

Recruits to Professionals: In-House Mentorship as a Way of Developing Competent Law Enforcement Officers

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Abstract

Performance of an organization is directly associated with the performance of individuals in the organization; hence, the development and enhancement of performance in an organization. The concept of mentoring may be discussed as an effective tool, designed in detail to be fully compliant with the overall targets of the company operations of the organizations where the success depends on the development of the leaders. The application of mentoring in organization organizations informally or formally has a number of variations as is evidenced by the kind of organization and the purpose of the program. The Turkish Coast Guard is a law enforcement organization whose responsibility is maritime safety and security; it has been facing difficulties in determining the training and development process of its personnel to correspond to the increasing needs and growing workforce. This has made it necessary to come up with a modern day development system to the officers who staff the Coast Guard executive. Among other things that the in-house mentoring programs can solve, they can lead to proper internal communication, the promotion of the development cultivation of a favorable corporate culture, and especially promote the institutional development. As part of the research, a base of executable officers development model will be proposed to help in the development of the executive candidates into middle and senior management in the Turkish Coast Guard. The model entails both theoretical and practical use of characteristics in building the executive officer candidates. The research paper also seeks to address a major gap in literatures related to the study. Through this, it offers a new approach to training of law enforcement executives.

Keywords: *Coast Guard, In-House Mentoring, Organisational Development, Manager Training.*

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen an enhancement in the level of importance attributed to the subject of maritime boundary security worldwide. There has been a changing trend in maritime security policies of many countries with better protection systems coming into force. Turkey being a coastline country on three sides is exposed to heavy maritime traffic due to location on the migration routes as well as the straits dividing Europe and Asia, thus requiring additional efforts in maritime security activities. The Turkish Coast Guard (TCG) is one of the three general law enforcement forces of Turkey and in the last twenty years has been carrying out an intense battle against irregular migration.

The TCG has been performing all kinds of law enforcement activities, especially search and rescue at sea, in maritime jurisdictions remaining under its sovereignty and control since 1982 (Turkish Coast Guard, 2025). In order to fulfil tasks assigned by the law, the TCG has to remain agile now more than ever. It is supposed to lead change, not just follow it. With the developments in technology, the requirements placed upon maritime security remain

increasingly disparate with each waking day. Organizations, therefore, must be able to perceive a variety of novel and evolving requirements related to the maritime domain and rapidly overhaul themselves in relation to these changes (Lengick-Hall et al., 2011; Hannah et al., 2009). To show such behavior as an institutional reflex, the top officers, occupying managerial positions, have to be experts in their area, competent, capable, and willing to open up to change, fast thinkers who can identify the right choice and sometimes be willing to take risks (Boin & van Eeten, 2013).

In the modern view of managing business, only the existence of qualified personnel capable of undertaking future managerial roles will ensure that organizations are viable (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Within the TCG, promotion of commanders is internal. This option, while providing certain advantages such as low turnover, high loyalty, and competitive environment, does have its drawbacks. One of them is that under pressure, managers hastily make decisions or scrimp on the training being provided in order to meet on-time needs (Groves, 2007). Like other agencies of law enforcement, the planning of executive-development processes for the TCG is crucial to the sustainability of the organization in the long run (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002; Zenger & Folkman, 2014).

Being placed with the senior commanders in TCG cover various aspects of training and preparation of junior officers for senior management plans. This is a universal activity as it demands nurturing an organization's culture and traditions (such as a sailor's culture) to be carried forward into the naval service and is in essence professional development for people whose livelihood revolves around this profession (Day et al., 2014; Reiche et al., 2017). Adaptation and transformation capacity becomes a prime factor for competition in such an ever-changing field that is maritime (Avolio et al., 2021).

Therefore, the several methodologies unique to other organizations can be borrowed to prepare officers for high-ranking posts. However, the two points taken as a basis are: (1) the continuous monitoring of the young commander's performance by the supervisor, documented through evaluations on structured forms and (2) the provision of him/her with training and study assignments from headquarters. It should also be clear that the TCG does not hire personnel for managerial positions from outside the organization; personnel may be promoted to grade within the organization to those posts. Thus, the development of commanders should not be solely realized by their will or effort.

During the training process, supervisors are held responsible for the continuous observation and documentation of the development of the young officers under a certain plan. However, when the superior is indifferent to this, somehow the observation and imitation of the superior influence the development of the officers to a large extent. The development of officers cannot be left entirely to the discretion or initiative of the superior. Rather, every stage of development needs to be planned carefully, with indicators of performance being recorded and the data then assessed (Day et al., 2014; Reiche et al., 2017).

The TCG has laid down various rules to regulate this process in a centralized fashion. However, these rules increase the work of boat commanders who are already engaged in carrying out strenuous patrol missions. Since the supervisors must use valuable time filling out lengthy and tedious forms, they are not willing to share this time with their young officers. It is thus a game: pretending that development activities are going on. Yet, this game makes it difficult for central administration to ascertain whether supervisors are actually performing the right evaluation and observation.

It has been observed that the existing management development process, categorized as merely an item in the Officer Professional Development Plan (contrasting with modern management development programs), (1) is limited in relevance, (2) is short in duration and, therefore, mostly paper-based with a very bureaucratic method, and (3) limiting assessment to the knowledge, experience, and expertise of the supervisor rather than an objective evaluation criteria. Selection for senior management posts is made on a career basis and on the superiors' assessment at the central administrative level. This is because it has not been possible to bake a promotion system that is transparent and based on merit. Training of senior management personnel is carried out largely after the appointment of officers to management positions.

The styles of leadership by the commanders and their perceptions of the subordinates cause diverse types of development in each Coast Guard (CG) boat. The TCG does not want this situation, with this constituting one of the biggest obstacles to implement a training and development program on a standard basis. On the contrary, any discord between the commander and the young executive officer aboard the TCG boat is a confidential concern unless it is overt and of great impact. When the disorder is in the direction of the subordinate development, not as desired, or, for any reasons, one might say slow in comparison to the designated normal, the commander somehow tries to cover it up for fear of being accused of the deficiency itself.

Incorporating many principles and practices developed in the Turkish Navy, with which it shared organic links in the past, the TCG underlines personalities concerning traditions. Although this affiliation and orientation have evolved through time and through changes in legislation, in establishing its objectives, in its personnel structure, systems, and equipment, it continues to act with an instinct of loyalty to specific traditions, especially those in the training of personnel. Changes in personnel, over the years, have largely been in response to changes in legislation, while no serious survey has been undertaken to measure the existing situation or to attempt the formation of a policy for change. The system as it stands is theoretical, is widely known to be impossible to put fully into practice, is bureaucratic, is principally oriented toward learning from superiors (master-apprentice system), and is never transparent. Consequently, this program satisfies neither the present needs of young officers nor the expectations of the institution. If insistence on this line of thought continues, the leaders of the future Turkish Navy may well prove not to have been raised to the standards observed today.

At present, the goal achievement capacity of the TCG is contingent on how well its commanders perform. Such a scenario might still be acceptable for an emerging country, which is why performance appraisal is gaining ever-increasing importance (Locke & Latham, 2019; Reiche et al., 2017). However, an unconscious appraisal system limits subordinates' development opportunities in the TCG. Even when concrete data are desired to be used in support of such appraisals, commanders usually ignore this issue (Aguinis & Pierce, 2008). The starkest example of this is the neglectful manner in which they fill out annual evaluation forms for officers who subjectively score their subordinates in a few minutes. This may derive from supervisors who observe deficiencies in their subordinates' development and choose to hide developmental deficiencies and slow progress instead of taking responsibility for them (DeNisi & Smith, 2014). What is even more fascinating is that despite the fact that almost everyone, including the highest-level managers, are aware of this unfavorable condition, no concrete step is taken in remedying the situation. Another surprising aspect is that still today the TCG's evaluation system has remained invariant for two decades since 1982, experiencing a tremendous inflation in both personnel and floating and flying platforms. Officer career

progressions start from Lieutenant and first rank. Career progressions depend on ranks, and with each rank, a waiting period for promotion is laid down by the legislation in force. For appointment into management positions, it is mandatory to have a certain rank and number of years of service. This all, in turn, poses a problem for the organization's need to train the officers for middle and senior management positions (McCauley & Palus, 2021).

THEORETICAL STUDIES

All of these developments at the institutional level affecting military and law enforcement organizations are deeply rooted in several theoretical frameworks. These theories help us understand how structured mentoring and leadership development can be rendered formal and enhanced inside these systems, which are high-stakes and highly hierarchical.

1. Institutional Theory

Institutional theory focuses on how organizations are supposed to conform to external expectations and develop norms so that they may be given legitimacy, promote continuity, and usher in stability. According to Selznick (1996), institutionalization is the process in which organizations instill enduring values and norms in their operations. From the perspective of the TCG, the tracing of a lengthy tradition from naval heritage and the master-apprentice leadership method are classical examples of institutionalized conduct.

Today, to satisfy the needs of the present, the organization demands flexibility, transparency, and adaptability in its operations. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), institutional isomorphism-if competition to adhere to industry norms and best practices-is relevant in such a case. Being in a high-paced and internationalized maritime security set up, the Grade I TCG must have mutating internal systems in tandem with the world outside-the competency-based assessment, structured mentorship, and e-governance systems.

2. Transformational Leadership Theory

Particularly in leadership development in future military contexts, the transformational style of leadership is most appropriate. Introduced by Bass and Avolio in 1994, this theory focuses on how leaders inspire followers through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the TCG, mentoring could be a pathway for transformational leadership, whereby senior commanders serve as role models, challenging junior officers to think critically, and investing in their individual personal growth.

Such leadership development results in an ever-increasing ability to become agile and responsive- a necessary attribute to Coast Guard adaptation with respect to myriad maritime threats and irregular migration patterns. Transformationally oriented mentorship is also likely to increase morale, motivation, and performance, particularly under high-risk operational environments with constrained resources.

3. Adult Learning Theory

According to Malcolm Knowles, andragogy, or adult learning theory, promotes training that is experiential, self-directed, role-related, and problem-centered for adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005). The present master-apprentice arrangement in the TCG partially reflects this theory but is sporadic and unstructured. The proposed Mentor-ODM model meets this need by proposing a strategic learning pathway grounded in real operations with mechanisms for feedback and clearly defined objectives.

Through structured mentoring, junior officers experience real-world cases and simulations and receive feedback from mentors, who further contextualize the lessons in terms of TCG values and maritime operations. These activities enable officers to think critically and become adaptive leaders.

4. Social Learning Theory

Bandura put forward the social learning theory stating that humans learn not only by being directly instructed but also through observation of behaviors, attitudes, and the consequences others attend to (Bandura, 1977). In hierarchical organizations such as the TCG, informal modeling could really play a major role in shaping a person's leadership ability. Officers imitate whatever their superiors do, knowingly or unknowingly, thus cascading behaviors through the entire command structure.

Yet, if only left to such unstructured social learning processes, the outcomes are bound to become erratic. This proposed mentoring program takes advantage of such social learning purposely by selecting and training outstanding role models to be mentors. Through reflection sessions and guided commentaries, mentees are encouraged to consider what behaviors they want to adopt and internalize. It is this very intentionality that empowers social learning as a professional development tool.

5. Performance Management Theory

Performance management is essential to achieving long-term leadership development. According to Aguinis (2013), a successful performance system is one that sets expectations, gives feedback, and evaluates outcomes based on objective criteria. In TCG, the current mechanism of evaluation using one annual officer evaluation form without any objective criteria limits the scope for holding people accountable and determining their development.

The theory endorses formative assessment, i.e., performance feedback ongoing with the aim of enabling course corrections and learning. Mentors-ODM are designed with this in mind: tracking progress, interim assessments, and reflection meetings between mentors and mentees ensure that officer development continues to be measurable and improvable while remaining aligned with institutional objectives.

RESEARCH METHODS

Turkish Coast Guard, the design had to be multifaceted and rigorous. Given the organizational complexity, hierarchical structure, and sensitive operational context, the TCG essentially demanded a methodologically robust approach, which could be both adaptable to circumstances and sensitive to the nuances peculiar to internal development processes for its personnel.

1. Research Design: Qualitative Case Study Approach

The whole effort was dutifully undertaken through a qualitative case study approach to have an in-depth exploration of whatever internal dynamics, perceptions, and institutional structures determined officer development and leadership training within the TCG.

Case study method is especially conducive when gaining a deep and contextualized understanding of a real-life phenomenon, in this case, the informal and formal leadership development practices of a law enforcement body operating under unique maritime and national security pressures (Yin, 2018).

Qualitative case studies become warranted in answering questions concerning "how" and "why" officers are to be mentored and promoted and why at times current methods are suitable or unsuitable. It affords rich descriptive analyses of those mentoring dynamics that remain invisible under purely quantitative approaches.

2. Sampling Strategy

The study employed purposive sampling to identify and interview 40 subject-matter experts across the TCG, including senior commanders, junior officers, human resource specialists, and policy-makers.

Purposive sampling was best used in selecting participants that possessed first-hand experience with the development, training, and evaluation of officers and could provide information that highlights both the merits and demerits of the present system.

In order to obtain representation at several echelons and functions, participants were drawn from:

- Public sector administrators involved in officer evaluation and planning
- Boat captains (mentors) with junior officers (mentees)
- Central training staff and HR officials
- Officers in different levels within the command structure (e.g. Lieutenants, Lieutenant Commanders, and Captains).

This purposive sampling framework contributed to multiple points of view being gathered — from those designing the training policies to those implementing and finally to those receiving them.

3. Data Collection Methods

Three major qualitative data collection methods were employed:

a. Semi-Structured Interviews

The total number of participants was 40, all of whom were interviewed either one-on-one or in focus groups employing a semi-structured method. Interviews typically lasted between 45 and 90 minutes.

Particular methods of communication were adapted as per availability and location of the interviewees, with interviews conducted face to face, via a video call, or over the telephone.

Core questions related to the study's objectives formed the basis of the flexible interview guide, which allowed participants to expand on any aspect deemed personally important.

Some sample guiding questions included:

- "How do you assess the current system of officer development in the TCG?"
- "What role does your immediate superior play in your development as an officer?"
- "Does your unit practice any leadership development activities or programs?"

"What do you identify as gaps or challenges in the training of officers for managerial positions?"

b. Document Analysis

The study also looked into internal TCG training policies, officer evaluation forms, officer performance documentation tools, and development plans.

These documents enabled the researcher to view the formal structures guiding officer training and to identify the extent to which development programs were structured and monitored.

Juxtaposing policy documents against respondent answers provided clues for identifying the disparities between the "stated" and the "enacted" development processes.

c. Field Observations

Field observation was selectively conducted in the dry at specific Coast Guard stations and on vessels. The observational data thus helped to contextualize the interview data and permit a real-time view of the mentorship interactions or behaviors of officers.

Observers recorded detailed field notes concerning:

- Daily briefings
- Officer-supervisor interactions
- Documentation procedures
- Informal moments of mentorship
- Cultural signs of promotion and development

These were then able to expose unarticulated norms, power relations, and contradictions in the training environment presented to officers.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 software. Transcripts were coded from the interviews in relation to pre-existing deductive themes (guided by literature and research objectives) and to inductive themes emerging from data itself.

Coding categories included:

- Mentorship practice
- Promotion criteria
- Evaluation tools
- Training gaps
- Informal learning
- Leadership traits

Thematic clustering allowed for pattern recognition across cases, units, and hierarchical levels. The validity of the findings was increased by triangulating data from interviews, documents, and observations.

5. Ethical Considerations

All participants were told of the intention of the study and signed their informed consent forms. There was a strict maintenance of confidentiality, and individual names or any identifiable information were not included in the final reporting.

All data were anonymized and stored in secure, encrypted formats, given how sensitive the institution's role is considered to be in national security.

Approval for the research was obtained under the auspices of the internal ethics board of the TCG, adhering to international research ethics guidelines to foster protection to all participants, along with the integrity of the institution.

6. Limitations of the Study

While offering insight characterized as qualitative, the study simultaneously limits generalizability of findings outside the TCG context. Moreover, the hierarchy and culture within the military might have affected the willingness of some participants to speak up. The effects were as far as possible mitigated by triangulation; assurance of anonymity; and observation corroboration.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The qualitative research into the interviews, documents, and field observations has unfolded many essential dimensions of the leadership development and mentoring system in the Turkish Coast Guard (TCG).

The results are presented thematic, reflecting the core objectives of this study: in exploring the effectiveness of the existing officer-development processes, in identifying constraints to those processes, and in evaluating whether the newly designed structured in-house mentoring (Mentor-ODM) could serve as a remedy.

1. Fragmented Development Practices Across Units

Among other things, the absence of a standard leadership-development program for the Coast Guard units was one of the findings of overriding importance. Development of officers was primarily at the whim, choice, or style of leadership exhibited by the commanders. The more interactive commanders embraced these practices more actively, some virtually ignored mentoring of any sorts.

Each boat is a different world, as they say. If there is a commander who is interested in development, we grow and learn. If there is no such person, we work just to complete the duties without any growth.”

As the views vary, so does the training and general readiness of junior officers across the institution. With the lack of an implementable framework for training, it could lead to a wide disparity in skills such as morale or readiness for promotion, thus undermining institutional cohesion in the long run.

2. The Evaluations and Promotions Are Insufficiently Objective

Promotions to higher ranks concern a lot of subjectivity that is brought by direct superiors. Several officers raised concerns—that evaluations often are biased on relationships, favoritism, or preferences of the commander rather than on any actual merits or objective criteria for performance.

One junior officer explains:

1. If a commander likes you, the evaluations are brilliant. If, on the other hand, the commander dislikes you, then half-breaking a sweat may not get you pretty scores. Concrete criteria or data cannot truly testify for the progress."
2. This culture breeds uncertainty and distrust: performance is not woven into the career redesign scheme. Moreover, it belittles power down to the hands of one single evaluator and, hence, renders the system prone to bias and manipulation.

3. Time Constraints and Form Fatigue

Due to operational duties, boat commanders continue to encounter stressful situations during patrol missions that mainly practice search and rescue activities: a maritime security task. This has caused the Chairs to regard the formation of development forms and mentoring of subordinates as more than an extra burden on top of their leadership duties. We're expected to do many patrols, manage emergencies, and yet fill out forms that are bureaucratic and repetitive. Doing paperwork for development plans does no good for me to actually train my officers," said a senior commander. Because of the restrictions, development plans either remain uncompleted, or they are completed on a superficial basis. The forms are turned into mere procedural checklists without serving as a meaningful tool for tracking growth.

4. From Institutional Memory to Institutional Innovation

The TCG remains firmly attached to its naval traditions — stressing old-style respect for hierarchies, strict disciplines, and apprenticeship-style training. While these uphold continuity of automation culture, they often prove contrary to innovation, agility, and diverse leadership.

Some officers cited an absence of psychological safety and modern learning practices such as coaching, feedback culture, and individualized learning paths:

- You learn what your commander knows. If he is obsolete, you are obsolete.
- Without scheduled updates or formalized training modules in leadership, commanders pass down methods that do not, and indeed cannot, meet the dynamic demands of maritime security, technology, and international coordination.

5. Integrated Support for a Structured Mentorship Model (Mentor-ODM)

The Mentor-ODM came to be regarded with excitement, both by junior officers and senior commanders, as a structured and policy-based mentoring system. The idea of:

- Development meetings with fixed dates
- Documented follow-ups
- Clear learning objectives
- Standardized mentoring tools

Was well received. Many felt that it would ensure equitable treatment for the mentees, clarity of process, and, most importantly, accountability on all sides, leaving very little room for guesswork in the developmental journey.

I wish I had something like this when I started. I had to guess what was expected of me. With Mentor-ODM, it becomes clear," shared a newly promoted Lieutenant Commander.

6. Expected benefits from Mentor-ODM

Table 1: The participant responses identified the following expected benefits of implementing the Mentor-ODM

Benefit	Description
Equity in Development	All officers receive equal developmental opportunities irrespective of their assigned units.
Skill Tracking	Mentors may systematically track and report on mentees' growth using pre-established templates.
Organizational Readiness	A well-prepared cadre of middle-level officers for higher assignments maintains the succession planning process.
Commander Accountability	Mentors become accountable for the development of their subordinates; thus, development reinforces leadership responsibility.
Motivation and Retention	Young officers derive a sense of being valued and supported, thereby increasing morale and decreasing attrition.

7. Risks and Recommendations

Table 2: Risks that may stand in the way of Mentor-ODM success were also identified:

Risk	Recommendation
Mentor burnout	Reduce mentor load through rotation and workload management.
Poor compliance	Implement auditing and feedback mechanisms to ensure the legitimacy thereof.
Mismatch of personalities	Implement auditing and feedback mechanisms to ensure the legitimacy thereof.
No incentives	Offering symbolic awards or career enhancement possibilities to active mentors.

8. Diagram: Mentor-ODM Development Cycle

The following is a visual summary of how the Mentor-ODM program should operate from inception to evaluation:

Generally, it is recommended that the Mentor-ODM durate six months, with meetings set twice per month, comprising one meeting every two weeks. Time constraints are imposed upon both participants to prevent arbitrary practice. The longer an encounter continues, the more burdensome it is for either party involved, considering the intensity that their daily routine work entails (Wanberg et al., 2003).

The main point here is that meetings in practice should stand separate from normal working activities. Both parties should meet at a prearranged time and place, free from the stress of daily work, and be prepared mentally for the session. Records should be maintained for these meetings upon which they shall be reported. The record shall not involve descriptions of the meeting, aside from the location, time, general atmosphere, and any problems encountered during the process.

From the perspective of mentor-mentee confidentiality, the meeting content shall never be disclosed to third parties (Eby & Robertson, 2020). After three months, a formal evaluation may be expected to occur among the two members of the pair. This gathering appears beneficial if held apart for each pair; hence, groups will have an opportunity to discuss what has transpired so far and whether the program is evolving as envisioned, to talk through any problems that might have arisen, and exchange remedies for these issues (Haggard & Turban, 2012). It is also helpful to take into consideration questions arising during the consultation.

Figure 1: Mentor-ODM Development Cycle - integrating structured mentoring into officer development within TCG units.



Figure 1: Mentor-ODM Process

These questions are often indicators of the kind of information the staff will find useful upon the program's next phase. Any issues that require resolution within the TCG should be noted and forwarded to the project coordinator at the end of implementation.

Another meeting could be organized at the end of the implementation period. These should be meetings hosted separately with mentors and mentees. During the meeting, the evaluation of the participants on the process, the experiences they have gained during it, and

their views on whether it would be put into practice over the coming years should be obtained. It would also be good to account for any questions that arose during the consultation phase. For those unable to attend the meeting, an alternative questionnaire could be used to cover their input so that no gaps arise in the evaluation of implementation. If necessary, short questionnaires could be sent out to mentors and mentees before the meeting, recording how many meetings they have had so far, whether they have set clear goals together, and how they are progressing toward achieving those goals.

Mentoring personnel in their own development is a prime concern in the mentoring relationship (Kram & Higgins, 2009). Individual development, however, is an on-going process of change; in fact, the longer time that elapses between the engagement and the ultimate benefit for officers, the more time available to ascertain the potential benevolence or added value of Mentor-ODM to the TCG (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Those mentees may be appointed to the position of commandant later on and potentially carry mentorship forward as part of the commitment to subordinates' development. Thus, a mentor developmental culture will evolve in the TCG through this cycle.

Advantages of Mentor-ODM

TCG can greatly benefit from Mentor-ODM at the subordinate level (mentees), commander of the level (mentors), and at the organizational level. This practice will allow their career development for young officers while at the same time enhancing the leadership and communication skills of the young officers. The young officers receive guidance, advice, and support from their commanders as they hone their leadership skills; in turn, the supervisors participate in developing their leadership and coaching capabilities. These commanders, as their teachers, will impart their experience and knowledge; however, in doing so, they will themselves review their profession, acquire a new perspective, and take part in learning activities. This will ultimately benefit the commanders in their personal career. Commanders will track the future triumphs of their wards, which will swell their ranks, and it will also give joy to their hearts.

The TCG benefits most from the mentoring ODM. Employees undergo some experiences of personal growth and a degree of belonging, which in the medium to long term will have considerable implications for corporate culture and organizational development. Increased information sharing among its managers and employees will help internal communication. Helping in becoming an innovative learning organization. Moreover, mentoring facilitates skill development of employees and those supporting career development needs of the employees within the organization. Thus, these also earn significant importance for talent management practices. To sum things up, mentoring could help both individuals and organizational development and provide for sustainable development environments.

Possible Difficulties during Implementation

There are strengths and weaknesses to in-house mentoring practices. It has long been considered one of the strongest tools for developing individuals in a field. Yet, it has been only partly treated in public organizations of the security sector, with hardly any steps taken because of the traditional organizational culture (Eby et al., 2008; Chun et al., 2012). This is due to the old hierarchical structure and rigid chain of command in the security sector (Ragins and Kram, 2007). Subordinate-superior relationships have the potential to prevent the open communication and trust necessary for mentoring. The operational intensity and pace of operations also restrict mentors and mentees in terms of time and other resources (Allen and

Eby, 2021). These factors undermine mentoring sustainability and prevent any form of program integration owing to resistance from an organizational culture (Ghosh and Reio, 2013).

If we look into setting up internal mentoring programs, it would usually be in its favor if a positive contribution could be made toward organizational development; yet, it should be kept in mind that incompatible with staff development needs or institutional culture could be such programs (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). A clear understanding of what employees might need development-wise would be an important first step for TCG to consider before even proceeding with mentoring as its tool.

Good chemistry and compatibility between the mentoring pair are most important for any mentoring relationship to succeed. It involves matching individuals who have similar aspirations or whose experiences and skills complement each other's goals. Corporate mentoring programs associate individuals with similar professional interests. In the case of large organizations, the preference is to match people across departments and with colleagues with whom they do not have any contact in their day-to-day roles. While this might not be of much use to the TCG, it stretches west from the coast of the country, and very often, the distance between two units may be considerable.

Requiring mentors and mentees to meet from different locations will pose problems such as time and resources that may hamper the conduct of the program. Hence, the Mentor-ODM requires that the supervisor be the mentor and the subordinate the mentee. Consequently, it should be expected that this method will not only protect the professional boundaries of both parties but also give each person a better understanding of new networks and broader organizational operations, which in itself is as valuable an asset in development.

While there is much literature on the role of mentors in fostering creativity in their mentees, little is known about how a Mentor-ODM might benefit from the process. Hence, it has been argued that if the Mentor-ODM focuses uniquely on the subordinate's development, this task would not be mutually beneficial to the supervisor and would merely become an additional workload. Conversely, while the commander who assumes the role of mentor will certainly be trained in coaching skills that will be needed in all walks of life, it is unclear how the mentor role will impact the commander's own development.

The Mentor-ODM could turn into a negative experience because of the rigid attitude of the mentor, traditionalism, lack of ego-control, and low creativity, especially for the mentee. The training to be given to the program would most probably be insufficient to resolve the negative issues as stated above (David & Pitman, 2024).

To expect a supervisor who at all consciously learns coaching techniques yet is unwilling to employ such techniques to then carry the process forward in a healthy manner could only be described as being hopeful. The opportunities that remain may keep the supervisor and his subordinate apart from each other, and the absence of external mentorship may limit employees to only their supervisor's outlook. It could therefore prevent the officers from their further career aspirations, limited exposure to experience, minority training and development opportunities for commanders, and non-optimal co-development of officers' competences (Allen et al., 2004).

Even though the parties intend to continue in good spirit, an inability on the supervisor's part to internalize mentoring skills or a genuine unwillingness to apply them will result in a negotiated or faceted evolution of the process, on the one hand, and the mentee unable to utilize these gains, on the other (Ragins et al., 2000). What is needed to fully understand and therefore

circumvent this picture is to analyse the feedback of both sides judiciously and intervene well before the last minute to salvage the process and make it progress the right way.

Although many Mentor-ODM matches will never be totally perfect and will experience disruptions along their paths (Koopmas et al., 2006; Wanberg et al., 2003), establishing avenues to provide support for mentors and mentees might take care of issues that may arise. It can be searched to keep the relationship rewarding for both the mentor and the mentee. If mentored and mentees are provided with the free access from the TCG Implementation Project Coordination Office, either of them can address any concerns or assistance they might require.

DISCUSSION

Placing the introduction and application of a structure-based mentoring system such as Mentor-ODM for the Turkish Coast Guard as a major response to the evolution of leadership and management challenges in a high-risk maritime security arena would be a worthy proposition. The study's findings have shown that the current professional development setup in the Turkish Coast Guard is inconsistent, lacks objectivity, and long-term planning—which would, thus, impede said institution from realizing her strategic objectives and excelling operationally. This discussion aims at synthesizing the implications of the findings with underlying theoretical frameworks, empirical literature, and practical observations of similar implementations in other parts of the world.

1. Bridging Gaps Between Tradition and Innovation

The TCG's development practices have remained strongly embedded within traditional structures inherited from the Turkish Navy. These development practices—alongside the master-apprentice approach—have constituted informal mentoring systems for years. While tradition allows for continuity, it also has the detrimental effect of restricting innovation. Therefore, the aim of Mentor-ODM is to save, nurture, and upgrade the good in tradition, applying necessary structure for measurable progress and lasting impact.

Research indicates that organizationally controlled mentoring programs are more effective than informal mentoring relationships where informal mentoring relationships exist (Allen & Eby, 2021). The findings indicate that, without the formalization of mentorship processes, the variability in leadership approaches exercised by commanders tends to produce inconsistent developmental results amongst junior officers. The resultant discrepancies, therefore, see the institution losing in the long-term goal of readying swift, strategic leaders for the future. Consequently, the Mentor-ODM is a systematic oversight structure blended with relational mentoring to bridge said gap.

2. Institutional Resilience and Leadership Perpetuity

Studies raised above, *drmt*: Inst. Insurgency and Resilience are concepts that center on the continuity and long-term foresight of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Real leadership is, therefore, developed through genuine and reflective practice maintained over time and usually enabled through feedback-rich environments. The TCG with its paper-based evaluation systems and non-transparent promotions lacks this very quality. Thus, what Mentor-ODM seeks to establish is a longitudinal development structure where feedback and performance monitoring drive development. Furthermore, mentoring has been found to contribute to organizational resilience by encouraging an exchange of knowledge, values, and decision-making competence among emergent leaders (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Boin & van Eeten, 2013). The greatest factor working against the TCG are the unpredictable maritime challenges

it faces-from migration challenges to search and rescue missions, the institution requires dynamic decision-makers. Mentor-ODM answers this need by allowing the grooming of junior officers under the tutelage of highly experienced mentors who demonstrate complex decision-making and ethical behavior in pressured situations.

3. Addressing Evaluation and Performance Gaps

Another critical finding is the inadequacy of the present-day appraisal system. Supervisors periodically provide overestimates because they do not genuinely concern themselves with junior officer development. The reasons are diverse and range from being operationally busy to not being offered incentives to engage in the evaluative duties, and the absence of sufficient training to conduct such evaluative duties. This situation fosters a disparity between performed work and assessed performance, leading to poor decisions concerning promotion and adjunct training (DeNisi and Smith 2014; Aguinis and Pierce 2008).

With the introduction of performance monitoring and periodic review to the existing Mentor-ODM framework concept, the performance evaluation framework shifts from being a one-off, annual snapshot to becoming a continuous professional development tracking tool. Feedback is bidirectional, flowing from mentor to mentee and vice versa, where mentees even reflect on the quality of mentorship received. This promotion of accountability extends beyond the subjectivity commonly associated with strictly supervisor-based evaluations, which contemporary performance management literature recognizes as a significant concern (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Allen et al., 2004).

4. Theoretical Foundations of the Model

Mentor-ODM is quite entrenched in established leadership theories, most especially Day's (2001) integrative model which identifies formalized programs, developmental relationships, and personal development as key ingredients to effective leadership development. These developmental relationships in Turkey and TCG have been largely informal. Mentor-ODM seeks to formalize this very notion, in accordance with the work of Kram and Higgins (2009), whose developmental networks are crucial in generating diverse and well-rounded learning. to understand why the TCG's top-down approaches to leadership development have been unable to foster innovation. Complexity theory maintains that leadership in complex dynamical systems ought to be distributed, adaptive, and rooted in relational process as opposed to being based upon rigid structures. By decentralizing responsibility for development down to boat commanders (mentors), Mentor-ODM injects relational accountability and opens avenues for localized innovation in training methods.

5. Mitigating Practical Challenges

Despite the theoretical strength and assertiveness for implementation, the study also reveals *prima facie* barriers to the implementation of the program, namely:

- Commanders may be reluctant to devote time to mentorship for competing priorities.
- Mismatches between mentoring and mentees.
- The process may degenerate into a superficial effort because either the mentor or the mentee is not internally motivated or institutional enforcement is lacking.
- Geographical enervability of TCG units hinders face-to-face mentorship.

These challenges are not unique to the TCG. Studies on mentoring in hierarchical and mission-critical organizations (e.g., police, military, emergency services) underscore similar obstacles (Chun et al., 2012; Kotera et al., 2019). The mitigation, however, lies in strategic implementation: incentives should be provided, mentor training (David & Pitman, 2024) offered, digital support tools implemented (e.g., mentorship dashboards), and centralized monitoring established at headquarters level. Similarly, the Mentor-ODM incorporates a robust pre-implementation training and pilot phase that serves as a buffer to mitigate the risks.

6. Expected Cultural Shift and Long-Term Benefits

A structured mentoring program will bring organizational culture shift; the implementation will be further promoted by specific general considerations. Currently, the TCG is functioning in an environment fostering knowledge hoarding, superficial assessments, and promotion based on traditions that deny meritocratic growth. Mentor-ODM will attempt to disrupt this amalgamation, evolving an organizational culture that values transparency and continuous learning as well as mutual accountability. With time, as the mentees mature into mentors, the cycle of development will become self-sustaining. In addition, the long-term benefits of this cultural shift extend beyond leadership development:

- **Morale and retention:** Officers who feel investment are more likely to stay and perform.
- **Stronger internal networks:** Mentorship breaks down silos and builds trust across ranks.
- **Diversity and inclusivity:** Structured mentoring can promote minority groups and provide equal developmental opportunities (Kato, 2020; Ragins & Kram, 2007).
- **Institutional memory preservation:** Mentors represent the antithesis of institutional knowledge, which is essential for institutional coherency and institutional continuity.

7. Mentor Development: A Two-Way Interaction

The uniqueness of the Mentor-ODM lies in having a two-way impact: developing mentors while simultaneously growing the mentees. The study supports observations by Kotera et al. (2019) and Gill et al. (2018) that mentors experienced growth in self-awareness, confidence, and job satisfaction. Mentoring provides a reflective space for commanders in the TCG to consolidate their experience and hone their coaching and communication skills—the very skills foundational to senior management.

This two-way impact ensures that mentoring is not seen as a burden but as an opportunity for professional rejuvenation. The TCG, therefore, would do well to brand mentoring as a highly desirable and prestigious activity—a badge that recognizes one as ready to ascend into more strategic leadership roles.

Conclusion of the Discussion

Apart from simply representing a new form of training method for the Turkish Coast Guard, the Mentor-ODM is a systemic intervention that shifts leadership development from an ad hoc, supervisor-led activity to a transparent, well-structured, and performance-oriented program. Based on tested theories, and enriched by international best practices, it satisfies the TCG's urgent need for resilient leadership with performance accountability and institutional via continuity. Were the implementation to be well adapted with monitoring mechanisms, feedback loops, and strategic oversight, there is a great likelihood for its adoption as a model for maritime forces and beyond for other law enforcement and security agencies in the rest of the region.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study proposes a new method of training young officers of the TCG. A Road map for the implementation of the Mentor-ODM is also outlined. This model tries to provide a good platform to prepare officers in leadership modules. Mentoring is a leadership tool to develop others, pass knowledge, and cultivate organizational culture within an ever-changing working atmosphere of a hard hierarchical structure. Should the TCG actualize this, it would end up becoming a role model not only for Turkey but also for many other law enforcement agencies worldwide. In some cases, Devine Clutterbuck et al. (2001) claim that mentoring is a self-fulfilled charm. For an operationally-intensive organization such as the TCG, to expect an accounting method to render self-fulfillment would be wishful thinking. The other way would be that the TCG really cannot afford the luxury of waiting for a magic; it has to make sure that mentoring is conveyed and internalized properly by both the young officers and their superiors so that benefits are realized faster.

Designing mentoring ODM as a formal institutional activity and thus a learnable activity will eliminate some of the major barriers to the success of any mentoring program. One such barrier is the resistance of the potential mentee, supported by organizational culture (Schulleri & Saleh, 2020). Usually there can be so many reasons for people to resist or be dissatisfied with mentoring. However, in organizations such as TCG, such resistance may not really be articulated. Commanders may consciously or unconsciously use mentoring as a display of power or as a means of intimidation to show that a subordinate lacks competence. As an aside, to make the whole mentoring experience worthwhile, a commander may resort to behaviors or actions that are rather inappropriate for a mentor. TCG management, followed by the supervisor, must ensure that this does not happen. As long as the TCG monitors closely each stage of the program and as long as the supervisor in the mentoring role really takes ownership of the program with a genuine belief that the subordinate will shortly stand in his place, the intended results are likely to occur. Finally, mentors and mentees will view the program as a professional collaborative effort, acknowledging that for the organization to succeed itself, its members and especially its officers must succeed.

The actualization of the plan must be guided by strict implementation policies once an act that has been properly considered into an action plan. With the realization that the magic of a good mentoring program happens in detail and planning and through the phases of learning, implementing, and reflecting, it is important to have these aptitudes fine-tuned. The relationship will be unique in that shy or reluctant mentees will receive the support and training necessary to become better commanders; mentors and mentees will communicate sufficiently to understand each other's assumptions and thereby give each other the freedom to try out different best practices; mentors and mentees will resolve problems collaboratively instead of treating a subordinate's difficult question as a personal attack and dismissing it as a personality conflict; and mentors and mentees will recognize occasions in which they are confronted with a problem neither can solve and agree either to seek help or to let it pass.

Program execution will develop leadership skills among junior officers who will become the future commanders of TCG and their supervisors who will be in charge of their training, thus increasing their loyalty to the company, adopting the corporate culture, and contributing to the company's performance. Mentor-ODM will be more than just an application by which young officers acquire knowledge and skills. It will rather be a uniquely disruptive approach moving TCG forward toward the learning organization model.

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