

## ENHANCING EARLY-CAREER ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH STRUCTURED MENTORING: INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Le Thi Bich Thuy<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract.** This paper aims to present an integrative literature review of junior faculty mentoring, encompassing effective measures for quality control. Additionally, it seeks to explore successful mentoring models from HEIs around the world that have demonstrated their effectiveness. Considering the backdrop of higher education internationalization and the rapidly evolving nature of the modern workplace driven by technological advancements, this study holds significant implications for Vietnamese HEIs policy makers aspiring to enhance the professional growth of their young staff, to foster a thriving learning culture and ultimately, to strengthen their institutional competitiveness and collective development in a sustainable manner.

**Keywords:** *Human resource development, sustainable development, learning culture, mentoring, policy making.*

### 1. Introduction

Education in general and higher education in particular have always played a crucial role in the socio-economic development. Universities have been so far regarded as the primary institutions responsible for training scientists, providing high-level human resources, conducting meaningful research, and connecting with businesses, communities, and stakeholders to address challenges at the local, national, regional, and global levels. In the context of globalization and the current Fourth Industrial Revolution, higher education must enhance the quality of education to effectively respond to rapid technological and socio-economic changes. This includes addressing urgent demands for high-quality human resources to meet the new requirements of the labor market and contributing significantly to the realization of national economic and social development goals. To improve the quality of higher education, the development of faculty members is a key factor, as emphasized in numerous studies. According to Darling-Harmon (1994), Guskey (2000), Condon et al. (2016), faculty development is a pivotal element in enhancing the quality of higher education institutions. Particularly, in the context where universities need to adapt to the new demands of the era, faculty development becomes even more critical because "an organization's change cannot occur without the change of individuals who make up the organization" (Sense, 1990). And the development is even more critical for junior faculty members who are in a phase of professional growth, technologically adept, and freshly innovative in spirit. They require support to adapt to a dynamic work environment and to develop a clear career path. Effective mentoring for this group not only increases their job satisfaction but also helps institutions retain talent, ensuring the stability of the faculty and maintaining high-quality education for sustainable development.

---

Received November 6, 2024. Revised December 2, 2024. Accepted December 8, 2024.

<sup>1</sup>Foreign Trade University, Viet Nam

<sup>2</sup>National Academy of Educational Management, Viet Nam

Corresponding author: Le Thi Bich Thuy; e-mail: [lebichthuy@ftu.edu.vn](mailto:lebichthuy@ftu.edu.vn)

Recent years witnessed robust changes in the higher education sector in Vietnam, marked by the Ministry of Education and Training's Higher Education's Quality Improvement Scheme 2019 as the Vietnamese government's response to the 4th Revolution, the higher education massification and internationalization. Faculty members in general and junior academic staff in particular have since been paid more adequate attention, as the quality of higher education is significantly determined by the quality of this cohort (AUN-QA, 2022). For junior faculty, mentoring is an effective and very economic development tool which is widely exploited in higher education institutions around the world. In Vietnam, this form of professional development has become relatively popular for junior faculty in the onboarding phase. Newly recruited academic staff members are often placed in mentorship with senior lecturers, who guide them through the integration process and make evaluative comments for different phases towards fulltime contract. However, unlike overseas HEIs where formal mentorships for junior faculties are often carefully planned, organized, and evaluated for improvements, Vietnamese HEIs's mentoring for junior academic staffs is far from being managed effectively. This concern was reported by the World Bank in 2008, as it emphasized, "a majority of the faculty must struggle with their own development in the context where universities are not actively engaged in their academic staff's professional development". (World Bank, 2008, as cited by Phuong et al., 2016). The situation has become really critical, as junior faculty in Vietnamese HEIs have been unanimously reported to be weak in both pedagogical and professional competent in the recent studies (Hoang, 2021; Nguyen, 2017; Pham, 2021)

The phenomenon has inspired the writing of this discussion paper whose primary objectives are discussing the importance of mentorship as a professional development scheme for junior faculty in HEIs in Vietnam, analyzing several mentoring models that have been exploited successfully around the world, as well as discussing the implications for Vietnamese HEIs' leaders and policy makers. Specifically, this paper aims to answer the following four questions:

- 1- What is mentoring and how important is this human resource development tool for the sustainable development of higher education institutions (HEIs)?
- 2- What are the effective mentorship models that have been exploited successfully in the international contexts?
- 3- What is an overview of the Vietnamese Higher Education and what are the characteristics of junior faculty members in Vietnam?
- 4- Based on the discussion of junior faculty mentorship and the effective models, what implications can be drawn for leaders and policy makers in Vietnamese HEIs?

In order to achieve the objectives mentioned above, this paper consists of four parts. The first part is dedicated to providing a comprehensive understanding of mentoring and its pivotal role as a human resource development tool in the sustainable development of higher education institutions (HEIs). Following this, the second part delves into an exploration of successful mentorship models in international contexts, aiming to distill key principles and factors contributing to their effectiveness. The third part offers an overview of the Vietnamese higher education landscape, coupled with an examination of the distinctive characteristics defining junior faculty members in Vietnam. Lastly, the fourth part synthesizes the discussion on junior faculty mentorship and effective international models, culminating in an analysis of the implications derived for leaders and policymakers in Vietnamese HEIs. This structured approach aims to systematically address each research question, ensuring a cohesive and insightful examination of the multifaceted aspects surrounding mentoring in higher education, both globally and within the specific context of Vietnam.

## **2. Mentoring as an effective junior faculty development tool**

Mentorship has been established as a crucial tool for the development of junior faculty, particularly in higher education institutions (Moore et al., 2020). Paradoxically, the concept of mentoring, although well-recognized and frequently utilized, is marred by a lack of consensus and clear definitions. This lack of

a uniform definition has persisted across various fields, including education, management, and psychology. As highlighted by Wrightsman (1981), this definitional diversity has led to confusion regarding precisely what mentoring entails, and the variability in its interpretation is evident from the multitude of definitions offered in these fields. In the context of higher education, mentoring has been defined as a process in which individuals of superior rank, distinguished accomplishments, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and career development of protégés (Blackwell, 1989). Lester and Johnson (1981) define it as a one-to-one learning relationship based on modeling behavior and extended dialogue between an older person and a younger person. Moore and Amey (1988) describe mentoring as a form of professional socialization, where experienced individuals act as guides, role models, teachers, and patrons to refine the skills and abilities of less experienced protégés. This variation in definition is mirrored in management and organizational behavior, with Fagenson (1989) characterizing mentors as individuals in positions of power who offer advice and promote the accomplishments of proteges within a company. In psychology, the term "mentor" is employed with a broader scope, denoting a relationship that encompasses teaching, counseling, psychological support, protection, and, at times, promotion or sponsorship (Zey, 1984). However, Levinson et al. (1978) argue that the term "mentor" lacks the precision to convey the complexity of this relationship. The varied interpretations and imprecise definitions have given rise to a lack of clarity and, at times, devaluation of the concept, particularly in research. The enduring challenge in the discourse on mentoring is the absence of a shared and comprehensive definition, which has led to superficial and loosely applied interpretations. Such ambiguity has hindered the development of rigorous research on mentoring. In light of this, there is a pressing need to establish a foundational and more precise definition of mentoring that can serve as a basis for more systematic and substantial research in the field.

Research in the field of human resource development, dating back to the 1980s, underscores the significance of mentoring. Notably, Hunt and Michael (1983) demonstrated that mentorship is the most effective and cost-efficient method for fostering the growth of young talents within an organization. Ivey and Dupre's comprehensive study (2020) on workplace mentoring further highlights the benefits of mentorship, both for individuals and organizations. For young faculty members teaching in higher education institutions, Sternert (2010) emphasizes that career development can take various forms, with mentoring being a prominent choice due to its relative ease of implementation, cost-effectiveness, continuity, and practicality. Jacobs (2008) also contributes to this discussion by emphasizing the indispensable role of mentoring, citing evidence that faculty members who participate in mentoring programs are more likely to remain in their profession, reducing attrition rates. Moreover, Jacobs argues that mentoring is an effective career development tool for both individual faculty members and the organization, proposing the incorporation of mentoring programs into specific initiatives at the state and institutional levels. In light of these findings, it is evident that mentorship plays a vital role in the professional development of junior faculty, offering a balanced approach to individualized learning while maintaining the quality of institutional education.

### **3. Effective models of junior faculty mentoring**

Various authors have discussed effective mentoring models for junior faculty members, providing insights into the development and efficacy of such programs. The most notable schemes are the ones proposed by Jacobs (2008), Dunham-Taylor et al. (2008), Kohn (2014) and Polikoff et al. (2015). These models offer a holistic view of the intricacies and strategies involved in developing mentorship programs for junior faculty members, highlighting the crucial role of institutional engagement, program structure, contextual considerations, and mentor-mentee dynamics.

Jacobs (2008) proposed a Pyramid Model for an effective mentoring program for novice teachers, emphasizing the importance of federal government involvement in program design and funding. This model encompassed several levels, with the federal government serving as the foundational support, followed by professional organizations offering subject-specific guidance. The subsequent layers focused on mentor-teacher activities, such as mentor selection, compensation policies, and necessary training to

enhance the mentorship's effectiveness. At the pinnacle of Jacobs' model was the issuance of teaching certificates to newly hired teachers upon program completion, underlining the importance of mentoring activities as a mandatory prerequisite for becoming a certified teacher. Jacobs' model addresses key elements to enhance mentoring effectiveness while emphasizing the role of both federal and professional bodies in the development and implementation of such programs.

Dunham-Taylor et al. (2008) concur with Jacobs on the efficacy of mentoring for junior faculty but pivot towards emphasizing programmatic structure. Their research emphasizes that mentorship programs should be institutionally organized rather than individualistic efforts. They advocate for the systematic development of mentorship programs in nursing education to address the growing shortage of nursing educators.

In contrast to Jacobs' macro-level focus, Dunham-Taylor et al. (2008) concentrate on mentoring activities and relationships between mentors and mentees, articulating ten influential factors such as collaboration, action, and generational differences. Their mentoring model prescribes a four-stage process: initiation, exploration, culmination, and re-initiation, each with specific activities to be undertaken. Although their approach is distinct from Jacobs', both studies underscore the significance of mentorship programs in retaining educators and facilitating their professional development.

Polikoff and colleagues (2015) examine the quality of mentoring in the context of mathematics educators in the United States, identifying four groups of factors affecting mentoring program effectiveness. Their research identifies contextual, mentor-mentee characteristics, policy-related, and mentoring activity and content factors as significant contributors to the success of mentorship programs. They propose a conceptual framework to clarify these factors' interplay, highlighting the critical roles of context and policy-related aspects. Their study underscores the importance of considering these elements when developing effective junior faculty mentoring programs, indicating that both contextual conditions and policy considerations significantly affect the quality and effectiveness of mentoring programs.

Kohn's (2014) model provides a comprehensive evaluation of a mentoring program for junior faculty members at the Eshelman School of Pharmacy, University of North Carolina. This model highlights the active engagement of institutional and departmental leaders in the mentoring program, affirming the program's alignment with the institution's goals. The department heads play an active role in advising the mentor-mentee pairs and attending annual evaluation meetings with the new faculty and their mentors. Furthermore, it introduces a dual-mentor approach, pairing each new faculty member with two mentors—one from within the institution and one external to it. This approach fosters collaboration and builds a robust support network for faculty members, connecting them to a broader academic community. Kohn's model also emphasizes the development of a support network within the academic community to enhance junior faculty's teaching, research, and community engagement skills in the long term. Incorporating senior experts from both internal and external academic circles, this mentoring program supports junior faculty members in their growth as educators, researchers, and community contributors. The model exemplifies the significance of engaging department heads and external mentors in mentoring programs and emphasizes the creation of a robust network to facilitate the well-rounded development of junior faculty members in academia.

Generally, the above discussion has highlighted key factors of effective junior faculty mentoring models, each offering unique perspectives and features. While Jacobs' model emphasizes government and professional body involvement, Dunham-Taylor and colleagues stress the importance of programmatic structure. Polikoff and colleagues underscore contextual, policy-related, and mentoring activity factors. Kohn's model adds the dimension of active institutional leadership, dual-mentoring, and the creation of a comprehensive support network, emphasizing the well-rounded development of junior faculty members in academia. These models provide valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of mentoring programs for junior faculty members.

## **4. An overview of the current Vietnam's higher education and its junior faculty**

### **4.1. The current Vietnam's higher education**

In the current landscape of Vietnam's higher education, the paramount importance of nurturing and guiding junior faculty within its academic institutions cannot be overstated. This significance is abundantly evident within the comprehensive analysis provided by the World Bank's 2020 report, which underscores the pivotal interconnection between higher education and socioeconomic development. As illuminated in the cited sources (Salmi, 2017; World Bank, 2012), higher education acts as a linchpin for the nation's economic growth, poverty reduction, and innovation. With Vietnam's ambitious vision of ascending to upper-middle-income status by 2035, there is an acute and immediate demand for a highly skilled workforce to propel ongoing productivity growth.

In this contemporary context, marked by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the massification of higher education, and the internationalization of educational institutions, the role of junior faculty development takes on added significance. The sweeping trends encompass rapid technological advancements, the ascendancy of the knowledge economy, and demographic shifts, all of which spotlight the escalating need for cognitive, digital, and socio-emotional skills (World Bank, 2018a, 2018b). In this milieu, junior faculty members are poised to be the linchpin of educational progress, serving as the catalysts for innovation and the providers of cutting-edge knowledge.

In a world beset by the unforeseen challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of adaptability, resilience, and innovative solutions in higher education has never been clearer. Effective mentoring programs, specifically tailored to develop the expertise and capabilities of junior faculty, emerge as a linchpin. They operate as the guarantors of sustained progress in the quality and relevance of higher education, positioning Vietnam's educational institutions as agile responders to the dynamic shifts in global and national educational paradigms.

### **4.2. An overview of Vietnamese junior faculty**

#### *Definitions*

In their review of literature on junior faculty, Finkelstein, M. J., & Lacle-Peterson, M. W. (1992) discussed the challenges related to defining and categorizing "junior faculty" within the context of higher education. They highlighted the diversity in the definitions of these faculty members across various data sources and surveys, which can include factors like age, rank, tenure status, and type of appointment. What they found was the definitions vary, with some considering junior faculty as those who have recently completed their Ph.D. or terminal degree and are embarking on an academic career, while others have a broader interpretation that includes faculty new to a particular institution or those in probationary appointments. Acknowledging the challenges in precisely defining this category, the authors suggested that there are multiple subgroups within junior faculty. These subgroups may include faculty members who are new to the profession, new to a specific institution, or in the midst of probationary appointments, among others.

In the context of Vietnam, junior faculty is defined as "individuals employed in the position of faculty members who are not older than 35 years of age" (Than, 2017).

This definition only bases the categorization of young faculty on age, then the definition provided by authors Dong & Pham (2019) in their comprehensive article on the development of teaching competence among junior faculty in Vietnamese universities takes a more holistic approach. According to these two authors, young faculty members are "educators whose age is not more than 35 and have professional experience of fewer than 10 years." This definition has also garnered agreement from various researchers in the field of junior faculty in Vietnam, including Pham (2020), Bui (2017), Dang (2016), and others. Therefore, this definition is adopted for the term "junior faculty" within this article.

The central question at hand pertains to understanding the defining characteristics of young faculty members in Vietnamese higher education institutions today and how best to nurture their development to meet the evolving demands of the new era. Examining available research on junior faculty members in Vietnamese HEIs reveals that the exploration of young faculty within Vietnamese universities has predominantly been limited in scale and often confined to specific university contexts. A nationwide survey addressing this specific group of faculty members is notably absent. Within this extensive examination of small-scale studies of junior faculty members, a report by Hoang (2021) on junior faculty at Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics stands out, reflecting commonalities discerned in various articles. According to this report, junior academic staff are primarily individuals under the age of 35 who have served as lecturers for less than a decade. As of March 2021, the academy was home to a total of 959 faculty members, with junior faculty accounting for 20.8% of this figure. This subset of junior faculty consists of 78% holding master's degrees, 10% with doctoral degrees, 14.5% actively engaged in research work, and 58.5% already involved in lecture delivery. This cadre of junior faculty is often described as dynamic, adaptable, and well-equipped with contemporary knowledge, foreign language proficiency, and effective teaching methodologies. However, the study brings to light several challenges. The observed low percentage of junior faculty members, which falls short of the recommended 30%, raises concerns about potential staffing gaps upon the retirement of senior faculty members. Furthermore, the level of engagement of junior faculty in teaching demonstrates significant variations among different academies, notably impacting their readiness in this domain. For example, while some junior faculty members can effectively lead entire courses within their initial five years, others may require a decade of service before they can instruct a specific subject or module. In response to these challenges, the study proposes a revised faculty structure aiming to encompass 30% of faculty below 35 years of age, 40% between 35 and 50 years of age, and 30% above 50 years of age, aligning with the national party resolution. These changes are designed to address these specific challenges and to ensure the effectiveness of faculty development programs at the academy. Nonetheless, despite the dynamism and adaptability of junior faculty members, they still encounter certain limitations, particularly during the teaching process. These limitations may include handling unexpected situations that arise during lectures. The primary reason for these limitations stems from the relative lack of experience among young faculty members. Although they may possess some teaching experience, their pedagogical knowledge, which encompasses instructional objectives, information delivery, teaching methods, and student engagement, remains somewhat underdeveloped. Young faculty members tend to focus on delivering subject matter content and might occasionally overlook the importance of nurturing students' critical thinking and life skills. Additionally, they often receive guidance on course content and curriculum but may sometimes place less emphasis on the holistic development of students. The effective application of pedagogical methods, both pre-lecture and in the classroom, still requires further refinement and development.

### *Challenges*

Research on the development of young faculty highlights several psychological challenges that junior faculty encounter. According to Husbands and Davies (2000), these challenges include a lack of a sense of community due to increasingly individualized relationships and reduced teamwork compared to their time as students. As pointed out, junior faculty members often struggle with classroom management and the academic titles they hold, which is in line with the observations of O'Connor (2000) and Milliken and Cohhan (2000). These difficulties can also extend to specific terms within employment contracts, with many junior faculty members expressing dissatisfaction with limited benefits and demanding working conditions, such as low salaries and excessive working hours. There is also the issue of high workloads, a concern raised by Husbands and Davies (2000). Furthermore, Knight, Tag, and Yorke (2006) emphasize that junior faculty may face challenges in pedagogical knowledge, mastering subject matter expertise, and effectively conveying their knowledge to their students. Apart from the above common challenges, Vietnamese junior faculties are faced with the difficulties originated from cultural factors. The influence of hierarchical cultural

values in Vietnamese society can lead to an inhibiting effect on their communication within the academic community, causing young faculty members to be reluctant to engage in open dialogue and express their opinions, particularly in the presence of senior colleagues. This cultural influence may serve as a significant impediment for young faculty members in terms of adapting to a new environment and advancing in their careers (Le, N. 2017). Additionally, the variability in teaching readiness among Vietnamese junior faculty members is well recognized, with some being able to deliver comprehensive courses within a shorter timeframe, while others may require more years of service to take on similar responsibilities (Pham, D, 2019) (Dong, X & Pham, T, 2020)

## **5. Implications for Vietnam's higher education institutions' leaders and policy makers**

Vietnam's higher education system, as depicted by the World Bank's findings in its 2020 report on higher education, faces multiple challenges, including concerns related to academic staffing, quality assurance, and the alignment of education with economic development. Within this context, the extensive discussion of mentoring for junior faculty development and effective mentoring models in the international contexts holds significant implications for both higher education institutions (HEIs) leaders and policy makers in Vietnam.

On the one hand, Vietnamese HEIs' leaders and policy makers should be well aware of the importance of junior faculty mentorship to Vietnamese HEIs' sustainable development, thanks to the benefits this HR development tool offers. First of all, it can help address academic staffing challenges. The high student-to-teacher ratio (STR) in Vietnamese HEIs, as identified by the World Bank (2018), indicates a strain on the quality of teaching and learning. Effective mentoring models can be a strategic response to alleviate this challenge if HEIs leaders acknowledge the role of mentoring in optimizing the capacity of junior faculty members – the key agents of HEIs' sustained development. Secondly, to be able to supply high quality professionals for the nation's targeted economic growth as articulated in the Vietnam 2035 vision, Vietnam's higher education system must strive for both quality and relevance (World Bank, 2012; World Bank, 2018b). Mentoring, as a mechanism for professional development, can directly impact the quality of teaching and research conducted by junior faculty. HEIs leaders should ensure that mentoring programs align with the skills and competencies required for Vietnam's economic development, providing junior faculty with practical insights and industry-relevant knowledge. It is also advisable that Vietnam's policy makers encourage the integration of industry-specific mentoring components within HEIs curricula. Last but not least, as Vietnam seeks to enhance its higher education quality and global competitiveness, internationalization plays a pivotal role. Mentoring can offer junior faculty members exposure to international best practices, pedagogical methods, and research standards. HEIs leaders should foster mentoring relationships that provide access to global perspectives and networks. They should also support the initiatives that encourage international collaborations and exchanges for both mentors and mentees, enriching the local academic environment.

On the other hand, in the discussion of some effective mentoring models in international contexts, several important success factors have been uncovered. These include strong government support, active institutional engagement, structured programmatic approaches, supportive policies, long-term development strategies, and ongoing evaluation and improvement processes.

In light of the international success factors derived from effective mentoring models, Vietnamese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) leaders and policymakers are confronted with crucial implications, particularly within the distinctive context of Vietnam's objectives to achieve targeted economic growth by 2035 and the acknowledged underdeveloped professional and pedagogical competencies among junior faculty. A paramount recommendation involves active advocacy for heightened government support and funding, aligning educational endeavors with the nation's economic goals. Besides, to address the identified competencies gap, the incorporation of structured programmatic approaches within mentorship initiatives is imperative, ensuring a systematic and targeted development process for junior faculty. Furthermore, policy

frameworks supporting mentorship programs must also be crafted and implemented, tailoring guidelines to the specific needs of junior faculty in terms of both professional and pedagogical development. Strategies emphasizing long-term development for faculty, such as continuous professional growth opportunities and mentorship initiatives, should be prioritized, aligning career trajectories with economic growth objectives. The concept of a dual-mentor approach, pairing faculty with mentors from academia and industry, can possibly emerge as a strategic imperative to enhance both professional competencies and practical perspectives. It is also very important to note that attention to contextual nuances is essential, necessitating the tailoring of mentorship programs to address the unique challenges and opportunities within the Vietnamese HEI landscape. Encouraging community engagement and networking opportunities for junior faculty becomes integral, fostering a well-rounded skill set aligned with the economic growth aspirations of the nation. Finally, the establishment of continuous evaluation mechanisms for mentorship programs is imperative, ensuring dynamic responsiveness to the evolving needs of junior faculty and the economic landscape. In synthesizing these implications, Vietnamese HEIs can shape and fortify mentorship initiatives that not only bridge the identified competency gap among junior faculty but also resonate with the nation's economic growth objectives for 2035.

To sum up, mentoring for junior faculty's professional development in Vietnam's higher education is pivotal in addressing the challenges for Vietnam's higher education as identified by the World Bank in its 2020 report. Vietnamese HEIs leaders and policy makers must recognize the significance of mentoring in achieving quality, relevance, and alignment with national development goals. By incorporating mentoring into the higher education landscape and making it an integral part of institutional policies, Vietnam can significantly enhance the capabilities of its junior faculty members and, in turn, the overall quality of its higher education system.

## 6. Conclusion

The extensive literature discussion has unveiled the intricate connection between junior faculty mentoring and the unique challenges and opportunities within Vietnam's higher education sphere, thereby illuminating a clear path for HEI leaders and policymakers. These findings bear significant implications that transcend the academic realm and reverberate into the socio-economic future of the nation. The leaders and policymakers in Vietnam's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) shoulder the weighty responsibility of shaping the nation's academic landscape, and it is incumbent upon them to take heed of these insights.

First and foremost, there is an unequivocal need to recognize the fundamental role played by junior faculty members in shaping the future of higher education in Vietnam. Their dynamism, adaptability, and proficiency in modern knowledge and teaching methodologies are not merely assets but the cornerstones of progress. The essence of nurturing these qualities cannot be overstated. Urgent attention must be directed toward the professional development of junior faculty, particularly in terms of teaching readiness. The suboptimal representation of junior faculty, falling below the recommended 30%, signifies a potential staffing gap as senior faculty members transition into retirement. The consequence of this gap could ripple through the entire educational system, impacting both teaching quality and institutional continuity. To address these concerns, HEIs must be deliberate in investing resources into the professional growth of junior faculty. Tailored support, guidance, and mentorship programs should be thoughtfully implemented to bridge the gap in teaching readiness. This investment will not only ensure a seamless transition as senior faculty retire but also empower junior faculty members to be effective educators. This is a strategic step toward enhancing the quality of education and strengthening the foundation of Vietnam's higher education system.

Furthermore, the literature re underscores the paramount importance of adopting comprehensive definitions of mentoring. The definitions discussed in the review, such as Blackwell's and Kram's, offer foundational guidance. However, these definitions must be adapted diligently to meet the specific needs and objectives of each institution. A shared and comprehensive understanding of mentoring is the cornerstone



for the development of effective mentoring programs that can have a lasting impact on junior faculty members. Another vital dimension lies in the engagement of senior faculty in mentoring programs. The wisdom, guidance, and exemplary role modeling that senior faculty can provide are invaluable resources for junior counterparts. This transfer of knowledge not only enhances the effectiveness of junior faculty but also creates a symbiotic relationship that bolsters the overall teaching and learning environment within HEIs. Promoting a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing among faculty members is of paramount importance. The environment within HEIs should be conducive to mentorship and mutual support, as it not only fosters the development of junior faculty but also strengthens the collective knowledge base and synergy within the institution.

Lastly, it is imperative to align educational strategies with the vision outlined by the World Bank. Such alignment guarantees that Vietnam's educational system is well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the 21st century. This strategic congruence with the World Bank's vision not only secures the educational system but also ensures it is a driving force in the socioeconomic progress of the nation.

*Funding: Le Thi Bich Thuy was funded by the PhD Scholarship Program of the Vingroup Innovation Fund, code VINIF.2023.TS.126.*

## REFERENCES

- [1] Blackwell, J. E. (1989). Mentoring: An action strategy for increasing minority faculty. *Academe*, 75, 8–14.
- [2] Condon, W., Iverson, E. R., Manduca, C. A., Rutz, C., & Willett, G. (2016). *Faculty development and student learning: Assessing the connections*. Indiana University Press.
- [3] Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). Developing professional development schools: Early lessons, challenge, and promise. In M. D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.), *Professional development schools: Schools for developing a profession*. Teachers College Press.
- [4] Finkelstein, M. J., & LaCelle-Peterson, M. W. (1992). New and junior faculty: A review of the literature. In M. A. D. Sagaria (Ed.), *Empowering women: Leadership development strategies on campus* (pp. 39–50).
- [5] Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Corwin Press.
- [6] Hunt, D. M., & Michael, C. (1983). Mentorship: A career training and development tool. *The Academy of Management Review*, 8(3), 475–485.
- [7] Husbands, Ch. T., & Davies, A. (2000). The teaching roles, institutional locations, and terms and conditions of employment of part-time teachers in UK higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 24(3), 337–362.
- [8] Ivey, G. W., & Dupré, K. E. (2022). Workplace mentorship: A critical review. *Journal of Career Development*, 49(3), 714–729.
- [9] Jacobs, J. (2008). Constructing a model for the effective mentoring of music educators. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17(2), 60–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708317645>
- [10] Kram, K. E. (1985). Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life.
- [11] Krueger, P. J. (1999). New music teachers speak out on mentoring. *Journal of Music Education*.
- [12] Lester, V., & Johnson, C. (1981). The learning dialogue: Mentoring. In J. Fried (Ed.), *Education for student development: New directions for student services* (No. 15, pp. 49–56).
- [13] Moore, S. E., Hines-Martin, V. P., & Gattis, M. N. (2020). Paying it forward: The role of senior Black faculty in preparing junior faculty and Black doctoral students for career success. *Journal of Negro Education*, 89(2).

- [14] Moore, K. M., & Amey, M. J. (1988). Some faculty leaders are born women. In M. A. D. Sagaria (Ed.), *Empowering women: Leadership development strategies on campus* (No. 44, pp. 39–50).
- [15] Phuong, T. T., & McLean, G. N. (2016). The experiences of Vietnamese university faculty in relation to their faculty development. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(4), 599–608. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-016-9454-5>
- [16] Salmi, J. (2009). *The challenge of establishing world-class universities*. World Bank.
- [17] Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Century Business.
- [18] Steinert, Y. (2010). Becoming a better teacher: From intuition to intent. In T. Ende (Ed.), *Theory and practice of teaching medicine* (pp. 73–93). American College of Physicians.
- [19] World Bank. (2008). *Vietnam: Higher education and skills for growth*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- [20] World Bank. (2012). *Putting higher education to work: Skills and research for growth in East Asia*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- [21] World Bank. (2018a). *World development report 2018: The changing nature of work*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- [22] World Bank. (2018b). *Vietnam’s future jobs: Leveraging mega-trends for greater prosperity* (Vol. 3). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
- [23] Nguyen, M. L. (2017). Improving the quality of young faculty members today. *Communist Review*. Retrieved from <https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn>
- [24] Pham, D. D. (2019). Some measures to develop career-oriented professional values for young faculty members at military universities. *Journal of Education*, Issue 463 (Special Edition - December 2019), 1–3; 49.
- [25] Pham, T. Q. H. (2021). Developing teaching capacity for young faculty members. *Journal of National Defense and People’s Security*. Retrieved from <http://tapchiquptd.vn>
- [26] Hoàng Anh. (2017). Young faculty members at the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics. Retrieved from <https://sti.vista.gov.vn>
- [27] Dong, T. K. X., & Pham, C. T. (2019). Enhancing the teaching competence of young faculty members in political theory courses at universities in Vietnam today. *Journal of Education*, Special Issue December 2019, 283–287.
- [28] Huyynh, T. B. T. (2017). Current situation of young faculty members’ lecture design skills at the University of Khanh Hoa. *Journal of Education*.