

9 ICLICE 2018-046 Kittiwana Sinthunava

## **Developing Peer Mentoring Model for Academic Positions :A Case Study at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Phranakhon Rajabhat University (PNRU) is recognised as the first tertiary institution established for educating teachers in Thailand .For more than 135 years, PNRU has been recognised as the leading teacher training school .Although this reputation and acceptance has been established, this alone will not maintain the university's competency unless PNRU understands how to encourage staff to keep up with rapidly changing technology .This includes the demand of both students and the workplaces, including the enhancement of staff member's psychosocial wellbeing .The purpose of this paper is to examine the practice of peer mentoring at PNRU as a means to support and maintain personal values and the performance of academics. It is essential for academic staff to become successful in terms of university standards .Through the recording of in-depth interviews, the analysing of written reflective journals between mentors and mentees, the conducting of focus groups and writing of case summaries, the theme of peer mentoring emerged .There are many types of mentoring, but traditionally a mentoring program involves an experienced mentor who offers support to a young mentee .However, it has been found that the successful practice of peer mentoring at PNRU is based on trust and an equal relationship between the mentor and mentee .The concept of partnership, strong mutual respect and commitment between the mentor and mentee are the most effective practices for professional development .The external factors, such as a lack of university support and financial resources can delay the successful program of the peer mentoring practice .This is possible not only at the university, but within any workplace .With the lack of internal factors that are more significant, such as willingness to learn, to change, and to engage in peer mentoring practices, both the mentor and mentee will be unable to either continue their professional development or increase their learning journey, including an inability to achieve the university standards .

*Keywords* :Peer Mentoring, Academic Positions, PNRU, Teacher College

### **Introduction**

Being recognized as the leading teacher training school in Thailand, Phranakhon Rajabhat University )PNRU (wants to encourage all the academic staff to achieve their higher academic positions and set their quality of teaching and learning to the same standards as other established universities .There are many workshops that have been provided throughout the years to support academic staff to achieve the university's objectives .However, there are still some academic staff who have participated in those workshops at PNRU, but were unable to achieve as much as they had planned .In fact, a few of them perceived their participation as having no advantage to their skills or overall career .It has become an issue for the PNRU's university administrators to reconsider the way they have supported academic staff to achieve their goals .It is very important that every academic staff member is provided the opportunity

to choose any of the developmental programs that are suitable for their career growth) Hudson, 2013 .(Each individual is different in terms of their characteristics, interests, capacities, skills and knowledge .The general training programs that are offered to everyone at the university may not be suitable for establishing the full competency of all the academic staff .This might limit the development of their professional skills, preventing them from reaching the standards of the university) Aspors & Fransson, 2015 .(Consequently, it might be a good time at PNRU to try a new technique, such as the peer mentoring model, so to motivate academic staff to achieve new goals and challenge themselves to being more competitive with those from other universities.

The idea of using a peer mentoring technique to increase the capacity of academic staff had been suggested following the faculty meeting on the topics of academic performance evaluation in January, 2017 .Data from the meeting showed that more than half of the young academic staff were unable to attain the outcomes suggested by participating in these professional development programs, especially the accomplishment of the higher academic positions and reaching the minimum standards of the Office of Higher Education Commission )OHEC(, Thailand) Office of Higher Education Commission, 2015 .(Many faculties discussed these outcomes and suggested that in order to solve these problems, each faculty may need different workshops and training programs .It was also suggested that the university should support any research projects that aim to increase the number of academic positions .In accordance with that university policy, this study was funded to discover how to increase the number of academic positions offered at PNRU by using the peer mentoring model .

### **Purpose of the study**

It is obvious that every university wants to increase the number of academic positions to meet the standard of the OHEC, with many workshops and training programs provided to support and encourage academic staff to gain the higher academic positions) Morley, 2014.( The major focus of this study was to examine the practice of peer mentoring at PNRU as a means to support, the maintenance personal values and the performance of academics. The new challenges of higher education institutions in Thailand have been increasing in order to meet the same standards as other universities within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations )ASEAN.( Currently, students can transfer their credits of study and choose to work after their graduation in any ASEAN countries) Paryono, 2011 .(It can be said that the wider the opportunity for everyone who belongs to ASEAN countries, the higher the quality of requirements that are needed for a university to achieve and maintain financial stability in the new environment) Feuer & Hornidge, 2015 .(

### **Objectives**

There are two major objectives of this study .Firstly, to understand the current situations of academic staff who want to achieve higher academic positions .Secondly, to understand how to implement the peer mentoring model, so to support and encourage academic staff to effectively achieve professional development .

### **The significance of this study**

This study will focus on supporting academic staff who had previously participated with the trainings programs at the university for many years, but had failed to achieve the higher academic positions so to have other options available for them to be successful. It is obvious that the results from this study will provide understanding to the university administrators and create a peer mentoring model that can be motivated by academic staff who had been left behind, to now gain more success in their careers.

### Theoretical framework

This study is an example of the peer mentoring model, within the wider framework of the action research cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a, 1988b). (There are four steps to develop the peer mentoring model in this study. Step one is titled “Plan”. The researcher had to prepare the information and design the appropriate peer mentoring model. The step of plan was including the environmental and participants’ behavior analysis, in order to design the appropriate plan for individual professional development. Step two is titled “Act”. During this step, the researcher had to make sure that everything that had been written on the step one “plan” was completed properly and correctly. If there were any mistakes because of the researcher being unable to transfer the “plan” into “act” or due to incorrect practices, the researcher had to report those mistakes or limitations in the reflective journal and bring that information to the next meeting so to discuss this again with the participants.

Step three is titled “Observe”. It was very important to observe the changes in the participants’ behavior after implementing the plan into act. The key success factors of conducting action research are the abilities of the researcher to not only observe the behavior of the participants, but also to understand those behaviors. Every step of the peer mentoring process is based on the understanding between the mentor and the mentee. Often recognized as a slow process, with the interaction creating the relationship and the adjustment of mentoring techniques so to support the encouragement of the mentee to progress forward and achieve their goals. The objective of peer mentoring is focusing on changing academic staff behavior to become a higher performance staff and meet the standard requirements of the OHEC. The step of “observe” needs to be practiced both from the outside by the researcher and from within by the participants.

The final step is titled “Reflect”. This step had been used as the significant of feedback information so to improve the peer mentoring model in order to provide better support and encourage academic staff in the right direction. Each academic staff member has different characteristics to their advantage. Moreover, the needs and motivation by which these can be used to develop themselves can vary significantly between staff. The “reflect” step can help the researcher to understand the priority of each individual and adjust the “plan” so to start over again and try out the new four steps. To check and recheck their progress again, until the peer mentoring model has been implemented successfully. Without the “reflect” step, the researcher cannot fully develop the appropriate plan and bring that plan into practice.

During the four steps of “plan, act, observe, and reflect” there were other factors that caused problems to develop when using the peer mentoring model effectively, with some of them being out of the control of the researcher. These included a lack of financial support to run the peer mentoring workshop, the life style of the participants that slowed down their improvement and created a negative attitude, and the low motivation of some participants in order to develop themselves. These factors can interrupt the achievement of academic staff to meet the standards of the university and the OHEC. However, after 12 months of the peer mentoring workshop, it can be seen that the integration of the action research cycles theory and the peer mentoring concept have reduced those uncontrollable factors, having a small impact on the achievement of academic staff. The most advantages of using the continuous process of action research cycles is that this peer mentoring model can support those academic staff who want the longer period of support and help from the mentors.

The four steps of “plan, act, observe, and reflect” had been performed time and again. The actions of these cycles were repeated until the outcomes were the same, with there being no other method for improving the outcome (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). (These actions created a long-term relationship between the mentor and the mentee, with the benefit to the university being to have established the idea of sustainable development for academic staff. It

can be said that every university has been surrounded by a lot of knowledgeable and skillful people and most of them are capable of helping and supporting others .It is worthy to build a network among academic staff who are specialized in different areas or co-ordinate a group of academic staff who hold the same interests to create a friendly atmosphere and maintain the highly subjective wellbeing of the working environment .

### Methodology

Qualitative research method and case study had been used as a research methodology to collect the data .The participants had been recruited from every faculty, with there being a total of five participants from the five different faculties .The consent forms had been signed by each of the participants who wanted to take part in this study .The ethic approval application form had been granted by the PNRU ethic committees in 2017 .The data had been gathered from January to December 2017, with a total of 12 months of data being collected and separated into four cycles .Each cycle had been divided into four steps following the action research approach .The four steps had been composed of “step one :plan, step two :act, step three :observe, and step four :reflect ”with the feedback from the final step assessed before restarting the process again as the new cycles .These actions were repeated until stable results were recognised .Every month since January until December 2017, the researcher conducted each of the in-depth interviews with the five participants .The interview questions had focused on their problems and feelings towards the peer mentoring program .The average period of time that each in-depth interview with the participants took to conduct was around two hours in length. The transcripts of the in-depth interview had been sent to each participant to verify the correctness and understanding of the researcher’s interpretation before using the analysis process .This consisted of three steps; open coding, categorization and abstraction )Elo & Kyngas, 2008 .(

The observation of each participant was conducted through the writing of the reflective journal .Both the participant and researcher had observed the behavior changed during 12 months of each participant and reflected those changes into the writing journal .The criteria for the writing journal were set after consideration by the researcher and the mentors, who had been providing the support and were involved in the peer mentoring system .The data from each in-depth interview and the reflective writing journal had been integrated by a careful reading procedure, followed by an inductive review process of the results .The research questions were highlighted to discover the key metaphors, ideas, concepts and were coded as emerging themes. Systematic reviews of published research were conducted from December 2010 to December 2017, with a focus on the search terms mentor, peer mentoring, mentee, professional development, academic positions, higher education, teacher training, ASEAN, OHEC, Thailand, action research, and quality assurance .The selection process was conducted in two separate phases .Firstly, it was a review of titles and abstracts .Secondly, it was a consideration of the full text articles .The data from each in-depth interview, observations by using reflective writing journal, content analysis from the journals ’peer-review processes, and a qualitative check by the researcher was included .All of them considering what is relevant to the developing of the peer mentoring model at PNRU for academic positions .The identified studies were critically reviewed, and the usefulness of the studies were evaluated with the triangulation technique .Thereafter, a more systematic coding and categorization method was conducted .The pieces of data from each case study were compared for similarities and differences .To validate the analysis process, the researcher analyzed the data separately .First by using the transcripts that had been recheck with the participants and then by discussing the codes and the categories .

### Literature review

There are many research articles that have focused on the mentoring concept in order to support and promote professional development around the world. Most of them are using qualitative methodology and action research as an approach (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015). Providing the right technique for professional development have been the important issues for the university administrators (Tang & Choi, 2005). (The example of using mentoring concept for professional development can be seen in many research papers such as the study of Stanulis and Ames (2009), which was based on professional development in mentor groups. Attained by setting up the meeting for the mentors each month, or in another case of providing the online mentor courses for teacher mentors) McCracy & Mazur, 2010. (A study that focused on how to practice mentoring by using the mentoring online system) Sinclair, 2003. (Moreover, there are a lot of studies that use the combinations of short courses, workshops and sustained support in internship while conducting the mentoring process) Koballa et al., 2010. (There is no doubt that the mentoring system and organizing of the mentoring workshop have become the important tools to increase the university's standards) Jones & Brown, 2011. (Academic staff are the key success factors for the university, so to maintain the reputations and attract the new and qualify students to enroll at the university) Hemmings, Hill & Sharp, 2013. (However, when considering the developing professional skills by implementing peer mentoring, it is necessary to identify the definition of the term peer mentoring before progressing on to further discussion. Although for more than 40 years there have been many research papers conducted on this topic, there is still not an agreed definition upon which the term "mentoring" or any single theoretical concept of mentoring has been accepted worldwide) Jones & Brown, 2011.

When searching for the mentoring model that has been implemented at the university, two major mentoring models were discovered. The first model is titled; "the traditional model of mentoring", which explains the relationship between an experienced mentor who holds a higher academic position and a young academic position, acknowledged as a protégé (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Harvey et al., 2009; Higgins & Kram, 2001). (The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is hierarchical and the knowledge is from the mentor to mentee) Jones & Brown, 2011. (It is a rather common practical way at the tertiary level where the advance wisdom and skills of the senior faculty staff have been assigned to support the young academic staff member who needs to develop themselves) D'Abate & Eddy, 2008. (The second model is titled; "the reciprocal model of mentoring", which has increasingly come to be acknowledge in this decade) Bryant & Terborg, 2008; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Jones & Brown, 2011; Ragins & Kram, 2007. (The problems of using the traditional model of mentoring arises with the willingness to exchange the knowledge and benefits between the mentor and the mentee. It can be seen that the top-down relationship between the mentor and the mentee has caused the benefits only to the protégé alone. Because the higher power academic staff, who are always providing support and sharing their expertise with the younger member have the feeling that they have been investing their time and their effort to support the protégé to achieve their goals and career outcome without investing anything back in return to the mentor) Bell -Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Harris, Freeman & Aerni, 2009.

The inequality of power and the amount of dedication in the traditional model of mentoring has delayed the mentoring process and sometimes both of the participants have not found any outcomes by remaining in the traditional mentor relationship (Allen, 2007; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Haggard et al, 2011). (The advantages of using the reciprocal model of mentoring have been mentioned in many research papers. For example, it has taken out the idea of top-down relationship and the one-way benefits that only started from the mentor to the mentee) Allen, 2007; Pololi & Knight, 2005. (On the other hand, the reciprocal model has recognized the mutual relationship between the mentor and the mentee, and how both parties can work

collaboratively for the benefits of all the stakeholders )Harris, Freeman & Aerni, 2009 .(The advantages of the mentee being in the flat structure relationship of the reciprocal mentoring model are the freedom of making their own decisions .It is depended on the mentee to choose what is good for them .The mentor has shown the respect and privacy to the mentee )Harris, Freeman & Aerni, 2009.( Moreover, the benefits for the mentor by helping the mentee to achieve career-outcome and psycho-social wellbeing can be seen both in their inner mindfulness and within the friendly workplace environment )Jacobi, 1991; Kochan & Trimble, 2000; Langer, 2010.(

### **Findings**

The data from the in-depth interview, observations by using the reflective writing journals and the content analyses from the systematic reviews of published academic journals had been discussed into the processes of open coding, categorization and abstraction. There are two parts of the findings that follow the research questions .Part one provides the background information of the five participants and explored the current situations by which individuals fit within and adjust to their changing environment at the university .Part two has been involved in a series of their progress of achieving higher academic positions and their relationship with their mentors .Data obtained from the in-depth interview, the follow-up correspondence between mentor and mentee, document analysis, and filed observation both from the researcher writing reflective journal and the five participants reflective journal were used in five collective case studies )Hemmings, Kay, Sharp & Taylor, 2012; Lim & Barnes, 2005; Sekiguti, 2004; Sharp, Hemmings, Kay & Callinan, 2012; Stake, 2005 .(Using five case studies for examining a phenomenon and general condition has been widely adopted in higher education contexts )Lim & Barnes, 2005.( The data set for the collective case study was derived from five participants and the outcomes of developing the peer mentoring program .The five interrelated themes identify common features in the developing of the peer mentoring model at PNRU and how each participant had coped with the new environment of OHEC and the university's standards .The results showed that there are three following themes :partnership commitment, university mentoring context, and the theory in practice .These were found after the preceding steps of a content analysis, and the integration of results.

#### **Part One :General information and current situation at PNRU**

The demographic characteristics of the five participants can be seen in Table 1 below . The participants had been chosen from the five different faculties .All of them had shown the willingness to participate in this study and had agreed to provide all the information and the writing of their reflective journals during their participation in the peer mentoring program . However, to protect the real identity of the five participants, all the names in this study had been coded to the English names instead .

Table 1

*Background information of the five participants*

Name	Age	Status	Gender	Faculty	Academic Position
Anthony	50	Single	Male	Management and Social Science	Lecturer
Benjamin	47	Single	Male	Industrial Technology	Lecturer
Christian	36	Single	Female	Humanities Social Science	Lecturer
Grace	48	Single	Female	College of Teacher Education	Lecturer
Jasmine	53	Married	Female	Science and Technology	Assistant Professor

The five participants reported the current situation of their professional development at the university. The support and challenges that had been encountered during their work at their faculty, including the environmental change in the higher education in Thailand and in ASEAN countries have impacted their career growth. Table 2 provides the similarities and differences of the five participants in relation to those categories.

Table 2

*The environmental change that impacted to the professional development at PNRU*

Name	Teaching experience	Access to the training workshop for academic positions	Teaching load per week	Administrative position
Anthony	10 years	3 workshops	12 hours	The head of the Department
Benjamin	20 years	1 workshops	9 hours	Dean
Christian	5 years	1 workshops	18 hours	The head of the Department
Grace	7 years	2 workshops	18 hours	The head of the Master program
Jasmine	25 years	2 workshops	12 hours	The head of the Bachelor program

The data from Table 1 and Table 2 represents the general information and current situation at PNRU. The findings show that the five participants had already taken part in the training workshops for academics at the university to their full capacity. Especially for Anthony, who had taken his time to attend the three workshops in one year, which had been causing him some frustration that he was unable to achieve an academic position, no matter how many times he tried. Anthony had been working at the university for more than 10 years and had been focusing on achieving the higher academic position since the day he started working. However, with a high working load, including both teaching and administrative requirements every week, he found himself feeling exhausted when returning home. He was unable to feel positive about getting started and participating in additional academic work to achieve higher academic positions.

The situation of Anthony is similar to the rest of the faculty members at PNRU, including the other participants in this study. They have many things to do on their hands, with them having taken responsibilities to their family and the university before paying attention to their career achievement. The five participants must take care of their parents, who are retired and staying in their home. During their free time, with the need to care for their parents, many

of their weekends are spent performing actions, such as taking their parents to attend a doctor's appointments. Four of the participants are single and have no children. Although they have to dedicate this time for their friends and family, as Jasmine is married with three children, additional time is also needed for her to look after her children. When considering their gender and age, it appears that they are facing the same problems. It does not matter whether they are male or female, aged below 35 or over 50 years. Each of the five participants were unable to achieve their higher academic positions, with the different faculties and different administrative positions not creating any opportunities to develop their careers. Table 1 demonstrates that only Jasmine was able to attain the academic position as the assistant professor. This being a position that she had gained before having her third child, which means that she has held the same position for 12 years and has not study doctoral degree.

During the time that the other four participants; Anthony, Benjamin, Christian and Grace, were studying their doctoral degree, Jasmine spent the same period developing her academic positions by writing two text books and publishing her research papers. However, after she got the title of assistant professor placed in front of her name, she found that it was unlikely that she would gain a higher academic position than this one. With the amount of teaching and administrative responsibilities and time dedicated to caring for her elderly parents and three young children, she does not have enough time to contemplate and plan for any higher academic positions.

### Part Two :Developing the peer mentoring model

The themes were developed around the in-depth interview, observations and the writing of the reflective journal. It was found that the developing of the process of the mentoring model to help and encourage the participants to achieve their academic position was followed by the action research cycles; plan, act, observe and reflect. However, the journey to become a successful academic in their career outcome is a very personal process. The three following themes :partnership commitment, university mentoring context, and theory in practice seems to play a significant role in developing the peer mentoring model that influences the motivation and capacity of the academic achievement. In this study, the five case studies from each participant will be presented in the three themes above in order to provide the specific events and circumstances of the peer mentoring model that had impacted on the progress of professional development. Table 3 shows the summary of each case study in the three major themes.

Table 3

*The major themes in developing the peer mentoring model at PNRU*

Case study	Major themes		
	partnership commitment	university mentoring context	theory in practice
Anthony	Very important	Important	Very Important
Benjamin	Important	Very important	Very Important
Christian	Very important	Very important	Very important
Grace	Very important	Very important	Very Important
Jasmine	Important	Very important	Very important

### Partnership commitment

Three participants had indicated that the partnership commitment between the mentor and the mentee was very important for developing the peer mentoring model. The further two participants also recognized importance in quality of the partnership. The partnerships that had



been identified in this study can also be recognized as a relationship during the peer mentoring process. All of the participants reported that the reciprocal relationship is better for supporting the peer mentoring process than the top –down relationship. The higher power and authority of the mentor in this workplace environment might be a good tool for controlling the mentee to follow their orders. However, it might not be the best action for maintaining the long-term process of professional development and positive attitudes towards the mentor, including the creation of a sustainable friendly environment at the university.

The feeling that they are partners who will encourage each other to learn and share their experiences is the most effective way for developing their career outcomes. The willingness between the mentor and the mentee to work as a team towards their academic positions has provided the understanding and trust among them. The mentor reported that the partnership and commitment of the mentee had motivated them to provide more support and to feel very proud of themselves for helping the mentee to achieve their goals. When the mentor had given their suggestions to the mentee, they found that it is not only the mentee would have benefited from their suggestions. It was found that the mentor, who had given these suggestions had also learnt from the journey of the mentee's career growth.

### **University mentoring context**

The second theme from the results was based on the university's policies and the concept of mentoring that had been implemented during the peer mentoring process. Four of the five participants reported that this theme is very important. Only Anthony noted the university support and the mentoring context as being important. The reflective writing journal of the participants confirmed that the university's support for workshop training and professional development are very significant factors for the success of their academic careers. Without the university providing relevant support, such as financial funding to organize the training workshops, the policy to reduce the teaching load or administrative jobs for academic staff who want to write textbooks or teaching documents, and the establishment of research funding and scholarship for academic staff who want to conduct research and publish their articles, this will not be possible.

All of these supports are very important in the process of professional development. Most of the universities in Thailand have already provided these supports, including at PNRU. However, without the mentoring concept to motivate academic staff to access these university supports, it might not be as beneficial to academic staff as was expected by the university. The context of mentoring is working with individual academic staff members that have unique characteristics and experience different life-styles. It can be designed to adjust to their different demographics and personal requirements. The peer mentoring model that had been implanted in this study was a useful model for the university to consider the highlights along with all the university's supporting policies.

### **Theory in practice**

Five of the participants strongly agreed that the success of developing a peer mentoring model to support higher academic positions was dependent on the theory in practice of the peer mentoring model. In this study, the four steps of the action research cycles have played important roles as the guideline for developing the peer mentoring model. In each cycle, the peer mentoring model had been developing into the four steps; step one :plan, step two :act, step three :observe, and step four :reflect) see Figure 1.(

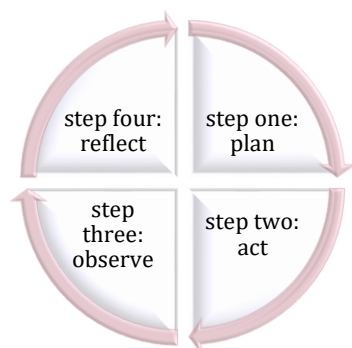


Figure 1 The cycle of developing the peer mentoring model

In the study, each cycle took around three months to complete the four steps .The feedback and the problems observed from the previous cycle were discussed and adjustments were made before starting the next cycle in order to develop the most appropriate and effective peer mentoring model )see Figure 2 .(

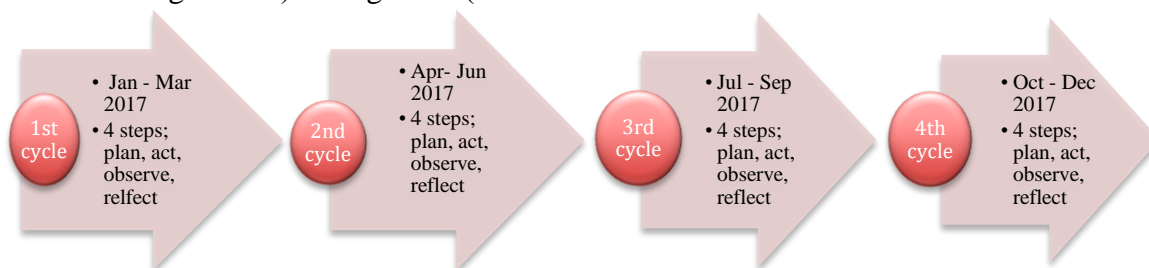


Figure 2 The process of 4 cycles in developing the peer mentoring model from Jan –Dec 2017

Before starting each of the cycles of the peer mentoring model, the researcher was required to bring all of the feedback from the five participants to a meeting with their mentors . The role of the mentor, who was involved in the action research cycles was to discuss and analyze the findings with the five participants again, so to determine the best plan for achieving their goals .To adjust a plan for the next phase of the peer mentoring model, the researcher found that each of the participant experienced different difficulties when following the plan . The wonderful plan will not hold any stability if the researcher cannot transfer the plan into practice .During the peer mentoring process, the researcher had observed the five participants and the peer mentoring process, whether it had been moving into the right direction and was following the plan .It had depended on the university environment and the situation of each circumstance in order to implement the plan into action .

During the second step, the five participants had scheduled to meet with their mentors and discuss their own favored style .Each meeting was designed to suit with their characteristics and conveniences relevant to both mentor and mentee .The researcher had played the role of coordinator and supporter to check that the second phase was following the plan .Then the actual meeting of the peer mentoring program would be organized and designed by the mentee in order to suit their requirements .It being the mentee's responsibility to make decisions about when the meeting would occur and the length of each meeting ,including where the meeting was to take place .For example, Christian and Grace always had the weekly appointments with their mentors at one of the restaurants around their lunch times .This being because they would love to discuss their circumstances while eating a delicious meal .They

said that for them, the environment created more efficiency and relaxation when talking about their problems and whilst eating their delicious lunches at the same time.

The idea of reflection occurring after the three steps of plan, act and observe had occurred in each cycle. Before the researcher started the next cycle, the reflection from the outcomes of the previous three steps had been discussed with the participants along with all the data being analyzed and read carefully. The mistakes and the benefits gained from the first cycle are what influenced the changes and adjustments made in the process to design the best new four steps in the second cycle. All the feedback from the second cycle had been analyzed and adjusted for the better processing of the new four steps in the third cycle. The outcomes from the third cycle had been compared with the first and second cycle. The fourth cycle had shown that the outcomes had not changed from the third cycle and the researcher had developed the completed four steps of the peer mentoring model that cannot be adjusted or changed to anything further than this structure see (Figure 2)

### **Discussion**

This study aimed to understand how to develop the peer mentoring model, so to support academic staff to achieve higher academic positions. The results showed that the most important factors to encourage academic staff to continue their professional development are composed of three important factors. The first factor is the strong relationship between the mentor and the mentee, who are working in a partnership. This includes their strong commitment to support each other and the desire to achieve their goals. The mentor and the mentee must develop the mutual benefits whilst maintaining a positive attitude, and believe that by helping each other, both will benefit from their actions. The second factor is the university policy and the mentoring context. The university has played the important roles to create the environment of learning and sharing. By providing the important resources and funding to facilitate the peer mentoring program, both the mentor and mentee will be able to follow their career growth and participate in the peer mentoring program more efficiently. The final factor is the implementation of the theory and bringing the theory into practice. The concept of peer mentoring can be achieved by a continuous improvement plan of the action research cycle. It is important that the peer mentoring coordinator, who has organized the peer mentoring program reviews these factors and brings all the feedback from the previous cycle into the following meeting to adjust and improve the next cycle. As the environment changes all the time, it is appropriate for the peer mentoring model to adapt to the new environment and become suitable for the next cycle. Moreover, the peer mentoring model has been designed to serve the needs of the individual academic staff. It is important to identify the differences of their backgrounds, motivations, characteristics, and needs of both the mentor and mentee. It cannot be assumed that 'one size fits all' in the development of the peer mentoring program model.

### **Limitations**

The five case studies provided a deep understanding and explored the feelings that the five different academic staff members experienced during the peer mentoring program. It highlighted how to develop a peer mentoring model that would be more effective for promoting them into the higher academic positions. However, it is accepted that the problems of working at the university have been recognized in more than this study. If further research can be conducted on how to maintain the sustainable professional development and increase their subjective well-being, this would offer more information for the university's administrative staff on how to manage a better workplace within the university.

### Conclusion

The peer mentoring model that was developed at PNRU has shown that each academic staff member who had participated in the study experienced a strong variety of needs and characteristics. The index or measurement to see whether this peer mentoring model has been successful is evident through the numbers of academic positions that had been increased after the participants had taken part in this peer mentoring programs. The best peer mentoring model that should be offered to help them needs to be designed as the specific model for their characteristics. The four steps of plan, act, observe and reflect to organize the most appropriate peer mentoring programs resulted in more productivity and effectively in the process of mentoring for both the mentor and the mentee. Moreover, evidence shows that the peer mentoring program created a friendly workplace and positive attitudes between academic staff who had participated in the program. The university might consider maintaining the three key concepts of partnership commitment, university mentoring context, and theory in practice within the peer mentoring model so to increase the opportunity for higher academic positions among academic staff.

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