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A Study on Workplace Mentoring and Its Contribution to Meaningful Work Among Employees Experiencing Workplace Anxiety in the Insurance Industry of Guangdong Province, China

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ABSTRACT: The insurance industry in China has seen growing job-related anxiety due to fierce competition, high performance expectations and ongoing organisational change. Workplace mentoring has become an important human resource management technique to provide career guidance, psychosocial support and positive role modelling to employees. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate whether employees involved in workplace mentorship programmes can experience favourable workplace anxiety symptoms in the insurance business in Guangdong Province, China. A quantitative study approach was used, and the data was obtained with the help of structured questionnaires which were administered to chosen respondents. The use of a convenience sampling method helped to select 300 Chinese insurance sector employees from Guangdong Province, China. All the collected data were examined using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28.0 to assess variations in workplace anxiety among employees taking part in workplace mentoring programmes. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to assess workplace mentoring and the connection of workplace mentoring with workplace anxiety. The findings revealed that employees who took part in workplace mentoring programs received good mentoring through career support, psychosocial support and role modelling. This mentoring functions were related to higher confidence, more interpersonal contacts, increased coping abilities and less workplace anxiety. The research found that mentoring in the workplace is an effective organisational strategy for enhancing employees' psychological well-being and reducing anxiety in the workplace in the insurance industry. The results present practical recommendations for insurance organisations to enhance the employee support systems through structured mentoring programmes, effective mentor development and supportive corporate cultures

1. INTRODUCTION

The insurance industry in Guangdong province exists in a business environment characterised by competition that calls for continuous change according to customers' needs, digitalisation, compliance and performance. The pressure on insurance industry employees is increasing due to associated heavy workload, sales targets and services expectations (Lin & Xu, 2024).

Organisational anxiety has thus become an important organisational concern due to the fact that prolonged emotional stress may decrease confidence levels and effectiveness of employees. An enabling organisational culture is more essential for the insurance companies trying to adopt sustainable strategies for development and retaining of their employees (Ahmad et al., 2025). Organisational mentoring has proved to be a good organisational practice where experienced employees can mentor other workers through providing career advice, motivation and useful information that help to deal with problems at the workplace. Mentoring relationships enable employees to understand the importance and meaning of the activities done at the workplace, which makes them do meaningful work despite tough working conditions. Positive mentoring relationships require mutual trust, regular communication, professionalism, organisational support and commitment from both mentors and mentees. These features ensure an environment in which uncertainties and anxieties can be decreased, and work attitudes are positively built up. Moreover, mentoring helps develop psychological resources and motivates reactiveness among workers by improving the psychological contracts and support among people (Kostyuk & Battisti, 2024).

The new trends witnessed in China regarding organisations have generated an interest in studying the psychological wellbeing of the workforce as a result of uncertainty and stiff competition in the business environment. This is especially true for the insurance industry owing to challenging performance evaluations, consumer-oriented services delivery and technological developments. These trends could lead to high levels of stress among the employees and reduced emotional commitment to organisational goals. Decreased emotional attachment makes the employees view their work as not contributing much towards the development of both themselves and their organisation (Cheung et al., 2025). A successful mentoring relationship will involve a robust feedback mechanism, social support and reflection opportunities, thus creating favourable circumstances for meaningful work. A good mentoring relationship also requires mentor availability, mutual trust, organisational recognition and constant communication. Such a situation will help workers deal with workplace stress better while still being committed to their professional duties (Nunan et al., 2023). Chinese organisations show that mentoring will increase organisational commitment through high workplace self-respect and positive organisational identification. The need to create mentoring programmes which will help improve meaningful work and eliminate the adverse impact of workplace stress in the insurance industry of Guangdong province (Shen et al., 2026).

The increasing popularity of sustainable human resource management practices has resulted in a greater focus on the quality of mentoring rather than the mere presence of mentoring schemes within organisations. Successful mentoring is contingent on a number of factors including positive organisational culture, competence of mentors, common professional aspirations and ongoing interpersonal communication. Ineffective mentoring relationships can cause disappointment, limited learning and lack of emotional support and hence the outcome in minimal gains from the mentoring process. These issues gain importance in the context of the insurance industry because workers in such an environment often face customer complaints, sales pressure and changes in laws and high performance standards (Sjarifudin & Rony, 2023). The process of mentoring at the workplace will develop employees through career coaching and psychosocial mentoring, which will build professional self-confidence in them and help emphasise the importance of their contributions to the organisation. Improved self-confidence will be linked to the perception of engaging activities, because employees will perceive higher levels of meaning in daily tasks and their long-term career development. The research of Chinese firms reveals that organisational support will increase the effectiveness of mentoring by increased mentoring self-efficacy, thus limiting negative mentoring experiences and enhancing the quality of relations. The mentoring relations can be considered as an important organisational resource for limiting workplace anxiety and enhancing meaningful activities of insurance employees in Guangdong province (Al-Zoubi et al., 2025).

2.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

There have been changes within the insurance sector in the last few decades due to various reasons including globalisation and digitalisation. Conventional insurance services were based on physical interaction while the contemporary insurance firms conduct their business digitally and with the aid of artificial intelligence and data analysis (Musaigwa & Netswera, 2025). China is now one of the largest insurance markets where the province of Guangdong acts as an important financial centre with a lot of insurance firms and a professional labour force working there. Expansion of the market has provided opportunities for the firms but raised performance standards as well. Such developments have resulted in workplace stress especially among those who are supposed to meet high sales targets and deliver good customer service (Bian et al., 2023). Mentoring at the workplace was slowly adopted as a significant human resource management tool that promotes employee development and sustainability of the organisation. Early mentoring programmes were mainly concerned with career progression and knowledge sharing.

Current mentoring goes further than that since it offers psychological and emotional support and boosts career confidence of employees, which helps them cope with workplace challenges. Good mentoring is thus becoming more valued in the service industry where the psychological demands often determine the health of the employees and performance of organisations. Attention has also been paid to meaningful work since employees are now looking for purpose and satisfaction as well as monetary gains (Hryshchenko et al., 2025).

3.PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of this qualitative research project was to understand how participants in a workplace mentoring programmes would perceive the positive workplace anxiety in insurance businesses in Guangdong province, China. The specific aim of the study was to look into the organisational, interpersonal and individual factors that make mentoring relationships stronger and help employees develop professionally. The insurance industry in Guangdong province is facing rapid digital transformation, increased competition and high performance requirements, which lays a strong emphasis on the necessity of establishing efficient mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships became one of the important organisational resources as they promote knowledge exchange, career development pathways and opportunities and emotional support leading to professional success in a challenging environment. The target population of the study comprised employees working in insurance companies located in Guangdong province, where mentoring relationships have recently become an important part of the company's talent management practices. The study aimed at revealing the factors that help establish efficient mentoring relationships, such as mentor–mentee interactions, mutual trust, good communication skills, mentor's competence, organisational support and common goal. This study will help in creation of effective mentoring programmes in insurance companies to promote meaningful work and employee resilience in the developing Chinese insurance industry.

4.LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lin et al. (2021), the impact of workplace mentoring is on the meaningfulness of work among employees suffering from workplace anxiety in the insurance sector. Workplace mentoring served as a career coaching, psychological and professional development intervention, whereas workplace anxiety referred to psychological strain due to job pressure. Meaningful work was concerned with employees' understanding of the purpose, significance and value of their work. It turned out that involvement in workplace mentoring programmes led to less workplace anxiety and more meaningfulness of work. Prolonged mentoring relationships yielded better results suggesting the importance of continuous mentoring. The conclusion drawn was that mentoring is beneficial to employees' well-being as it enhances employees' self-confidence and emotional and career development. However, despite those conclusions, the study considered only one American insurance firm and did not take into account organisational and interpersonal factors conducive to successful mentoring, especially in the context of the insurance industry in the Guangdong province, China. (Lin et al., 2021). Similarly, another study by Pandey et al. (2022), showed that the three main dimensions of mentoring effectiveness in the study were identified as: competency development, relationship building and sponsorship. Competency development helped improve professional knowledge and career skills of the employees; relationship building increased trust, communication and interpersonal support; while sponsorship led to career advancement and organisational visibility. From the above study, it was concluded that mentoring practices explained mentoring effectiveness besides the traditional mentoring constructs that were strongly correlated with workplace success. In essence, successful mentoring relationships require interpersonal support, professional mentorship and development of the employee. These limitations offer a chance to conduct a study on the factors affecting mentoring effectiveness in the insurance industry in Guangdong province, China (Pandey et al., 2022).

Li et al. (2024) have studied the impact of reverse mentoring on the innovative behaviour of employees in Chinese technological organisations. In the quantitative approach of research, the authors have conducted a study among 528 participants based on two waves of surveys. The findings indicate that reverse mentorship has a positive effect on the innovative behaviour of employees. A chain mediation effect is established along with challenge appraisal and continuous learning, which reveals continuous learning as a mediator. In conclusion, it can be stated that reverse mentoring contributes to knowledge exchange, professional development, and innovation as a result of the collaboration between senior and junior employees within an organisation. While the results obtained are valuable, the research does not consider insurance companies in Guangdong province, China and does not take into account workplace anxiety and meaningful work. (Li et al., 2024). Another study by Harshani et al. (2024) found out whether knowledge sharing mediated the effect of reverse mentoring on work engagement, where self-efficacy and organisational support played the role of moderators. It was found that the

promotion of acquaintance sharing between employees was positively influenced through reverse mentoring of work engagement. More organisational support and more self-efficacy made reverse mentoring even more effective. The study concluded that for successful mentoring relationships, one should create the environment of support, communication and exchange of knowledge. This would help people develop positive attitudes about their job and organisation as well. Nevertheless, the research does not only focus on the insurance business but is also aimed at other business sectors as well. In addition, it does not pay attention to workplace anxiety and meaningful work of insurance industry in Guangdong province, China. (Harshani et al., 2024).

5.RESEARCH QUESTION

- Which types of participants in a workplace mentoring programmes will experience positive workplace anxiety symptoms?

6.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The researcher used quantitative research design to examine the influence of workplace mentoring programme on positive workplace anxiety symptoms. The study was established to analyse the connections between research variables. The research findings were analysed using SPSS. Statistical analysis was used to evaluate the significance and strength of the association between meaningful work and workplace anxiety. At a p-value less than 0.05, the statistical significance was established, providing strong evidence among the research variables. Researchers assured that using the descriptive analysis approach for their study findings obtained from structured questionnaire items were genuine and dependable.

6.2Sampling

The study applied a convenient sampling process to execute the research. The Rao-soft sample size calculator indicated 249 people as a minimum sample size. The researcher distributed 500 questionnaires to the targeted population to ensure an adequate number of valid responses. A 60% response rate was obtained, which indicated that 300 completed responses were returned and 40% responses were not returned by the participants. Therefore, the final sample size was 300.

6.3Data and Measurement

The researchers implemented the survey method for gathering primary data from the selected employees of the 59 insurance companies of China who have their presence in Gungdong. The survey was conducted by distributing previously structured survey questionnaires to the selected employees who had been with the insurance company for at least a year, and the age of the employees was at least 20 years old. The structured questionnaires included information related to the demography of the participants. The collection of data was executed with the help of an online survey by using Microsoft Teams and email.

6.4Statistical Software

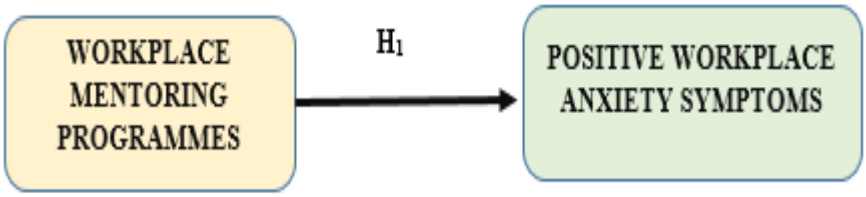
The study adopted a quantitative method based on a survey. The researchers analysed the results using IBM's SPSS version 28.0 software.

6.5Statistical Tools

The researchers applied a descriptive analysis method to comprehend the fundamental aspects of the collected quantitative data. The researchers employed Mentoring Functions Questionnaire-9 (MFQ-9) to evaluate the efficacy of workplace mentoring and its contribution in providing emotional and professional assistance to insurance industry employees of Guangdong, China. These instruments were significant for evaluating the research variables. Additionally, the ANOVA approach was used to explore the association among variables.

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7.CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8.RESULT

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Statistics		**Value**
N	Valid	300
	Missing	0
Mean		3.56
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		1.182

 Mentoring Functions Questionnaire-9 (MFQ-9) Descriptive Statistics:

All 300 participants who reported that they are presently engaging in their employer's workplace mentoring programmes or have done so in the past, were also asked to rate their mentoring experience using the 9-item MFQ-9 (Castro et al., 2005). Participants responded to nine items on the elements of career support, psychological support and role modelling of workplace mentoring.

•**Table 2:** Likert Scale Response

Response Category	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Totally Agree	71	23.7	23.7	23.7
Agree	102	34.0	34.0	57.7
Neutral	76	25.3	25.3	83.0
Disagree	26	8.7	8.7	91.7
Totally Disagree	25	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	**300**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

 The 125 mentor participants completed the MFQ-9 for Mentors. Items 1 to 3 assess the subscale of Career Support which are mentioned in Tables 3 to 5, items 4 to 6 assess the subscale of Psychosocial Support as mentioned in Tables 6 to 8

and items 7 to 9 assess the subscale of Role Modelling, mentioned in Tables 9 to 11. The findings of the MFQ-9 Mentor test were:

•Table 3:

MFQ-9 Mentor Career Support Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I try to behave in ways my mentee can model	4.64	0.593	125
I try to motivate my mentee	4.69	0.467	125
I try to teach my mentee	4.72	0.454	125

Table 4:

MFQ-9 Mentor Career Support Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.481	4.333	4.667	0.333	1.077	0.029	3

Table 5:

MFQ-9 Mentor Career Support Subscale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.821	0.835	3

Table 6 :

MFQ-9 Mentor Psychosocial Support Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
My mentee shares personal problems with me	3.72	1.233	125
My mentee exchanges confidences with me	4.08	1.156	125
I consider my mentee to be a friend	3.33	1.121	125

Table 7:

MFQ-9 Mentor Psychosocial Support Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.713	3.333	4.083	0.750	1.225	0.141	3

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Table 8:

MFQ-9 Mentor Psychosocial Support Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.804	0.802	3

Table 9:

MFQ-9 Mentor Role Modelling Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I try to behave in ways my mentee can model	4.64	0.593	125
I try to motivate my mentee	4.69	0.467	125
I try to teach my mentee	4.72	0.454	125

Table 10:

MFQ-9 Mentor Role Modelling Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.685	4.639	4.722	0.083	1.018	0.002	3

Table 11:

MFQ-9 Mentor Role Modelling Subscale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.683	0.697	3

Table 12:

MFQ-9 Mentor Full Scale Statistics

Item Means	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
	4.293	3.333	4.722	1.389	1.417	.240	9

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Table13:

MFQ-9 Mentor Full Scale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.815	.832	9

The MFQ-9 Mentor full scale mean is 4.293, meaning most mentors indicate they are providing their mentees career support, psychosocial support, and role modelling during their workplace mentoring behaviour. Additionally, the MFQ-9 Mentor full scale measured over 0.81 alpha for reliability. Based on the results, the mentors actively helped their mentees through their willingness to develop an interest in the mentees' career growth, coordinating their professional goals and spending time on their professional development. Psychosocial support was provided by the mentors through encouragement of communication, building up of trust and development of good interpersonal relations. Moreover, the mentors exhibited good role-modelling behaviour through example-setting, motivation and knowledge and experience sharing. There was a high degree of consistency in the answers, showing that these mentoring activities were widely performed. In general, it can be seen that these three mentoring activities worked together to create good mentoring relationships.

While the 175 mentee participants completed the MFQ-9 for Mentees. Items 1 to 3 assess the subscale of Career Support, which is mentioned in table 14 to 16, items 4 to 6 assess the subscale of Psychosocial Support as mentioned in table 17 to 19 and items 7 to 9 assess the subscale of Role Modelling, mentioned in table 20 to 22. The findings of the MFQ-9 Mentee test were:

Table14:

MFQ-9 Mentee Career Support Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
My mentor takes a personal interest in my career	4.14	1.095	175
My mentor helps me coordinate professional goals	3.98	0.975	175
My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my career	3.90	1.122	175

Table15:

MFQ-9 Mentee Career Support Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.008	3.905	4.143	0.238	1.061	0.015	3

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Table16:

MFQ-9 Mentee Career Support Subscale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.913	0.914	3

Table17:

MFQ-9 Mentee Psychosocial Support Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I share personal problems with my mentor	3.43	1.382	175
I exchange confidences with my mentor	3.64	1.428	175
I consider my mentor to be a friend	3.33	1.183	175

Table18:

MFQ-9 Mentee Psychosocial Support Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.468	3.333	3.643	0.310	1.093	0.025	3

Table19:

MFQ-9 Mentee Psychosocial Support Subscale Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.860	0.861	3

Table20:

MFQ-9 Mentee Role Modelling Subscale Item Statistics

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I try to model my behaviour after my mentor	3.48	1.234	175
I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others	3.98	1.137	175
I respect my mentor's ability to teach others	4.10	1.078	175

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Table21:

MFQ-9 Mentee Role Modelling Subscale Summary Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.849	3.476	4.095	0.619	1.178	0.108	3

Table22:

MFQ-9 Mentee Role Modelling Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.926	0.929	3

Table23:

MFQ-9 Mentee Full Scale Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.775	3.333	4.143	.810	1.243	.095	9

Table24:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.946	.949	9

The MFQ-9 Mentee full scale mean is 3.775. Additionally, the MFQ-9 Mentee full scale measured over 0.94 alpha for reliability. The results suggest that mentees found that the mentors had taken an interest in the career growth of the mentee and assisted in coordinating career goals for the mentee and provided career support. Mentees also received psychosocial support from the mentors in the form of open communication, trust, encouragement and good interpersonal relations. Furthermore, the mentors were seen to act as good role models who motivated the mentees, showed proper conduct at the workplace, and shared knowledge and experience through guidance and training. There was considerable agreement in the answers given by the respondents, thus showing that the above mentoring functions were regularly experienced by the mentees.

- TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

As mentioned in the discussion, the hypothesis was developed with the consideration of examining the strong relationship between the workplace mentoring programme and positive workplace anxiety symptoms."

"H01: There is no significant relationship between workplace mentoring programme and positive workplace anxiety symptoms."

"H1: There is a significant relationship between workplace mentoring programme and positive workplace anxiety symptoms."

Table 25: H1 ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	43.224	1	43.224	67.247	.000
Within Groups	37.923	299	.643		
Total	81.148	300			

The result is significant, with a F value = 67.247, which reaches significance with a p-value of .000 (< .05 alpha level). This denoted that the alternative hypothesis, "H1: There is a significant relationship between workplace mentoring programme and positive workplace anxiety symptoms" has been accepted and the null hypothesis has been rejected.

9.DISCUSSION

The results obtained from this study reveal that mentoring programmes in the insurance industry are influenced positively by organisational commitment, mutual trust, effective communication and mentor expertise. The presence of such elements creates a conducive situation for professional progress, reduces workplace anxiety and helps in making the work performed meaningful for the employees. Organisational support was identified to be particularly crucial since mentoring programmes and organisational encouragement help in building better relationships between the mentor and the mentee. These results are consistent with the research carried out by Hu et al. (2024) in which the results showed that the quality of the mentoring relationship had a substantial impact on the outcomes of employees. Poor experience in mentoring was found to decrease harmonious work passion and raise turnover intention, whereas excellent interpersonal understanding between mentors and mentees improved the effectiveness of mentoring (Hu et al., 2024). In the current study too, the importance of trust, communication and supportive acts of mentors in making the mentoring process a success has been stressed. However, the study conducted by Hu et al. (2024) largely focused on turnover intention whereas, in this study, the idea of mentoring has been studied in relation to anxiety at work and meaningful work outcomes. The results obtained also support the research conducted by Li et al. (2024) showing that reverse mentoring fostered innovation through continuous learning and challenge stress appraisals in Chinese technology companies. This current study too shows that continuous learning, guidance and frequent interactions between mentors and mentees improve mentoring relations (Li et al., 2024). The study provided new evidence by establishing the effective mentoring relations while fostering meaning at work for the employees suffering from workplace anxiety in the insurance industry in Guangdong province, China.

10. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that workplace mentoring is crucial for career support, psychosocial support and positive role modelling of employees in the insurance sector. Both the mentors and the mentees indicated positive experiences regarding mentoring which shows that successful mentoring requires professional guidance, emotional support and positive behavioural models. It is through the mentoring functions that a supportive environment is created to enable individuals cope with difficulties at workplace and to become more confident in their professional work. This indicates that the employees participating in workplace mentoring programme are prone to experience positive workplace anxiety because mentoring improves interpersonal relations, exchange of information and emotional resilience. Communication, trust and career guidance between the mentors and the mentees helps reduce workplace stress and improve the development of the employees. Therefore, this study demonstrates that workplace mentorship programme is an efficient human resource management tool

in improving the psychological well-being of the employees and managing workplace anxiety. Workplace organisations in Guangdong province in China need to participate in structured mentoring program, mentor training and organisational support for effective mentoring.

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