

# The Mediating Role of Mentoring Functions on the Relationship between Job Design and Career Adaptability among Newly Employed Graduates

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**To Link this Article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22230> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22230

**Published Date:** 07 August 2024

## Abstract

This paper deliberately examines the role of mentoring in the relationship between job design and career adaptability among newly employed graduates. The struggle of newly employed graduates to adapt to work challenges and industrial demand impacts crafting current and future careers. The involvement of mentors in designing the job assists newly employed graduates in comprehending their job responsibilities. In response to the study, 200 newly employed graduates had less than two years of work experience. The data is analysed using IBM SPSS software 28.0 through multiple linear regression and PROCESS procedure Version 4.1 by Hayes (2022). The major findings show that mentoring mediates the relationship between job design and career adaptability. The study results also show that there is a direct relationship between job design and mentoring and between job design and career adaptability. The achievement of career adaptability depends strongly on a person's adaptivity to their working surroundings. Compatibility in fulfilling employment requirements facilitates people's unnecessary adjustment to the job. Therefore, organizational support in enhancing people's adaptability through diverse human resource development approaches could lead newly employed graduates to have plans for current and future career trajectories. Consequently, further study could focus on human resource development approaches such as training, promotion, career succession programs, job mobility, job rotation, or coaching to become a mediator or as a predictor for the achievement of career adaptability.

**Keywords:** Job Design, Career Adaptability, Mentoring, Newly Employed Graduates.

**Introduction**

In this twenty-first century, an organisation's working culture must be ready and willing to face any circumstances. Due to the rapid technological changes, the political and global economy requires organisations to adapt to the international and local markets (Hays-index.com, 2020). The ability to adjust quickly to the changes depends on the commitment of the organisation's members (McKenna, 2021). The cooperation between adaptable employees and the organisational management support enables organisations to align with the changes. Therefore, organisations must consistently monitor their productivity in tandem with the changes. To meet the changes, employee job design must be compatible with current industry standards and norms, aligned with current technology and expertise demand (Hernaus et al., 2021; Oldham & Fried, 2016). The complexity of job design, the job demand, and lack of support are challenges for the employees to take part in the changes for the organisation's productivity. Ineffective job design leads to vague job responsibilities for the employees.

The scenario impacting newly employed graduates, with less working experience, and ineffective job design struggles them to thrive in the unprecedented working nature, high working demand and industrial requirements. The current job situation requires newly employed graduates to be capable of doing job responsibilities with little supervision and executing job activities with their knowledge. Unfortunately, as revealed by supervisors in the industries, the mismatch issues and lack of industrial exposure, show that newly employed graduates struggle in their early career transition between education and work (Cheong et al., 2016; Mottain, 2019; Ruzaimi et al., 2019; Vincent, 2020). They are unprepared for the anticipated work environment and misunderstand job responsibilities (Cheong et al., 2016b; Magnano et al., 2021; Tahir et al., 2020). Worsen the scenario, and employers are dissatisfied with their work performance. Their lack of employability skills (D'Silva, 2020; Nadarajah, 2021; Tanius et al., 2020) led them to dissatisfaction with the assigned roles. In addition to their lacked enthusiasm, they are having difficulties engaging with organisation members and show a lack of collaboration and self-confidence in job accomplishment (Cheong et al., 2016; Heang et al., 2019; Nadarajah, 2021).

The difficulties of newly employed graduates with their jobs, widen the gap between them and current employees in the organisation. An unclear understanding of their job design worsens the situation which requires them to perform and succeed in their field. In any circumstances, they must be able to cope and possess an enthusiasm to make them prosper. In particular, the organisation's support is top-notch to assist those newly employed graduates to perform for future success. The vigilant human resource management policy aids the newly employed in achieving a pleasant working environment (Lan & Chen, 2020; Malik & Nawaz, 2021). Designing the comprehended job design with appropriate workflow and work roles facilitates faster task completion and increases productivity. Notably, the job's design and execution must be compatible with the individual's capabilities, implicitly enhancing the organisation's values (Broeck & Parker, 2017). The efficient job design has to be specific to various skills in fulfilling the job structure, tasks, and activities in completing the daily job (Oldham & Fried, 2016).

In the development of job design, important for the organisation to incorporate mentor participation. The mentor can provide insights into the roles, align with the

employee's career aspirations, contribute to the job's practical knowledge and foster collaboration between employees. Subsequently, mentors' participation in the job design process facilitates employee comprehension of the expected level of performance, and mentors' expertise in job design development enhances a deeper understanding of the work process (Anafarta & Apaydin, 2016; Gyansah & Guantan, 2018). The organisation's commitment through human resource management to developing the mentoring function supports the group of newly employed graduates in achieving a favourable and comfortable workplace. The mentor's involvement in job design, mutual relationships, career assistance, and serving as a role model for the mentee would provide newly employed graduates with a clear understanding of the job, working environment, and career requirements (Kram, 1983). Indeed, mentoring is integral to career management methods (Abdullah, 2021). The supportive management engaged with the employees to have a vision of their career progression by realising the organisation's responsibilities which led them to career success (Anafarta & Apaydin, 2016). Thus, undeniably the success of newly employed graduates in conducting their duties with the support of mentors can assist them in thriving in the work environment challenge.

In the meantime, issues on newly employed newly employed graduates thriving in the new working environment acquired them to be well-prepared, concerned, confident, conscious, and in control over their working conditions. They must be adaptable, problem solvers, collaborators, coordinators, and entrepreneurial thinkers (Low et al., 2021; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021; Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, 2019). In coping with technological advancement and a fast-forward working culture, the risen organisation acquires newly employed graduates to align with current and future employees. Subsequently, establishing career adaptability among newly employed graduates in the workplace is necessary to prepare them for unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances (Savickas, 2013). In the face of environmental hurdles, career adaptability is a saviour as a resource for being prepared and able to adapt to occupational circumstances (Klehe et al., 2011; Savickas, 1997; Zacher, 2016). The concept of career adaptability allows people to develop self-regulation in projecting future careers, cope with and predict unpredictable work roles and respond efficiently to unexpected changes. Establishing career adaptability shapes people to readily respond in dealing with career demands and working challenges (Tolentino et al., 2014). However, in establishing career adaptability, people have to integrate between individuals' psychological and surroundings. As such, in the working contexts, newly employed graduates are bound by social, and organisational culture and task responsibility, and the adaptation toward the circumstances comprehend people to fit with the surroundings. In tandem with the situation, organisation support through mentoring functions could help newly employed graduates to fit with their surroundings, thus, this paper deliberately examines the mediating role of mentoring on job design and career adaptability among newly employed graduates.

## **Literature Review**

### *Role of Mentoring*

The functions of mentors in the organisation depend on the organisation's readiness to develop and implement the mentoring policy as one of the human resources management activities. Organisational support is recommended in establishing the employee's commitment to a working relationship (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). The development

of a learning environment between mentors and mentees through the sharing session acts as a self-development program that can pursue individual career goals (Weinberg, 2019). Workplace mentoring demonstrates the readiness to guide mentees to become dependable, demonstrate superior job performance, and commit to their profession (Arora, 2020). Conversely, mentors are also responsible for steering their mentees to meet the performance goals outlined. Mentors' feedback on mentees' performance and recognition of their behaviour toward work engagement enhances the growth of mentees' performance (Gong & Li, 2019). Thus, mentoring roles become an essential component of an organisation's strategy for tying newly employed graduates to the organisation and fostering their trust.

In tandem with the importance of mentoring function in the organisation, this paper establishes a formal mentoring program as a structured program by the organisation in connection with the people in the organisation, knowledge sharing, skills development, and engagement in work environments in the guidance in achieving future goals. Mentoring is part of human resource management activities in the function of the career management program (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Ghosh et al., 2020). Management initiates the program to support employee development. By establishing a standardised and systematic mentoring policy, the company adopted mentoring activities as a component of its training programs (Cai et al., 2020). According to the literature, mentors are senior newly employed graduates who assist junior or inexperienced newly employed graduates in performing competently (Beek et al., 2019; Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Noe, 1988; Son, 2018). Mentors help improve mentees' performance, develop a conducive working culture and increase job satisfaction (Kim & Park, 2020; Wen et al., 2018). Implicitly, formal mentoring activities encourage mentees to believe in themselves by discovering their capabilities (Umukoro & Okurame, 2018). Certain organisations use the informal mentoring framework for formal mentoring. Senior newly employed graduates offer to mentor newcomers to the workforce. Volunteer mentors may choose mentees based on their interests and provide advice on environmental adaptation.

Mentoring practices in an organisation are not new initiatives; they must be done with the cooperation of all members. The one-to-one developmental connection between mentors and mentees has two components: psychological and career mentoring (Kram, 1983). The mentees' comparable psychological acceptance of the mentor as a role model, counsellor, and coach enhances their confidence. At the same time, the mentoring relationship teaches mentees attitudes, behaviour, and values by providing intangible development support for the future (Gyansah & Guantan, 2018). Mentors are encouraged to participate in train-the-trainer events to promote sharing throughout the company. As a result, they can confidently share their knowledge and expertise with their mentees and grasp the necessary information. Once mentees can develop trust, the connection of sharing moments between mentors and mentees will be meaningful.

Due to industrial transformation, a dynamic mentorship relationship helps overcome work-life challenges (Ragins, 2016). Professional mentoring assists in effective career management by guiding the mentees toward professional outcomes (Kanten et al., 2017; Van Vianen, 2018). Peer mentoring sessions between mentors and mentees facilitate independence, emotional resilience, behavioural consistency, physical and vocational improvement, and professional employability growth (Fisher & Stanyer, 2018). In

consideration of newly employed graduates who struggle to thrive in the new work culture, particularly in completing tasks and responsibilities. The psychological and professional support provided by a mentor allows the mentee to confront challenges with more composure.

### **Mentoring as a Mediator between Job Design and Career Adaptability**

The job design is characterised by dimensions of the skill set of variety, the identity of tasks, the task's significance, and autonomy (Dessler, 2020; Hackman & Oldham, 1974). Job design in post-industrial employment is no longer described as a semi-permanent sequence of activities but rather as a responsibility for a specific goal, within which important task actions and interactions fluctuate (Hernaus et al., 2021). According to Van den Broeck & Parker (2017), physical resources such as technical assistance, a comfortable work environment, safety, and ergonomic equipment aid in controlling employees' feelings toward responsibility and duties to achieve meaningful work (Malik et al., 2020) and would be able to show the best attitude in accomplishing the tasks (Inuwa, 2016). The resources mentioned are necessary for the job design as tools for newly employed graduates to complete and achieve tasks with high performance.

Thus, in accomplishing the necessary tasks, guidance from the mentors becomes fundamental support for employees' psychological and physical well-being, workplace safety, and a comfortable work environment, thus, enhancing individual work satisfaction and motivation (Liu et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2021; Rozman et al., 2019). A responsible job scope that interacts with a mentor through guidance and orientation could minimise job defects and implicitly improve job performance (Jiang et al., 2020; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). Despite those relationships, the work engagement between mentors and mentees leads mentees to fit in with the job responsibilities and working culture. The engagement occurs through the efficient job design created by a group of experienced and knowledgeable mentors, making the job design more compatible with execution. A well-designed job with diverse tasks and skills, task significance, autonomy, and feedback enables newly employed graduates to plan their working practices for upcoming duties (Noraini, 2019). On that account, precise job descriptions in the job design preserve job sustainability and efficiency, leading newly employed graduates to positive work behaviour.

As regards newly employed graduates, job demand and result expectations create anxiety and exhaustion (Jiang, 2017; Tahir et al., 2020). Role conflict and ambiguity correspond to their limited adaptation (Kadir et al., 2017). These scenarios make newly employed graduates anxious to find someone they can depend on, specifically for accomplishing tasks. Lack of support may traumatise the early career of newly employed graduates. The complexity and ambiguity of the job design may result in unfavourable perceptions of early employment, making it harder for newly employed graduates to maintain themselves in the labour market that corresponds to their academic knowledge. Thus, mentoring functions in designing the job could establish career adaptability and enable them to thrive in the challenging working environment.

Challenges of newly employed graduates thriving in the new working environment due to the transition between students and career life may affect their early employment. The prior disappointment of a new environment causes them to lose faith in their professional



path plans. Thus the concept of career adaptability by Savickas (1997), assists newly employed graduates in adapting to predictable and unexpected working conditions and tasks. Obtaining a career adaptability viewpoint comprised of self-construction, self-enhancement, and self-regulation allows individuals to exercise control over their lifespan. Self-adjustment dictated by the challenges of a new environment, teammates, and organisational culture receives the practical and emotional assistance required for effective adaptation to the likely result (Chisengantambu et al., 2018; Coetzee et al., 2019; Falola et al., 2020; Moloney et al., 2020; Scanlan et al., 2018; Tageja et al., 2019). According to research by Kaur & Kaur (2020), there is a correlation between career adaptability and person-environment fit, enabling individuals to adjust readily to their jobs, workplaces, and organisations. However, fitting in with a new workplace requires learning about its culture and norms, which may be easier with the help of an experienced advisor. Thus, mentoring assistance as professional guidance to the newly employed graduates tying them to a comfortable and satisfying working environment.

Despite thriving on the working environment challenges and establishing career adaptability, people can fix and revert to circumstances that expose them to feelings of indifference, uncertainty, unrealism, and inhibition toward their career path (Savickas, 2013). Planning of future career paths is shown in the dimension of career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence). Individuals are shaping their future through life concerns having self-belief by controlling their career prospects, desire to seek opportunities by the interest in the future and having confidence in facing any obstacles. As such, career adaptability works beyond the dynamic interaction between a person and environment that leads individuals to adapt to unforeseen future situations, be curious about the possibilities through self-experimentation, actively seek out opportunities, and boldly lead their future careers.

In conjunction with research questions, this paper addressed mentoring's role in the relationship between job design and career adaptability through the hypotheses listed below.

Hypothesis 1: Job design had a relationship with mentoring.

Hypothesis 2: Mentoring had a relationship with career adaptability.

Hypothesis 3: Mentoring mediates the relationship between job design and career adaptability.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework was developed to verify the possible mediating factor. A successful understanding of job design through the assistance of mentoring brings about career adaptability. Career adaptability enables newly employed graduates to thrive in the new working environment. Here is the theoretical model framework,

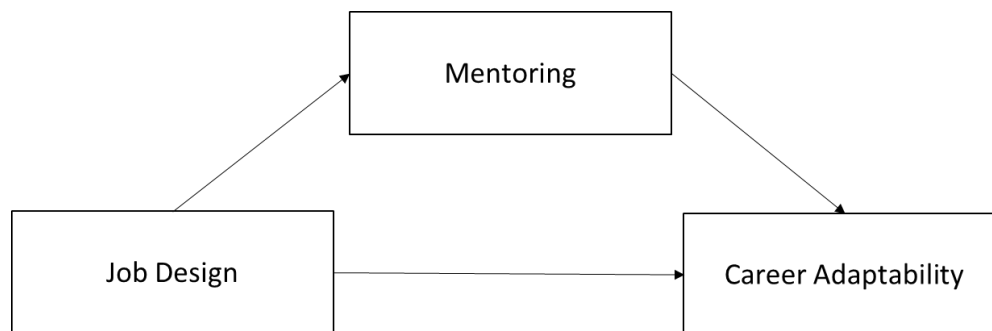


Figure 1. The framework of a study showing the independent variables, the mediator and the dependent variable

## Methodology

### *Participants and Design*

The questionnaire data were collected from July to October 2022 for the employed graduates. An online self-administered questionnaire was used as the method of data collection. There was a random distribution to graduates sent out via the Alumni office. This study focuses on graduates from three clusters: social sciences, business, and law; sciences, mathematics, and computing; and engineering, manufacturing, and construction from selected Malaysian Public Universities. Since career adaptability is significantly related to employability (Kwon, 2019; Monteiro et al., 2020). A lower marketability rate presumes that graduates are less likely to have low career adaptability. Thus, the study participants are 200 employed graduates which would likely provide light on how the career adaptability of graduates works.

### **Study Instruments**

In the questionnaire, there are filtering parts that were employed and unemployed before the respondent could further answer for the next part of the questionnaire. The questionnaire questions were adopted and adapted from prior research. The mentoring questionnaire was adapted from Noe (1988), and the assessment scale incorporates career-related functions with a 0.72 reliability value. A five-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) assesses the mentoring relationship's success. The questions items were "My mentor has encouraged me to develop", "My mentor has inspired me to try new approaches at work", "My mentor can listen to me during our conversation", "My mentor helped me in meeting with new colleagues", "My mentor gave me tasks for me to learn new skills", "I try to replicate the work behaviour of my mentor", "My mentor has interacted with me socially outside of work".

The job design questionnaire was obtained from Hackman & Oldham (1974), a measuring instrument for job diagnosis and assessment of job redesign with a 0.80 reliability value. The job diagnosis questions cover skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, job feedback, and interpersonal interaction. Using a seven-point Likert scale with an anchor ranging from 1 = "very inaccurate", 4 = uncertain, and 7 = "very accurate". Examples of items are "My job requires me to act with my judgment", "The job is important in the broader scheme of things", "My job allows me to complete the work I start", "My manager is constantly providing feedback on my performance" and "The job requires a wide range of advanced skills".

Adapted from Savickas & Porfeli (2012), the Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) has a reliability value of 0.92. Respondents are required to select the most appropriate option for them. The scale has four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. For this thesis following the original version, the Likert scale's value range ranges from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. Respondents are required to select the most appropriate option for them. Examples of the items are "I always think about what my future will be like", "I am aware of the educational and vocational choices to be chosen", "I am concerned about my career", and "I always explore my surroundings".

### Statistical Analysis

The data collected in the study were analysed using IBM SPSS software version 28.0. Thus, analyse the demographic background through descriptive analysis. Multiple linear regression analyses were executed where the standardised regression coefficients and a beta of the independent variable reflected the potential dependent variable, career adaptability. The mediation role of mentoring on the relationship between job design and career adaptability was analysed using a single mediation, the PROCESS procedure Version 4.1 by Hayes (2022). Every analysis was performed using macro 5000 bootstraps to calculate the indirect effects and the 95% confidence interval. All the significance levels tested were with an  $\alpha$  of 0.05. The model used in this macro was model 4 (parallel mediation). This method examines the total effect and the indirect effects of the variable, as a mediator in the relationship of the independent variables (job design and career adaptability).

All steps of assumption of mediating according to Zhao et al (2010), the single mediation relationship except for the indirect effect ( $a_1b_1$ ) of mentoring with job design as a predictor (X) and career adaptability as an outcome variable (Y). The requirements for mediation are tested in regression analysis. In the first step of the statistical analysis, the relationship between X and Y ( $c_1$ ), X and M ( $a_1$ ), and M and Y ( $b_1$ ) to determine the possible mediation. The first assumption is that there is a causal relationship between the X and Y variables, where the X variable precedes the Y variable. In mediation, the X variable needs to precede the mediator variable, and a causal relationship needs to be presented. The second assumption of mediation is that the mediator precedes the Y variables and that there is a causal relationship between these two variables. As such, the relationship between X and Y might be mediated via M.

The direct effect of X on Y is estimated with  $c'_1$ , and the indirect effect of X on Y through M is estimated as  $a_1b_1$ , meaning that the product of the effect on X on M ( $a_1$ ) and the effect of M on Y controlling for X ( $b_1$ ). The direct and indirect effect of X on Y sum to yield the total effect on X on Y ( $c_1$ ), meaning that  $c_1 = c'_1 + a_1b_1$ . The total effect can also be estimated by the direct effect of X on Y when no mediator is included in the regression.

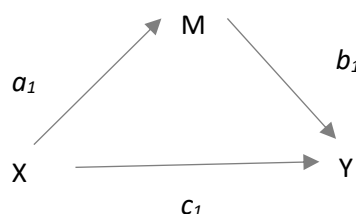


Figure 1.1. Mediation diagram overview



The mediation exists if there is a significant indirect effect ( $a_1b_1$ ). More specifically, partial mediation exists if the direct effect of X on Y remains a significant indirect effect. In turn, full mediation occurs if the direct effect of X on Y is no longer significant with a significant indirect effect. Confidence intervals are used to assess the mediation, and there is no evidence of indirect effects if the confidence intervals cross zero.

## Results

The total number of respondents for this study was 200 newly employed graduates from Malaysian Public Universities. The age of respondents was between 21 to 28 years old. The percentage of females in the population was 62 per cent ( $n = 124$ ), and 38 per cent were males ( $n = 76$ ). The field of the study was staggered into three categories 50.5 per cent ( $n = 101$ ) were from social sciences, business, and law, 27.0 per cent ( $n = 54$ ) from sciences, mathematics, and computing, and 22.5 per cent ( $n = 45$ ) are from engineering, manufacturing and construction background. The employment status showed 76 per cent ( $n = 152$ ) were permanent staff, 17.5 per cent ( $n = 35$ ) were on a contract basis, and 6.5 per cent ( $n = 13$ ) were working temporarily. The monthly income of newly employed graduates ranges between RM1500 to RM4500. They are in job categories 31.0 per cent ( $n = 62$ ) were in fresh/entry-level, 21.5 per cent ( $n = 43$ ) were at junior executive level, 12.5 per cent ( $n = 25$ ) in senior executive, 20.0 per cent ( $n = 40$ ) in managerial and 15.0 per cent ( $n = 30$ ) in the professional level. While, 63.0 per cent ( $n = 126$ ) believe their education is aligned with their job position, and 37.0 per cent ( $n = 74$ ) respond their education didn't align with their job. On the whole, Malaysian employed graduates are involved in job industries of administration and clerical, accounting and auditing, finance, banking, insurance, art, design, entertainment, education, and training, human resources, engineering, construction and property, manufacturing, production, science, research and development, information technology, business, management, project, planning, customer service, public relations, media and communications, sales and marketing, food and beverage, tourism, hospitality, health, beauty, and fitness, legal, public and security, maintenance and repairs, quality assurance, purchasing, procurement and inventory and transportation, and logistics.

In support of the hypotheses, data were analysed using multiple regression analysis to determine the contributions of job design, and mentoring to variation in career adaptability among newly employed graduates. Tables 1, 2 and 3 indicate the SPSS regression coefficients, standard errors, the  $t$  and  $p$  values and the 95% confidence interval of the variables. Table 1 results indicate that the independent variable (job design) is a significant predictor of the dependent variable (career adaptability) ( $\beta, 0.698$ ,  $t = 13.734$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, " $c_1$ " (unstandardised coefficient = 0.435) is statistically significant.

Table 1

*Multiple linear regression for job design on career adaptability*

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients, B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta, $\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	.843	.080		10.508	<.001
JD	.435	.032	.698	13.734	<.001

Note:  $p < .001$ ,  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient,  $t$  value = test statistics of  $\beta$ ,  $R = 0.698$ ,  $R^2 = .488$ ,  $Adjusted R^2 = .48311$

Table 2 shows the independent variable (job design) is also a significant predictor of the mediating variable (mentoring) ( $\beta = 0.530$ ,  $t = 8.789$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). That is “ $a_1$ ” (unstandardised coefficient = 0.465) is a statistically significant

Table 2

*Multiple linear regression for job design on mentoring*

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients, B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients		
			Beta, $\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	1.085	.134		8.110	<.001
JD	.465	.053	.530	8.789	<.001

Note:  $p < .001$ ,  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient,  $t$  value = test statistics of  $\beta$ ,  $R = 0.530$ ,  $R^2 = .281$ , *Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .277

Table 3 shows that while controlling for the independent variable (job design), the mediating variable (mentoring) is a significant predictor of the dependent variable (career adaptability) ( $t = 8.282$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). That is “ $b_1$ ” (unstandardised coefficient = 0.360) is statistically significant.

Table 3

*Multiple linear regression for job design on mentoring*

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients, B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients		
			Beta, $\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	1.065	.102		10.424	<.001
JD	.360	.043	.507	8.282	<.001

Note:  $p < .001$ ,  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient,  $t$  value = test statistics of  $\beta$ ,  $R = 0.507$ ,  $R^2 = .257$ , *Adjusted R*<sup>2</sup> = .254

A bootstrapping method was performed using SPSS Process Macro to examine if mentoring mediated the relationship between job design and career adaptability. Table 4 shows the results of the regression analysis show that job design (independent variable) was a significant predictor of mentoring ( $b = .4646$ ,  $t = 8.7890$ ,  $p < .001$ ). By controlling the mentoring (mediator), the results of the second regression analysis show that job design significantly predicts career adaptability ( $b = 0.3721$ ,  $t = 0.0365$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). The result of the indirect effect based on 5000 bootstrap samples shows a significant relationship between job design and career adaptability mediated by mentoring ( $a*b = 0.0629$ , bootstrap  $CI_{95} = 0.0188$  and  $0.1804$ ). Therefore the outcome of the analysis indicates job design as a predictor of career adaptability, it enhances the functions through the precedents of mentoring as a mediator.

Table 4

*Results of the PROCESS method to analyse mediation by mentoring*

	Beta, <i>b</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% interval	Confidence
JD → Mentoring	0.4646	0.0529	8.7890	0.000	0.3604	0.5689
JD → Career adaptability	0.3721	0.0365	10.2025	0.000	0.3001	0.4440
JD → mentoring → career adaptability	0.1354	.0416	3.2573	0.0013	0.0534	0.2174
<b>Effects</b>						
Direct	0.3721	0.0365	10.2025	0.0000	0.3001	0.4440
Indirect	0.0629	0.0232			0.0188	0.1804
Total	0.4350	0.0317	13.7343	0.0000	0.3725	0.4975

The outcomes of this study affirm the hypothesis of this study. Table 2 demonstrates that job design had a relationship with mentoring, hence supporting hypothesis 1. While the results shown in Table 3 demonstrate that mentorship affects career adaptability, support Hypothesis 2. Table 4 provides further evidence that mentorship mediates the relationship between job design and career adaptability, thereby confirming hypothesis 3.

### Findings and Suggestions

By examining the mediator of mentoring, this study's results are consonant with past studies that have shown that mentoring assists newly employed graduates thriving in the organisation. Mentors' involvement in designing the job leads to employees' career adaptability. Through mentoring commitment in the job, the newly employed graduates are capable of adjusting to various unanticipated environments and thus assist them through their work transition and professional development (Martin, 2022; Whitehead et al., 2022). The relationships between mentors and mentees improve mentees' involvement in the organisation, indeed achieving their identity in the organisation (Arora, 2020). As consonant to the work and job challenge, past studies have proven the commitment of the mentors in giving guidance to the mentees in supervising their job performance, generating adequate and effective job design can minimise the work defect for maximising performance (Jiang et al., 2020; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017).

Despite understanding job responsibilities, mentors' assistance in guiding professional development, especially in the early career, has to be considered further. This has to be played a role by the organisation through human resource management policy in establishing mentoring as a vital part of the organisation. By fully comprehending the job design with the involvement of mentors, the newly employed graduates are ready and prepared for the unanticipated and predictable working environment. The undertaking of job responsibilities and job fulfilment through the assistance of mentoring helps newly employed graduates to easily adapt to the job responsibilities. Mentors' assistance enhances to creation of a contented working environment that eases them to success in job performance.

Even though it has been shown that mentors may assist workers, mentoring policies were uncommon in the human resource operations of Malaysian organisations. This indicates that Malaysian organisations lack supervisor assistance, and the assistance provided depends

on the considerations of the seniors and supervisors (Lasi et al., 2020 and Malek & Bakar, 2020). Due to no rule or code of conduct mandating the adoption of mentors in the organisation, the naive approach of human resource management through mentoring is an ideal practice to manage talent structurally and develop to persist them in the organisation for the benefit of the organisation.

Thus, future research may further explore human resource development activities to enhance the relationship between personal and career adaptability. A prior study had mediated training of individual personalities on career exploration and career planning (Green et al., 2020), and implicitly career adaptability could achieve career exploration and career planning. Thus, further study on training as a mediator of individuals on career adaptability could be done. Other than that, further studies can be done in mediating individuals' human resource development activities on career adaptability, such as promotion, career succession, job mobility, job rotation or coaching. The organisation's career management practices improve organisational profitability, competitiveness and employees' organisational commitment (Wesarat, 2014). In addition, additional research on organisation leadership might be undertaken in order to facilitate career adaptation between people and their working environment.

Even though the current working world has shifted organisational career management to career self-management, in which individuals manage their careers. Newly employed graduates still depend on organisational career management to manage their successful careers. By incorporating newly employed graduates in organisational decision-making through job autonomy, newly employed graduates would likely perceive the wider picture of their career development. The structural program may assist the newly employed graduates in gaining a deeper understanding of themselves, hence aiding in the development of a career path in which they would be able to make career decision-making. Therefore, organisations' career management strategies are crucial in people's careers. Individuals have to enhance self-proficiency in achieving successful career success; mediating with organisational and environmental support could lead to career adaptability to gain a future professional career.

### **Implications of the Study**

This study provided evidence that mentoring mediates the relationship between job design and career adaptability among newly employed graduates in Malaysia. There are some distinct contributions to the literature on the career adaptability concept. Adaptivity derives from people's self-competencies construct and their surroundings that become an experience to make a future decision. The remains unanswered contextual factors (the surroundings) and personal adaptivity in establishing career adaptations (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Ocampo et al., 2020; Rudolph et al., 2019) this study's results contribution to the literature of mentoring on job design to achieve career adaptability. Additionally, this study result become contribution factors of personal adaptivity in job design to establish career adaptability.

As such, from a managerial perspective, top management plays the most prominent role in designing efficient job design, by involving the roles of mentors in job design. In consonant with that, human resource management policy had to be precise, especially in the aspects of employees' having a clear view of their career path. The organisation's members,

management, and human resources personnel must be committed to supporting the newly employed graduates to adapt to the unprecedented working environment. Providing efficient job design encourages the newly employed to thrive in unpredicted working conditions.

### **Conclusion**

Mentoring activities in an organisational career management practice have proven to have an impact on employees' career satisfaction, organisation commitment, and job involvement, and enhance job performance. The mentoring relationship between mentor and mentee, develops the organisation having a competitive advantage in achieving organisational objectives. By implementing structured and formal mentoring activities, the mentoring policy might aid workers who rely on their superiors or supervisors to thrive, maintain, and advance their careers. Subsequently, this study result is consonant with past studies that revealed mentoring mediates the relationship between job design and career adaptability. The mediating factor of mentoring between job design and career adaptability shows that Malaysian newly employed graduates can opt for the work roles and meet the job demand. The presence of mentoring enhances further their career adaptability achievement. Thus, the commitment to mentor guidance in career planning via the reciprocal exchange of relationship experience.

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