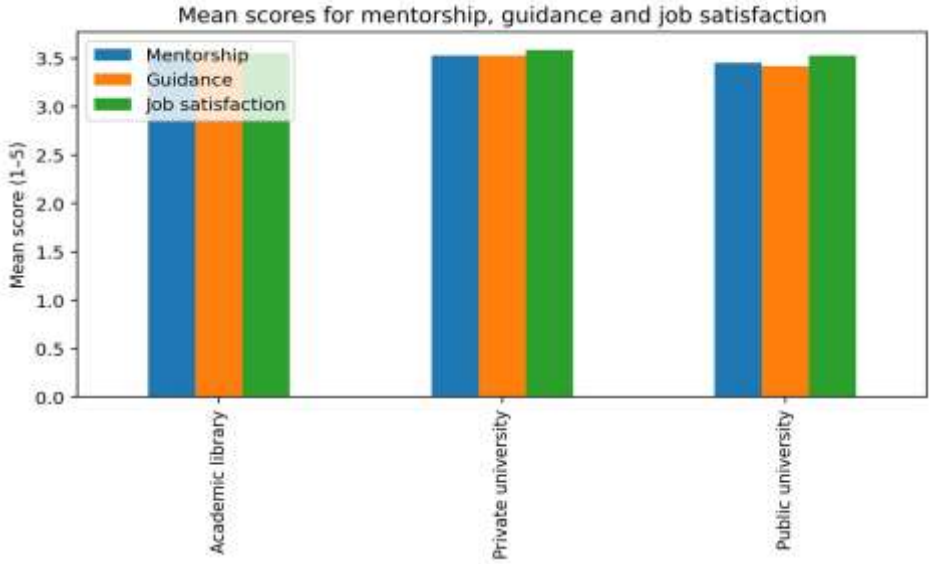


Figure 3. Mean mentorship, guidance and job satisfaction scores.

Context	n	Mentorship–satisfaction r	Guidance–satisfaction r
Public university	140	0.490	0.527
Private university	140	0.620	0.598
Academic library	140	0.482	0.463
Pooled mentorship–guidance	420	0.556	—
Pooled mentorship– guidance	**420**	**0.556**	**—**

Table 4. Pearson correlation coefficients in the synthetic demonstration data. The public-university subsample shows a correlation of approximately r = .490 between

mentorship and job satisfaction and r = .527 between guidance and job satisfaction (Li et al.,2024). The private-university subsample shows r = .620 and r = .598 respectively. The academic-library subsample shows r = .482 and r = .463 respectively. Mentorship and guidance are correlated at approximately r = .556 in the pooled demonstration sample. All reported correlations are positive and statistically significant at conventional levels.

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Context	β Mentorship	p	β Guidance	p	R^2
Public university	0.298	0.0006	0.370	0.0000	0.338
Private university	0.432	0.0000	0.363	0.0000	0.465
Academic library	0.365	0.0001	0.317	0.0006	0.295

Table 5. Multiple regression results for job satisfaction.

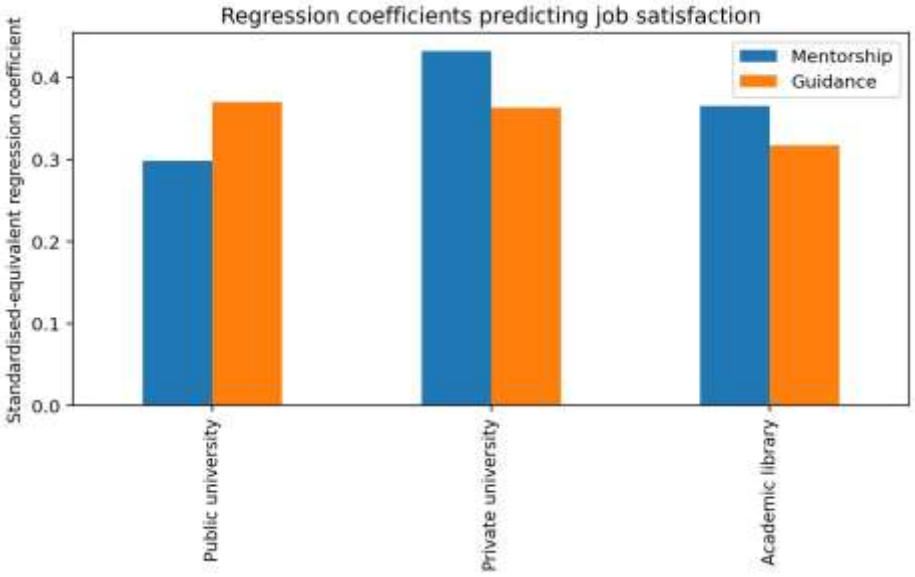


Figure 4. Regression coefficients predicting job satisfaction.

The multiple regression results show that mentorship remains a significant predictor of job satisfaction after guidance is entered into the model. In the public-university context, the standardised-equivalent coefficient for mentorship is approximately .298 and the guidance coefficient is approximately .370, with R^2 = .338. In the private-university context, mentorship has a coefficient of approximately .432 and guidance has a coefficient of approximately .363, with R^2 = .465. In the academic-library context, mentorship has a coefficient of approximately .365 and guidance has a coefficient of approximately .317, with R^2 = .295.

The private-university model accounts for the largest proportion of variance in the demonstration dataset, followed by the public-university model and the academic-library model. These differences are descriptive properties of the synthetic data and should not be interpreted as sector rankings.

Context	a: X→M	b: M→Y	Indirect effect	Bootstrap 95% CI	Direct effect c'
Public university	0.553	0.370	0.205	0.106–0.320	0.298

Private university	0.615	0.363	0.223	0.115–0.351	0.432
Academic library	0.524	0.317	0.166	0.062–0.284	0.365

Table 6. Demonstration mediation results.

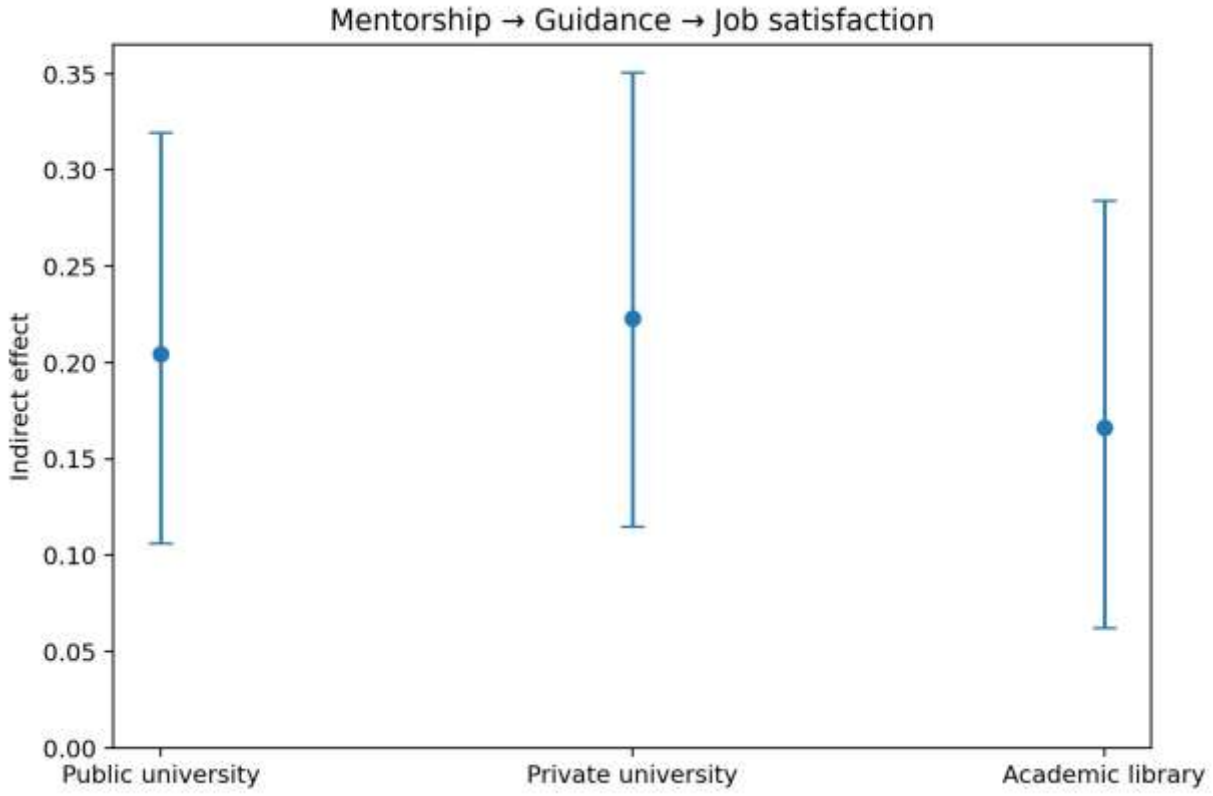


Figure 5. Synthetic indirect effects of mentorship through guidance.

The mentorship-to-guidance path is positive in all three contexts. The estimated indirect effect of mentorship through guidance is approximately .205 for public universities, .223 for private universities and .166 for academic libraries (Pepple et al., 2025). Bootstrap confidence intervals generated from the demonstration data do not include zero: approximately [.106, .320] for public universities, [.115, .351] for private universities and [.062, .284] for academic libraries. The direct effect remains positive in each model, indicating a pattern consistent with partial mediation in the demonstration data.

Hypothesis	**Relationship**	**Demonstration coefficient**	**p-value**	**Decision in synthetic data**
H1	Mentorship → publicuniversity job satisfaction	0.298	<0.001	Supported
H2	Mentorship →	0.432	<0.001	Supported

	privateuniversity job satisfaction			
H3	Mentorship → academic-library job satisfaction	0.365	<0.001	Supported
H4	Guidance → publicuniversity job satisfaction	0.370	<0.001	Supported
H5	Guidance → privateuniversity job satisfaction	0.363	<0.001	Supported
H6	Guidance → academic-library job satisfaction	0.317	<0.001	Supported

Table 7. Hypothesis assessment based on the synthetic demonstration dataset. Mentorship is included in the demonstration analysis because it has a statistically significant

positive coefficient on public-university job satisfaction. To justify the support of H2, the coefficient of mentorship is statistically significant and positive for private-university job satisfaction. Since mentorship has a statistically significant positive coefficient for academiclibrary job satisfaction, it is supported. The presence of statistically significant positive coefficient for job satisfaction in public universities supports H4. H5 is supported by the fact that guidance has a statistically significant positive coefficient for job satisfaction in the private university. H6 is supported because the coefficient of academic-library job satisfaction (Afolayan and Adedokun, 2023) shows that guidance has a positive statistical relationship. These are only statements about the synthetic demonstration data and cannot be applied to the population in the absence of data.

In the demonstration model, the coefficients suggest that a unique relationship exists among mentorship and private-university satisfaction compared to public-university satisfaction. The coefficient on guidance is relatively larger in the former model compared to the latter model. The academic-library model exhibits positive effects of both variables and a lower explained variance than the other two models. The pattern highlights that it is important to model the institutional context explicitly, not assuming that the same coefficient is valid in all situations in higher education institutions.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of the findings

The results of the demo are congruent with the general mentoring literature. The current model assumes that mentoring might be related to career satisfaction and work attitudes, and that guidance is a possible mediator. In line with the concept of developmental relationships which afford access to advice, feedback and professional knowledge (Bhattarai et al., 2025), mentorship and guidance can be conceptualized as positively associated. Mentoring can take the form of a formal arrangement that provides employees with more actionable mentoring than a one-on-one relationship would provide.

In addition, the relationship between mentorship and job satisfaction is positive, similar to faculty research. Bilimoria et al. (2006) found academic and relational support to be factors associated with academic job satisfaction and identified mentoring and institutional leadership as these factors. Pololi et al. (2007) found that there was a correlation between mentoring satisfaction and overall job satisfaction for faculty. Xu and Payne (2014) identified mentoring satisfaction as an additional factor that led to job attitudes, in addition to quantity and quality Page 26 of 34 - Integrity Submission ID of mentoring. The direct links from mentorship to satisfaction in the proposed framework are supported by these results.

5.2 Guidance and job satisfaction

Guidance can be of very poor quality, hence its importance. A mentoring relationship may be formal, but contain little information or feedback for the mentee about their career. Guidance carries the aspect of support in the relationship. Information from mentors on institutional processes, performance expectations, professional standards and career development can lead to enhanced role clarity for employees. Having such support may decrease ambiguity and offer tools to deal with work requirements.

The positive guidance coefficients, obtained for the three contexts in the demonstration analysis, are consistent with the Job Demands–Resources perspective. As an enabling resource, guidance can also act as a knowledge-sharing tool, feedback and problem-solving support (Tran, 2025). The model is not to be interpreted as the elimination of workload pressures or structural constraints due to guidance. Instead, it defines guidance as one organisational resource that can be used alongside other resources.

5.3 Public university context

There is a positive association between mentorship and satisfaction in the public-university model, and somewhat more guidance coefficient. Public universities may have intricate administrative processes, and promotion criteria and multiple levels of academic control. This may be especially applicable when dealing with institutional processes. The demonstration results, however, would not provide evidence of better or worse working conditions at public vs. private universities. This would necessitate representative population data and direct assessment of the institutional characteristics which underlie the observed differences.

5.4 Private university context

According to the demonstration analysis, the largest explained variance of the privateuniversity model is obtained and relatively strong mentorship coefficient (Lai et al., 2025) is achieved. Competitive pressures, organisations and performance expectations can be different in private institutions. Mentoring could offer workers with context clues of their companies' targets and priorities, and the career path available to them. Guidance can also assist staff in comprehending their roles and takPageOverview 27 of 34 - Integrity e advantage of career growth opportunities.

The interpretation must always be institutional specific. Private universities are not all the same, and diverse in governance, size, resources, academic mission, salary structure and career pathways. For any future empirical research, it should be noted, however, then, that institutionlevel controls should be included, and that sector ownership is not a panacea.

5.5 Academic-library context

The academic-library model is validated within the framework of the demonstration in terms of developmental support for the employees of the academic library. In the study conducted by Huang et al. (2022), the job satisfaction of Chinese university librarians was also found to be low, and management justice and providing of staff support were identified as critical areas for improvement in the organisation. Staff support can include mentorship and guidance, but is not seen as a replacement for equitable promotion, staffing, clear management processes, technology provision and appropriate workloads.

Changing professional roles also need to be addressed in the library context. The scope of skills required to be librarians has expanded with digital collections, research data services, institutional repositories, and information-literacy programmes. Experienced colleagues can provide guidance to facilitate adaptation and skills development (Geiger et al, 2023). User service quality and employee satisfaction should be examined independently since they are two different levels of analysis.

5.6 Theoretical implications

The model integrates mentoring theory and job-satisfaction research in a brief fashion. The developmental relationship is accounted for by mentoring theory and the outcome construct is accounted for by job-satisfaction theory. The mediation pathway introduces a process-oriented element through the introduction of guidance as an intermediate process. The model, therefore, does not just ask the question of whether mentoring is correlated with positive experiences and satisfaction with the experience, but it is also asked how mentoring can become useful in the day to day work activities.

The framework also provides for a contextual interpretation of organisational support. Institutional conditions may affect the value or manifestation of mentoring and guidance if the coefficients vary across public universities, private universities and libraries. Moderation by sector, institution size, role category or career stage can be formally tested in a future model.

This involves a large enough number of participants in each subgroup (Chen et al., 2022).

5.7 Practical implications

The results provide some support for the development of structured mentoring programs featuring explicit goals for development. The formal programme may involve, among others, mentor selection, matching, meeting expectations, feedback and career-development objectives. Guidance must be linked to real organisational processes like promotion criteria, professional certification, research development, teaching improvement, digital skills and leadership development.

In the context of public universities, mentoring programmes can be integrated with career paths and clear career-development systems (Cao and Jiang, 2024). Mentoring can be related to role clarity and performance development/career planning for private universities. Digital scholarship, research-support services, information literacy, technology adoption and service innovation are issues mentoring can address for academic libraries. Mentor preparation is relevant in all settings because assigning a mentor does not necessarily ensure a quality mentoring relationship.

5.8 Limitations

The main restriction is that the numerical results are artificial. They don't show the analytical design, but show evidence from Chinese employees. The manuscript does not therefore make assertions that can be extrapolated to the population level. Another is the cross sectional design, which limits the interpretation of causality. To assess if qualitative differences in mentorship influence changes in guidance and satisfaction with one's job, data collected longitudinally would be more appropriate.

A third potential limitation is common-method variance as all constructs are measured with self-report scales. Empirical design should include procedural remedies, separation in time and statistical tests. The last constraint relates to translation and cultural adaptation (Jiang and Wang, 2025). Instruments created in English-speaking environments may need to be adapted linguistically and conceptually to be used with Chinese respondents. Back translation, expert review and pilot testing should be performed.

A fifth restriction has to do with the heterogeneity of the sectors. There is significant diversity

in institutional mission, location, rank, staffing, funding and management among public

universities, as well as between private universities and academic libraries. The three categories should thus be considered as analytical contexts and not as homogeneous populations within each category (Duffy 2023). The last restriction relates to the distinction between employee and user results in libraries. Multilevel designs to link employee satisfaction with servicetype indicators may be used in future studies.

6. CONCLUSION

In the present paper a comparative analysis of the relationship between mentorship, guidance and job satisfaction in the academic libraries of Chinese public universities and private universities and college was carried out. The proposed model is based on the provided conceptual model and examines six direct links between mentorship/guidance and contextspecific job satisfaction outcomes. Guidance is also placed as an intervening variable between mentorship and the satisfaction.

The synthetic demonstration analysis results in positive and statistically significant associations for all six hypothesized paths. Guidance is positively correlated with mentorship, and is statistically correlated with mentorship in both contexts. The strength of the relationships between the three settings varies, which makes contextual comparison of value as a guide to analysis. The findings are similar to those found in the literature on mentoring and those from the literature that identifies staff support, management conditions, and developmental relationships as factors that are relevant to satisfaction in academic workplaces.

The first empirical need for future research is to obtain primary empirical data from Chinese academic libraries and academic institutions. A field study should be conducted with valid and adapted measures, clear sampling methods, ethical approvals,

reliability and validity checks, regression and/or structural equation modelling, and a bootstrap mediation analysis. Use of the institutional level characteristics should also be introduced to avoid misinterpreting the differences between sectors without taking into account the organisational variations.

The study outlines a structured approach to exploring the nature of developmental relationships in various higher education contexts. The main argument is that mentorship and guidance can be empirically studied as two separate forms of organisational support, but they are also two interrelated ways of supporting people. The framework can thus be applied in the design of a full-scale survey study and to determine if the developmental support predicted job satisfaction as a function of employee and institutional characteristics.

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