

**„A study of the influences of  
nonsupervisory mentoring relationships on  
the personal development and career  
outcomes of mentors“**

**Dorota Danecka-Mikus**

**Student number: 1737667**

**Supervisor: Martin O’Dea**

**Master of Arts in Human Resource Management**

**Dublin Business School**

**Liverpool John Moores University**

**August 2014**

**Word Count: 21,498**

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
Table of Figures .....	6
I DECLARATION .....	7
II ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	8
III ABSTRACT .....	9
Chapter One: Introduction.....	10
1.1. Introduction .....	10
1.2. Background .....	10
1.3. Explanation of terms .....	14
1.4. Research Objectives .....	15
1.5. Organisation of the dissertation .....	16
1.6. Major contribution of the study .....	17
1.7. Suitability of the researcher .....	17
1.8. Researcher’s Bias.....	18
1.9. Limitations .....	18
1.10. Recipient of the research.....	20
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	21
2.1. Traditional and Relational Mentorships.....	21
2.2. Conditions Influencing Mentorship.....	24

2.2.1. Hierarchy .....	24
2.2.2. Formal and Informal .....	24
2.2.3. Supervisory and nonsupervisory.....	25
2.3. Mentoring Functions .....	27
2.3.1. Career and Psychological functions .....	27
2.3.2. Role modelling function.....	28
2.3.3. Relational functions .....	29
2.3.4. Holistic approach of relational mentoring.....	30
2.4. Mentoring and Learning .....	30
2.4.1. Personal learning.....	31
2.4.2. Relational job learning and personal skills development .....	31
2.5. Benefits for a mentor .....	33
2.6. Negative effects of mentoring others .....	34
Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods.....	36
3.1. Research philosophy.....	37
3.1.1. Ontology .....	38
3.1.2. Epistemology .....	39
3.1.3. The author’s research philosophy .....	40
3.2. Research approach.....	41
3.2.1. Deduction.....	42

3.2.2. Induction .....	42
3.2.3. The author’s approach .....	42
3.3. Methodological choice.....	43
3.4. Research strategy .....	45
3.4.1. Grounded Theory .....	45
3.5. Time horizon .....	47
3.6. Sample.....	47
3.7. Data collection and analysis .....	49
3.7.1. Secondary data.....	49
3.7.2. Research Interviews .....	49
3.8. Data Analysis .....	51
3.9. Ethics.....	53
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion.....	55
4.1. Introduction .....	55
4.2. Relational Relationship .....	56
4.2.1. High-Quality .....	57
4.2.2. Personal-Skills Development.....	60
4.2.3. Career Development .....	64
4.3. Passing the Torch.....	65
4.3.1. Overcoming Invisibility.....	66

4.3.2. Validating Life-Choices .....	67
4.3.3. Generativity.....	70
4.4. Negative outcomes of mentoring relationship .....	71
4.5. Conclusion .....	71
4.5.1. Objective I .....	72
4.5.2. Objective II .....	73
4.5.3. Objective III .....	74
Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	76
5.1. Recommendations.....	77
5.2. Recommendations for future research .....	78
Bibliography .....	80
Appendices.....	88
Appendix 1: Interviews Guide .....	88
Appendix 2: Selective Codes.....	89
Appendix 3: Open and Axial Codes .....	90
Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form.....	107
Appendix 5: Learner’s Engagement and Reflection.....	109

## Table of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Mentoring research across time.....	11
<b>Figure 2</b> Mentoring Process Model for Mentors .....	12
<b>Figure 3</b> The Research Onion.....	37
<b>Figure 4</b> Models of process and theory.....	44

## **I DECLARATION**

I, Dorota Danecka-Mikus, declare that all the work in this dissertation is entirely my own, except where appropriately indicated and referenced in the Bibliography section.

No part of this work has previously been submitted, in whole or in part, for any degree or examination at this or any other institution.

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Masters in Human Resource Management at Dublin Business School and Liverpool John Moores University.

Signed:.....*Dorota Danecka-Mikus*.....

Dorota Danecka-Mikus

Date: 12th August 2014

## **II ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge all the wonderful people who have supported me in the last two years.

I wish to thank all the lecturers, staff and organisers of the MA in HRM programme at Dublin Business School for making it all possible. Special thanks to my supervisor Martin O'Dea for his guidance and advice.

Assistance provided by all my colleagues is greatly appreciated. Without their help, support and interest I would not have had the resources and flexibility to accomplish this task.

My word of gratitude is also for the participants of this study who willingly and enthusiastically contributed to this research.

I would also like to thank my classmates and new friends, for their support, encouragement and all the good times that we have shared.

Very special thanks to parents and my whole family who have always been supportive of all my endeavours and have always believed in me. And also my friends in Dublin and back in Poland, who kept tempting me with all the more enjoyable activities than the one I was supposed to be doing.

However, the greatest appreciation is meant for my husband Daniel. I am particularly grateful for his support, patience and understanding, unswerving loyalty, faith in me and love.

Thank you,

Dorota

### **III ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the influences of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships on the personal development and career outcomes of mentors. By means of qualitative research it examines mentors' perception of mentoring relationships, as well as factors that influence the quality and mutuality of these relationships. A review of the literature suggests there is a limited number of a qualitative research that provides an insight into nonsupervisory relationships and mentors' perspective on the topic of mentorship. The study highlights the most prevailing themes on mentoring relationships discussed in the literature and their impact on both mentors and mentees.

The inductive grounded theory strategy was applied in order to derive the theory out of raw data gathered through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with a number of mentors in nonsupervisory mentoring relationships, who are on senior positions within their own organisations.

This study, through in-depth interviews with mentors, indicated how significant is an impact of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships on their career outcomes and skills development. The result of the study showed that nonsupervisory mentorship creates favourable environment for the development of high-quality relational relationships, which are characterised by the interdependence of mentors and mentees and their mutual growth. The study also indicates that nonsupervisory mentoring relationships validate mentors' life choices and help them overcome invisibility.

# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1. Introduction**

This research provides a deep understanding on mentoring relationships and develops grounds for new research based on the findings of this study that significantly supplements data on the topic of nonsupervisory mentorship. It examines the influence of mentoring relationships on mentors' personal development and career outcomes and their perception of those relationships. Since the protégés' perspectives have been extensively researched from various angles, this study focuses specifically on a nonsupervisory mentoring relationship and its impact on a mentor, as well as on mentor's perception of that impact. Mentor's personal development and career outcomes may vary depending on one's experiences and the role in the relationship.

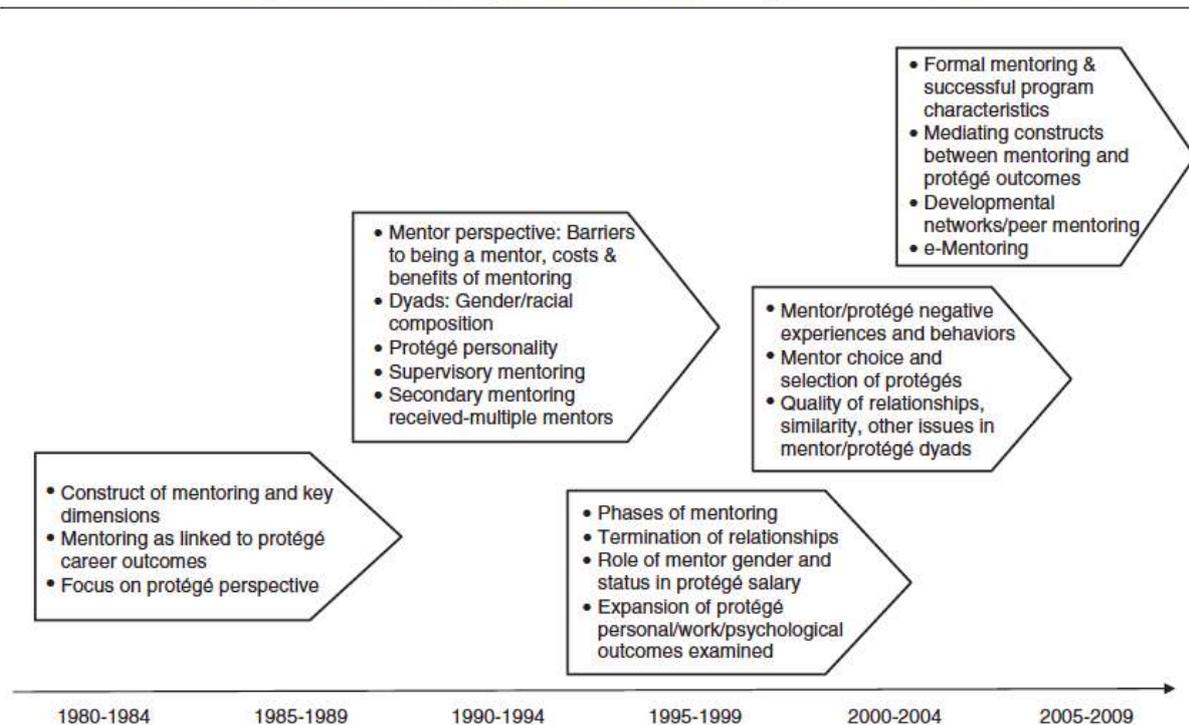
Fairly limited qualitative research on mentoring relationships is available based on the subjectivist and interpretivist positions, where an individual's beliefs and attitudes are examined. Most of the available literature focusses on the quantitative studies, with a collective view of a group of mentors, which ignores the perspective of individuals on their relationships, or their own personal view of the environment. The author, as a subjectivist, was concerned with the participants' perception on the reality of their mentoring experiences and their insight on the relationships.

## **1.2. Background**

The issue of mentoring has been analysed from various perspectives and angles such as formal and informal mentoring (Chao, Walz and Gardner, 1992), focus on protégés' benefits (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima, 2004), gender (Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Ragins and Scandura, 1997), willingness to mentor (Allen, 2007; Ragins and Scandura, 1999), negative outcomes of mentoring (Eby and McManus, 2004, cited in Allen, 2007; Eby, Durley, Evans and Ragins, 2008; Scandura, 1998), and organisational outcomes (Clutterbuck, 2004; Poulsen, 2013). A considerable amount of researchers have been

focusing on the benefits of mentoring for the protégé but slightly less attention has been given to that of a mentor. Figure 1 (Haggard et al., 2011) displays the richness of topics covered throughout three decades (1980-2009) and provides insight into major trends prevailing in the literature.

### Notable Topics and Developments in Mentoring Research across Time



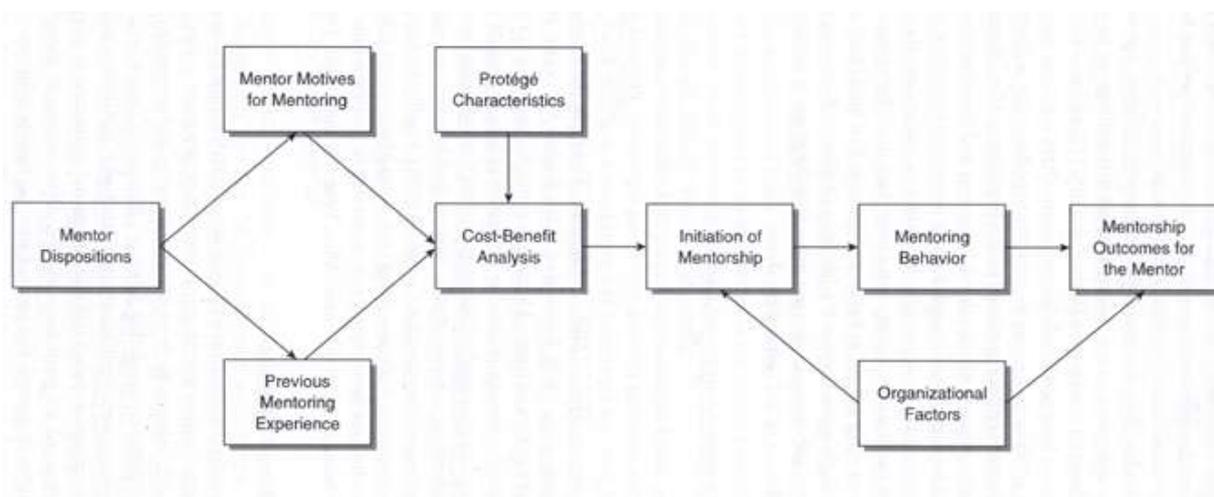
**Figure 1 Mentoring research across time**

Mentoring research across time (Haggard et al. 2011, p. 283)

Even though, there has been a shift with this trend in more recent literature, the chart clearly illustrates that less attention has been given to mentor’s perspective and that for years the dominant focus has been on protégé’s benefits. It is not surprising, since the development of the protégé is the main aim of every mentoring programme, nevertheless it has been proposed that a mentor can also benefit and learn from such relationship.

Engagement of mentors in the mentoring relationship may depend on their individual reasons i.e. willingness to pass on the knowledge and wisdom or previous positive personal experience from being a mentee. It may also depend on the organisational

factors i.e. formal mentoring programme launched by the company. Mentors might also be influenced by the mentorship outcomes and mentees' characteristics (Allen, Poteet and Burrough, 1997). A study by Allen, Poteet, Russell and Dobbins (1997) indicated that all types of previous mentoring experiences positively influence ex-mentors and ex-mentees' decision to become mentors in the future. Motivational factors and expected costs and benefits have also been associated with mentors' willing to mentor. The study by Aryee, Chay and Chew (1996) showed that altruistic and optimistic individuals are more motivated to mentor and that rewards are significant external motivator that influences and enhances the willingness to mentor. The cost and benefits associated with mentoring relationships were researched by Ragins and Scandura (1999), and the results indicated that expected benefits, like rewarding experience and recognition within the organisation were positively related to intention to mentor. Whereas, costs associated with, among others, energy drain and possibility of dysfunctional relationship were negatively related to intention to become a mentor. A Mentoring Process Model for Mentors (Figure 2) by Allen (2007, p. 125) clearly illustrates motivators and characteristics that influence mentors' willingness and intention to mentor.



**Figure 2 Mentoring Process Model for Mentors**

*Mentoring Process Model for Mentors (Allen, 2007, p. 125). This study will focus on the last parts of that model: Mentoring Behaviour and Mentorship Outcomes for the Mentor*

The views on supervisory and nonsupervisory mentorship differ across studies that acknowledge the distinction, as many researchers do not explicitly state whether the study is based on supervisory or nonsupervisory relationships. The outcomes of mentorship with different level of supervision are often influenced by the formality of the relationship. And so Clutterbuck (2004) and Haggard et al. (2011) suggest that formal mentoring relationship, where top management and stakeholders are involved, is beneficial for protégés, whereas studies by Lankau and Scandura (2002) and Jones (2012) do not support that view. Even less research has been done examining the influence of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship on the mentor.

Only a small amount of studies on mentors' perspectives is available and the most significant one is by Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) and presents a qualitative study examining mentors experience and their decisions to mentor others. Four major areas were investigated: individual reasons for mentoring others, organisational factors influencing mentoring, factors related to mentor-mentee attraction and mentors' outcomes associated with mentoring others. Additional research of quantitative nature focused on the mentorship effectiveness and its quality from the perspective of a mentor, and was conducted by Allen and Eby (2003). Another major study focusing on mentors' perspective is yet another work by Tammy Allen (2007). It is a chapter in 'The handbook of mentoring at work' edited by Kram and Ragins. It provides a wide literature review on mentorship as well as an extensive recommendation for future research. Even though an abundance of studies focus on mentoring relationships only a handful is of a qualitative nature and provides an insight of mentors' perceptions.

The most recent literature on the topic of mentorship discusses peer mentoring relationships and willingness to become a mentor among former mentees. The study by Roszkowski and Badmus (2014) did not find a strong correlation between successful mentee's experience and increased willingness to become a peer mentor in the future. Another study by Hammer, Trepal and Speedlin (2014) examines female faculty mentoring through relational cultural theory (RCT), which focuses on the importance of

mutuality of the relationships. "According to RCT, individuals grow through their connections with others. That is, we become more relationally competent as we represent ourselves authentically in our relationships" (Duffey, 2006, p. 50). Hammer et al. (2014) suggest that RCT concepts can be utilized within female faculty mentoring relationships and their findings showed that the desire for growth-fostering relationships was a core aspect of relational relationship.

This study presents various views on the characteristics of mentorship focusing on traditional and relational mentorship and conditions influencing the relationships. It also provides an overview and analysis of its connections with learning, and the career and psychological functions of the relationships. Subsequently, benefits and negative effects of mentorship from the mentor's perspective are presented followed by arguments for and against supervisory and nonsupervisory relationships. After the methodology chapter, where the author explains the approach adopted to conduct the study the actual research findings are presented.

This research explores the issue from variety of perspectives and even though many have already been examined, such as the developmental outcomes of mentoring relationship, mentor's learning outcomes, relational mentoring relationship and mentor's perception of the effectiveness of the mentoring relationships, still several critical issues remain unexplored. To the author best knowledge there has been virtually no qualitative research examining mentor's perception of the nonsupervisory mentoring relationship.

### **1.3. Explanation of terms**

Nonsupervisory mentoring infers that a protégé does not report to, nor is directly managed by the mentor. It has been argued that its counterpart, a supervisory mentoring relationship, may lack tangible reciprocity and mutuality and interfere with the process of transferring knowledge between participants (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2010).

For the purpose of this research, the term mentoring is used in relation to both formal (initiated by the organisation) and informal (spontaneous, forming naturally between people) mentoring relationships, unless otherwise stated; whereas a person being mentored is referred to as a protégé or mentee interchangeably.

#### **1.4. Research Objectives**

After considering the position of the theorists on the topic of mentoring, reviewing the literature, and identifying gaps in existing studies it has been indicated that in most cases mentoring relationships benefit all participants and provide tangible and intangible career outcomes and overall personal development. Even though mentor's benefits have been researched, the literature considers a mentee as a chief beneficiary of the programme. Therefore, the author ventured to examine mentor's career outcomes and personal development from the nonsupervisory perspective. Some theorists suggest that nonsupervisory mentoring relationship, where a mentor is not an immediate supervisor of a mentee can create more favourable learning environment and create high-quality relationship. However, it has not been investigated if that might have any influence on mentor's career and skills development. Even though studies briefly examine the influence of relational mentoring on a mentor as well as compare supervisory and nonsupervisory mentoring relationships, to the author's best knowledge, there has not been a study specifically focused on mentor's benefits and learning in a nonsupervisory relationship nor mentor's perception on the outcomes of the relationship. Thus, the following research objectives were formulated by the author in order to focus on relevant aspects related to the subject:

- I. To explore the influence of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship on a mentor's career outcomes**
- II. To identify skills that mentor learns from and improves through a nonsupervisory mentoring relationship.**

### **III. To analyse mentor's perception of the influence of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship on their development**

The in-depth qualitative analysis uncovered more specific examples of the mentoring outcomes by paying particular attention to mentors' perception of the relationships and their skills developed throughout nonsupervisory relationships. Also, it examined what influence nonsupervisory mentoring relationships have on mentors' career outcomes, and whether relational relationships are formed in the nonsupervisory environment. The research objectives supported the data gathering process and their analysis.

#### **1.5. Organisation of the dissertation**

**Chapter One** – Introduction outlines the background of the study, its objectives as well as the rationale and justification for conducting this research. It also presents the author's biases and suitability to conduct this study, as well as provides detailed limitations of the research.

**Chapter Two** – Literature Review explores and reviews the existing literature on the subject of mentoring relationships relevant to the topic and the research objectives. This exploratory review highlights the diverse concepts of mentoring relationships that prevail in the literature as well as their evolution and development over the last four decades. The purpose of the literature review is to provide the rationale for the study based on the gaps in the reviewed literature as well as to increase awareness of the existing knowledge on the topic.

**Chapter Three** – Methodology and Methods chapter explains the way the author approached the research process and the purpose of individual tools that were used in order to lead the researcher to the data collection stage, and subsequently to meet research objectives. It also focuses on the steps taken in the data analysis process. This chapter provides justification of why particular decisions were the most appropriate one

for the purpose of this study and gives reasons for rejecting alternative methods. It also presents the author's ethical stance.

**Chapter Four** – Findings and Discussion presents the findings gathered through the interviews and correlates it with the existing literature. It sets out the themes and concepts that emerged from the findings and evaluates them through discussion and analysis in the light of the previous researches. The purpose of this chapter is to present data that emerged from the grounded theory strategy. The conclusion presents the justification behind each objective based on the research findings and discussion and proves that the research aim was met

**Chapter Five** – Conclusion summarises the research process, concludes its findings and provides general recommendation based on the analysis. It also presents recommendation for the future research that could complement this study and the topic of mentorship in general

## **1.6. Major contribution of the study**

Nonsupervisory mentorship is widely recognised within the business context and is viewed as beneficial for both mentees and mentors. Even though, it has already been researched to some extent, there are not many qualitative studies that focus on mentors' perception on mentorship. The major contribution of the study is the analysis of mentoring relationships and their impact on the formation of high-quality relational relationships. The study also contributes to the understanding of the significance of mentorship in today's business environment, especially focusing on developmental relationships that positively influence both a mentor and mentee.

## **1.7. Suitability of the researcher**

As a student of Human Resource Management course in a business college the author covered a wealth of topics and materials. During the course of studies the topic of mentoring sparked particular enthusiasm, as the author identified with it on a personal

level. Thus, the interest in mentoring originated from the researcher's positive personal experience of informal mentoring relationship, which resulted in author's significant career development and psychological support as well as personal development i.e. positive effects on self-esteem, self-awareness and self-worth. This experience immensely influenced the researcher's interest in the topic of mentoring and the impact it can make on one's personal and career development.

### **1.8. Researcher's Bias**

The author has a strong personal experience with the informal mentoring relationship from the mentee perspective and it had to be taken into account so that it did not interfere with objective and fresh views on the mentoring relationship from the mentor's perspective.

A clear distinction had to be made between the participants with their social world and the author's own point of view. The author had to be wary of its own values and beliefs and endeavoured to understand participants' views and interpret them from their perspectives without affecting it with her own personal beliefs, biases and pre-conceptions (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). During the in-depth interviews, the open questions were to avoid bias, but the interviewer still had to be very cautious not to impose her own perception on the interviewees (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008).

Nevertheless, the researcher had to be curious and learn to trust her instincts (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

### **1.9. Limitations**

One of the major limitations for the research process was the time constraint as the researcher had approximately twelve weeks to finalise the research project, including gathering and analysing data before submitting the research.

The limited time did not allow the author to fully explore the topic and combine mixed methods and approaches in conducting the research, nor look at the topic from various perspectives. The author decided to use the grounded theory strategy to collect and analyse the data and inductively derive theory from that data. Grounded theory is, however, a very complex, time consuming and intensive process and the researcher was aware that the time constraints would not have allowed employing abductive approach, which was the most suitable one. Nevertheless, the researcher made every effort to collect and test the data using the combination of inductive and deductive approaches.

Moreover, the time limits did not permit the author to broaden the research and examine the results of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships analysed and compared from both perspectives: of mentors and mentees. Similar interviews with mentees could have been conducted to increase the validity and reliability of this study. The mentees' insight into these relationships might have brought even more interesting details and would have allowed new themes to emerge. The research could have been broadened even further if the author had interviewed mentors that are in the supervisory relationships only. That would have provided more data in order to compare nonsupervisory and supervisory mentoring relationships more thoroughly.

The qualitative nature of the study implied that the author conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven mentors in nonsupervisory relationships. The small sample size might have caused the sample error, especially so as the researcher used the non-probability sampling, however appropriate for the grounded theory strategy. Also, the author had to rely on interviewees' openness and willingness to share their insight and perspectives and general engagement in the process; there is a possibility that the interviews might have been more successful if the author had greater interviewing and communication skills or established closer rapport with the participants. The topic of mentoring, although strictly related with the Human Resources Management subject, is very closely associated with sociology as it examines the relationships between people. The author interpreted the collected data and analysed the relationships

by using own personal skills and capabilities, which could have influenced the outcomes. Although the author made every effort not to allow her own bias to influence the findings and discussion, inevitably some thoughts might have been filtered through the researcher's own experiences. The qualitative nature of the study, limited numbers of interviewed participants and possible author and interviewees' biases might have had an impact on the validity and reliability of this study and general assumptions made (Walliman, 2006).

The anonymity of the research participants made it slightly more difficult to present the findings and the lack of connections between the background of interviewees and their responses might have made their responses more vague and unclear.

### **1.10. Recipient of the research**

The principal recipient of this study is the research supervisor, Mr Martin O'Dea and the Examiners at the Dublin Business School in conjunction with Liverpool John Moore University.

As the research addresses matters related to human resources and business management it may be of interest to human resources practitioners and general public in the business environment. It might help individuals and organisations understand the importance of developing high-quality relational mentoring relationships.

Finally, the author herself has become a recipient of this study as she gained a significant insight into the topic of mentoring through the extensive research process and data gathering and analysis.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter explores and reviews the existing literature in the context of the topic of mentoring relationships. The author has correlated themes emerging from the most influential authors on mentorship with research objectives of this study. The review highlights the diverse concepts on mentoring relationships that prevail in the literature as well as their evolution and development over the last four decades. The purpose of the literature review is to provide rationale for the study based on the exploration of a secondary source of data and to stimulate further research questions (McGhee, Marland and Atkinson, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The researcher has undertaken the grounded theory strategy to carry out this study and so has started the work with exploring the topic of interest. Since the essence of grounded theory is to derive meaning from the raw data the author has not proposed any hypothesis and remained open minded for the findings to come (McGhee et al., 2007). For this reason the presented exploratory literature review is to merely increase awareness of the existing knowledge on the topic, and to identify gaps within the literature (Hutchison, 1993, cited in McGhee et al., 2007).

### **2.1. Traditional and Relational Mentorships**

The term Mentor dates back to Greek Mythology when Odysseus entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to Mentor, his friend and advisor. Athena, the goddess of wisdom took form and body of Mentor in order to guide and protect Telemachus (Homer, 1996). The modern use does not diverge much from the original meaning and despite numerous variations on the definition, discussed in more details below, the core value of the traditional mentoring relationship remains the same – mentor is an experienced individual who advises, encourages and serves as a role model to a less experienced person (mentee/protégée) in order to help promote their personal and career development. However, the focus of the most recent studies is on the relational mentoring relationship, which main characteristic is the mutual support and potential

growth of both a mentor and mentee. Various aspects of mentoring relationships and their influence on individuals involved with the mentorship are introduced as they all contribute to the aim of this research.

There is no one generic definition of mentoring, equally valid in all situations, even though the mentoring relationships have been widely discussed in the literature for the last four decades. The pioneering views on traditional mentorship are those of Levinson et al. (1978, cited in Scandura and Pellegrini, 2010) and Kram (1983, 1985, cited in Allen, 2007), and more recently developed by Allen, Scandura, Eby, Clutterbuck and, among many others, Ragins.

Fagenson (1989) presented one of the first, however concise, definitions of a mentor in the modern literature by saying: "[it is] someone in a position of power who looks after you, or gives you advice, or brings your accomplishments to the attention of other people who have power in the company" (p.312). Scandura (1992) and Day and Allen (2004) expand the view by claiming that the mentor can serve as a role model and provide direction on interpersonal and career development. Moreover, they distinguished between formal and informal relationships, where formal mentoring programmes are assigned with organizational assistance, whereas informal ones are developed spontaneously. Kram (1988, cited in Kram and Hall, 1989) go further and suggest that the key role of a mentor, in both formal and informal relationships, is to transfer the knowledge and wisdom in order to help prepare less senior colleagues for further organisational responsibility. Clutterbuck's (2004) definition seems to be the most comprehensive one of that traditional one-way relationship trend:

Mentors provide a spectrum of learning and supporting behaviours, from challenging and being a critical friend to being a role model, from helping to build networks and develop personal resourcefulness to simply being there to listen, from helping people work out what they want to achieve, and why, to planning how they will bring change about. A mentor may also be a conscience friend and – in certain definitions – a godfather or sponsor (p.3)

Even though the abovementioned definitions are still valid and apply in the majority of mentoring relationships, in recent years the researchers started to focus more on Kram's

(1985, cited in Allen and Eby, 2003) early view on the complexity, depth and quality of the interpersonal relationship, which is characterised by its mutuality. Recent literature reflects the shift of focus from the traditional one-way relationship towards the relational one with more emphasis placed on the quality of the relationship and its reciprocity. Ragins (2011), who largely explored Kram's view, explains that relational relationship does not reject traditional view but labels it as an average one with attention solely on the protégé's career advancement that is not always associated with high-quality outcomes for all involved individuals.

Ragins (2005, cited in Ragins 2011; Ragins 2011) explains that relational mentoring theory distinguishes between three relational states: dysfunctional, traditional and high-quality, where the high-quality aspect relates to healthiness and well-functioning of the relationship. Healthy and effective relationships can predict one's psychological health and well-being and meet their need for social interaction (Berscheid and Peplau, 1983, cited in Allen and Eby, 2003). The high-quality relational mentoring represents the very essence of positive relationship that "promotes mutual growth, learning and development within the career context" and beyond (Ragins, 2005, cited in Ragins, 2011, p.519).

The context of the relationship may depend on the type of mentoring and its outcomes. Based on the available literature and for the purpose of this study the author distinguishes between traditional and relational mentoring in the following manner: *traditional* hierarchal, one-way relationship and *relational* interdependent, reciprocal relationship that promotes mutual growth (Ragins, 2011). Both relational and traditional mentoring relationships can be of high-quality with exceptional outcomes for a mentor and mentee where all parties should always strive for being of the highest-quality. Nevertheless, the researchers have proved that the majority of traditional mentorships are only marginally effective and are not as successful as relational relationships (Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett, 2003)

## **2.2. Conditions Influencing Mentorship**

Within traditional and relational mentorships variety of sources identify certain conditions that influence the relationships and learning within: mentor's place within the organisational hierarchy, formality, supervisory versus nonsupervisory mentoring, and level of intimacy (Haggard et al., 2011).

### **2.2.1. Hierarchy**

Majority of studies have recognised mentor as an individual being of more senior position than a protégé. It generally has a positive impact on protégé's career outcomes when the mentor has more connections and power, and can provide more visibility within the organisation (Clutterbuck, 2004; Ragins and Scandura, 1997). As discussed by Lankau and Scandura (2002) the relationship with senior manager can trigger personal learning and provide unique insight into the organisation and oneself as well as become invaluable resource leading to a mentee's development. Peer mentoring has also been suggested where a more experienced colleague serves as a mentor (Kram and Isabella, 1985). Higgins and Kram's (2001) developmental network typology suggests that having simultaneous multiple sources of mentoring (including peers) can be mutually beneficial for the relationship. Nonetheless, Haggard et al. (2011) point out that peer mentoring, even if supportive in a work environment, does not have the same power in career development.

### **2.2.2. Formal and Informal**

The basic distinction between formal and informal mentorship lies in the initiation and formation processes as well as in length of the relationship. Informal mentoring is created spontaneously between individuals based on their mutual attraction, identification and career needs and personal issues. An informal mentorship is formed and exists without any involvement from the organisation and usually last for a number of years, whereas formal mentorships are initiated, managed and structured by the

organisation and last for approximately one or two years. (Allen, Day and Lentz, 2005; Chao, Walz and Gardner, 1992; Haggard, 2012).

Results of a study by Chao, Walz and Gardner (1992) and later research by Ragins and Cotton (1999) showed that mentees in informal mentoring relationships reported significantly higher career-related support than did mentees in formal mentorships, nonetheless both groups received the same amount of psychological support. Informal mentorships also have positive influence on mentor's careers. A study by Allen, Lentz and Day (2006) showed a positive correlation of mentoring others in both formal and informal relationships, with both objective and subjective career outcomes. Objective carrier success was associated with salary and promotion rate and subjective one with intangible benefits i.e. self-satisfaction and accomplishment. Also, mentors in informal mentorship may be more motivated to stay in the relationship as it forms naturally and is not forced by the organisation. Whereas, formal mentoring programmes may provide mentors with visibility and organisational recognition something that might be missing in, otherwise very successful, informal mentorships (Ragins and Cotton, 1999).

### ***2.2.3. Supervisory and nonsupervisory***

Two contradictory trends prevail in the literature on whether or not mentors should be immediate supervisors of their mentees. Scandura and Williams (2004) labelled mentoring provided by an immediate supervisor of a mentee as supervisory mentoring. Some studies do not explicitly acknowledge whether the mentor is an immediate supervisor, when others suggest that sizeable percentage of mentoring relationships develop within supervisor-subordinate framework (Day and Allen, 2004; Burke and McKeen, 1997).

Haggard et al. (2011) imply that a manager as an immediate supervisor of the protégé would have more power "to make things happen" (p.290) for the mentee's career and provide more career focused functions than nonsupervisory mentor. Similar outcomes are presented in an earlier work by Fagenson-Eland, Marks and Amendola (1997) who

claimed that supervisory relationship affects protégé's skills development and their intention to stay with the organisation. Furthermore, a study by Scandura and Williams (2004) respondents within supervisory mentoring relationships reported receiving more career-related support than those with nonsupervisory mentors.

Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992), however, completely excludes supervisors from the mentoring role as it might hinder the relationship and make a protégé less comfortable discussing sensitive matters with a mentor who is an immediate supervisor. Lankau and Scandura (2002) claim that nonsupervisory relationship that provides psychological support encourages a mentee to ask questions and discuss fears. Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton (2009) describe it as a psychological safety that occurs in high-quality relationships, where individuals feel comfortable to speak up without being concerned about the consequences of doing so. This psychological safety may encourage mutuality within individuals that increases willingness to share critical information, new ideas and insights, which in turns fosters learning. According to a study by Walsh et al (2002, cited in Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton, 2009) individuals were somewhat willing to disclose their mistakes with their supervisor but only when the relationship had high degree of mutuality. Therefore, the study suggests that nonsupervisory mentoring relationships might be of higher quality than supervisory ones as it is easier to maintain mutuality and sense of personal safety among mentees and mentors.

An important factor was pointed out by Rousseau (1995, cited in Haggard, 2012) who claimed that mentors, who are immediate supervisors of their protégés, can act as "organisational agents" and influence the relationship so that it fits the organisational needs. Therefore, it might cause confusion among protégés, who would not know whether mentors are contracting on behalf of the organisation or as genuine and sincere individuals. Similarly, Scandura and Williams (2004) indicated that a crash might occur when a mentor tries to reinforce the organisational vision on a mentee, whose higher priority lies in their own interests than the organisational one. That would not be an

issue for mentees with external mentors, since they act on their own behalf (Rousseau, 1995, cited in Haggard, 2012).

Further, Haack (2006) suggested that a mentor, who is an immediate supervisor of a mentee, should not be involved in the process of assigning promotions and rewards to their mentee as it may cause discontent on both management level and among mentee's peers. It could therefore lead to a situation where the relationship lacks tangible reciprocity and mutuality, and becomes a one-way relationship (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2010). Poulsen (2013) also stressed the importance of nonsupervisory (off-line) relationships stating that they minimise the risk of conflicting interests, dilemmas and ensure confidentiality.

The nonsupervisory mentoring is connected with higher level of intimacy and strength of the relationship (Higgins and Kram, 2001). Kram (1985, cited in Higgins and Kram, 2001) suggests that strong-tie relationships with psychosocial functions and mutual trust intensify personal learning and are critical to protégé's sense of identity and effectiveness. Therefore, it can be examined if such strong nonsupervisory relationships may also be associated with mentor's personal learning and development. This study investigates whether mentor can benefit, learn and develop in the nonsupervisory relationship and how the relationship impacts on their career development.

## **2.3. Mentoring Functions**

### ***2.3.1. Career and Psychological functions***

Mentor can serve as a powerful tool that sparks enthusiasm and excitement in the mentee and makes their behaviour more efficient in the business world and everyday life. This perspective derives from Kram's (1985, as cited in Johnson, Rose and Schlosser, 2010) pioneering work, where she distinguishes between career and psychological mentoring functions, giving a clear guidelines and scope for the future research for decades to come.

The career functions are described as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, challenging assignment, coaching and protection. The psychological functions are counselling, friendship, acceptance and confirmation, (Haggard et al., 2011; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller and Marchese, 2006). Lankau and Scandura (2002) note that the psychological support contributes to critical-thinking, generates trust and encourages a mentee to resolve problems instead of providing ready-made solutions. The theme of mentoring functions and their influence on a protégé received considerable attention, and even though researchers have also concentrated on the mentors' perspective (Allen and Eby, 2003; Allen, 2007), the study has not been so extensively developed.

### **2.3.2. Role modelling function**

The third dimension, role modelling, has emerged in Scandura's work (1992), and however important the function might be it has been disputed whether it is a separate dimension or a part of a psychological function (Kram, 1985, cited in Haggard et al., 2011; Clutterbuck, 2004). Nevertheless, a protégé will more probably imitate mentor's behaviours and attitudes if they identify with them and treat them as a role model. Since mentors are generally more business and politically knowledgeable, this role-modelling function may develop political skills as well as business and political acumen among mentees (Lankau and Scandura, 2002; Ferris et al., 2005). Based on Scandura's (1992) studies, Bozionelos (2004) concluded that role-modelling increases the likelihood that a person, who had a mentor as role model, will exercise this behaviour later on in their career and also become a mentor.

All of the abovementioned functions are developed through the sensitive guidance provided by the mentors, who can help the mentee "determine their real strengths and interests and guide them toward the area and level of their greatest potential" (Haack, 2006). In addition, Thrash and Elliot (2003, 2004) recommended an interesting perspective on role modelling approach by proposing the inspiration factor. They claim that traditional perspective ignores the possibility of a mentor being inspired by a

mentee and focuses only on protégé's admiration with a mentor, whereas in the relational mentoring, a mentor might be inspired by their mentee. The mutual inspiration might lead to more creative behaviour and spark fresh way of thinking and looking and work and life with new perspective (Thrash, et al. 2010).

### **2.3.3. Relational functions**

The complexity of mentoring relationship gives rise to a range of outcomes for a protégé and mentor. There has been a shift in the literature moving from the instrumental career-related one towards more developmental and relational outcomes of the relationships, which "are not simply tickets to advancement in organizational settings" (Eby, Butts et al., 2010, p. 83). It implies that the overall quality of the interaction between a mentor and protégé can be influenced by their emotions and personal characteristics and so they have an impact on their behaviours, personality and moods, not only compensation and promotion at work. Eby, Butts et al. (2010) describe these as subjective states and affective reactions to the mentoring relationships, which are associated with the following outcomes: quality of relationships, motivational indicators, intentions to stay in the relationship, willingness to mentor in the future and burnout. Eby, Butts et al.'s (2010) view on the complexity and quality of the relationship fits into Ragin's (2011) high-quality relational mentoring, where both members and their needs are continually evolving. According to Dutton and Heaphy (2003, cited in Ragins, 2011) traditional approaches that simply measure the relationships' outcomes, such as compensation and career advancement, fail to capture the effectiveness of high-quality mentorship. For example, a high-quality mentoring relationship may be perceived as exceptionally successful by both a mentor and protégé, as it provides them with work-life balance and visibility within the organisation. However, a researcher, whose sole criterion for measuring the outcomes is a salary raise, will conclude the relationship as ineffective.

### **2.3.4. Holistic approach of relational mentoring**

The outcomes of a high-quality relational relationship may reach outer layers of the workplace and change the quality of individuals' lives in all other contexts. Every relationship not only mentoring ones, changes and influences people. Since one cannot completely separate their work life from their personal life, these changes influence every aspect of their existence (Ragins, 2011). The example would be a skill to cope with stress (Kram and Hall, 1989) and ability to balance work and family interests by minimising work-life conflicts (Nielson, Carlson and Lankau, 2001). It also might improve family and friends relations due to increased cognitive coaching skills (McCorkel-Clinard and Ariav, 1998).

### **2.4. Mentoring and Learning**

Ragins and Kram's (2007) claim that mentoring can profoundly alter ones lives and inspire mutual learning, growth and development. According to Kram (1985, cited in Allen and Eby, 2003) and Allen (2007) mentoring relationship is a complex process, where both individuals (mentor and protégé) have different responsibilities to carry and roles to play and where the success of the relationship is contingent on the behaviours of both parties and their active involvement.

As mentoring is heavily context dependent so is the effectiveness of the relationship (Clutterbuck, 2004). Kram (2004) suggests that "the most effective strategies for fostering mentoring depend on the context in which they are implemented, the purpose of such initiatives, and the values , skills and attitudes of potential participants" (Kram, 2004, p.xii). Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2010) argue that no matter how effective is the relationship or the context in which it is set it always involves knowledge acquisition on both parts. Similarly, Ragins (2011) claims that mentoring relationship is a form of a partnership, where both mentor and protégé agree to enter into a learning partnership, where personal learning takes place. This view falls within a relational mentoring

framework, which unlike traditional one, is more reciprocal and involves mutual influence and growth.

#### **2.4.1. Personal learning**

Kram (1996, cited in Lankau and Scandura 2002) recognised mentoring relationship as an important tool through which individuals enhance personal learning. She explains it as “knowledge acquisition, skills, or competencies contributing to individual development, including the interpersonal competencies of self-reflection, self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback [which] invoke greater understanding of oneself” (1996, cited in Lankau and Scandura, 2002, p.780). Personal learning requires getting an insight into one’s own values, strengths and weaknesses, as well as identification of potential for personal growth and development. It is often supported by mutual feedback and successful communication between a protégé and mentor (Higgins and Kram, 2001, Srivastava and Thakur, 2013). Furthermore, Gouillard and Kelly (1995, cited in Lankau and Scandura, 2002) claim that personal learning, otherwise called the acquisition of self-knowledge, builds self-esteem, which in turns translates into more valuable contribution towards the organisation.

#### **2.4.2. Relational job learning and personal skills development**

Lankau and Scandura (2002) further distinguish between two dimensions of personal learning: relational job learning and personal skills development. They describe the relational job learning as an interdependence of one’s job to other people in the organisation; whereas personal skill development as learning and acquiring new interpersonal skills that “enable better working relationships” (p.780).

According to Baker (2009) personal skills define individuals’ personality, their abilities and expertness. There are inborn skills like personality traits and others that are acquired throughout life and formal education such as personal skills and work skills. Ferris et al. (2005) claim that the latter, otherwise called technical skills, are considered

outdated and cannot constitute for the important aspect of personal development. They argue that individual's political skills have to be considered for people and organisations to evolve (Ferris et al, 2005). These political skills are described as being flexible and adaptable and having strong interpersonal and networking skills (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004, cited in Chopin et al., 2012). Political skills i.e. gaining influence and building reputation can be learned and increased through experience and should play a big part in the mentoring relationships (Ferris et al., 2005). According to Lankau and Scandura (2002) other personal skills required in mentoring relationships, preferably those aiming to achieve a high-quality level, are effective communication, active and attentive listening, problem solving and creativity in developing relationships with others in the organisation.

As for relational job learning, Baumeister and Larry (1995, cited in Srivastava and Thakur, 2013) claim that frequent interactions with others encourage mentors and mentees to engage in authentic thoughts, feelings and genuine responses. This in turns leads to 'reflection thinking' that is triggered by the interaction with others (Hall, 1996, as cited in Lankau and Scandura, 2002). Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom's (1999) view on specific behaviours, such as, encouragement of stepping out of one's mental frame in order to see different possibilities corresponds with a role of a mentor, who facilitates learning and encourages a mentee to 'think outside the box'.

A study by Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton (2009) explores relational learning further and add that high-quality interpersonal relationships allow members to exchange ideas, find solutions to problems and share their experiences as well as find ways to improve work processes. Thus, mentoring relationship that are of high quality can create personal learning opportunities and combine both relational job learning and personal skills development. The most important aspect of relational job learning, as well as the relational mentoring relationship in general, is the mutual growth, learning and personal, professional and career development.

## **2.5. Benefits for a mentor**

A substantial amount of research has proved that the primary goal of every mentoring relationship is protégé's growth and development (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2010; Kram 1985, cited in Eby, Butts et al. 2010). Views associated with positive outcomes of the mentoring relationship has not been as deeply investigated as the protégé's perspective, nevertheless, the literature provides examples of the positive influence on the career outcomes associated with mentoring others. Ragins and Scandura's study (1999) suggests that mentor receives more intangible benefits (i.e. fulfilment, satisfaction) than mentees. A study by Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) reports mentor's intangible outcomes such as building of support networks and continual skills development for senior employees. More recently, Allen, Lentz and Day (2006) conducted a study comparing mentors and non-mentors and their results indicated greater tangible outcomes than were suggested in the previous studies. The individuals, who self-identified themselves as mentors, reported higher salary, promotion rates but also intangible subjective career outcomes i.e. self-satisfaction and accomplishment.

One of the themes that emerge from the research of Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) is that the mentors "often learned as much from the protégé as the protégé learned from them" (p.87). The findings by Rekha and Ganesh (2012) indicate that mentors learn soft skills such as interpersonal skills and leadership skills. Furthermore, benefits associated with being a mentor proposed by other theorists are generativity, which is the feeling of fulfilment and sense of immortality derived from passing on the knowledge to next generations (Erikson, 1963, cited in Ragins and Scandura, 1999), internal satisfaction from passing on the wisdom, skills, and experience among those who might be experiencing mid-career plateauing as well as fresh perspective and self-rejuvenation as a result of associating with younger people (Chao, 1990, cited in Allen, 2007; Levinson et al., 1978, cited in Scandura and Pellegrini, 2010). Ragins and Scandura's (1999) study suggests that individuals, who had previous experience with mentoring - formal or

informal or as protégés or mentors, are more likely to benefit more from the mentoring relationship than those without any prior experience.

## **2.6. Negative effects of mentoring others**

Not every mentoring relationship will reach its full potential and become successful. It is less common in the event of informal relationship, which forms naturally and spontaneously and usually creates a very strong and long-lasting bond, very often for life (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). However, according to the literature, negative mentoring outcomes exist, regardless of the formality.

The one negative effect that is recognised across the literature is associated with the time the mentoring takes away from other significant activities (Allen, Lentz and Day, 2006; Allen, Poteet and Burroughs, 1997). Another drawback that might have serious consequences is the toxic and damaging relationship, where a protégé uses the relationship for their own benefit in a destructive way, after which the mentor is not usually willing to enter into one again (Allen, Poteet and Burroughs, 1997; Feldman, 1999, cited in Allen, 2007). Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) also identify factors such as favouritism to protégé that can negatively influence the relationship with co-workers, and feelings of failure, when the mentorship does not work out. Eby and McManus (2004, cited in Allen, 2007) go even further and distinguish the following negative and somewhat extreme mentoring drawbacks: "exploitation and egocentricity, malevolent deceptions, sabotage, harassment, interpersonal difficulty, spoiling, benign deceptions, submissiveness, performance below expectations, and unwillingness to learn" (p. 136). Even though negative effects are unavoidable, in the case of formal relationships they could be buffered by discreet monitoring and evaluation by the organisation in order to maintain the appropriate quality and minimise the risks of destructiveness of the relationships. Also, the key to successful mentoring relationship is mentors and mentee's patience, perseverance and good communication (Haack, 2006), which implies it requires hard work of both parties involved.

The study by Eby, Butts et al. (2010) shows that mentor's negative experiences are easier neutralised and would not have such damaging effect on their everyday work and career as it would be in the protégé's case. This is because a mentor can distance themselves from the relationship with the mentee if they feel that their efforts are not appreciated or that the attempts to develop their protégé seem futile. The study claims that mentoring relationships are significantly marked by differences in power between a mentor and mentee. They reflect that mentor has sufficient power to cause damage to both personal and professional image of a protégé. An example provided shows a disgruntled mentor who presents their mentee's performance to senior management in an unfavourable light hinting that a protégé does not work well under stress and has serious personality flaws. A mentor could also be delegating a mentee to inappropriate tasks and taking credit for their work (Eby et al. 2000, cited in Eby, Butts et al. 2010). Studies conducted on reciprocity within relationships suggest that "individuals reciprocate with like behaviours" (Haggard, 2012). Mentors harmful behaviour can trigger similar mentees' destructive behaviour towards them. In addition, "individuals who encounter negative experiences feel more than disappointed at unmet expectations" (Haggard, 2012, p. 163). As illustrated, a mentee can also damage mentor's reputation, however, these bad experiences reported by mentors are usually less profound and damaging than those reported by mentees (Eby, Butts et al. 2010).

In general, the literature suggests that overall the benefits outbalance the costs (Ragins and Scandura, 1999), however Eby, Butts et al. (2010) remark that the balance between good and bad experiences have to be assessed by the context of the relationship itself, as the costs and benefits differ between mentors and mentees. In most circumstances, mentors have more power over their protégés and the abovementioned examples are possible in both supervisory and nonsupervisory relationships.

## Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

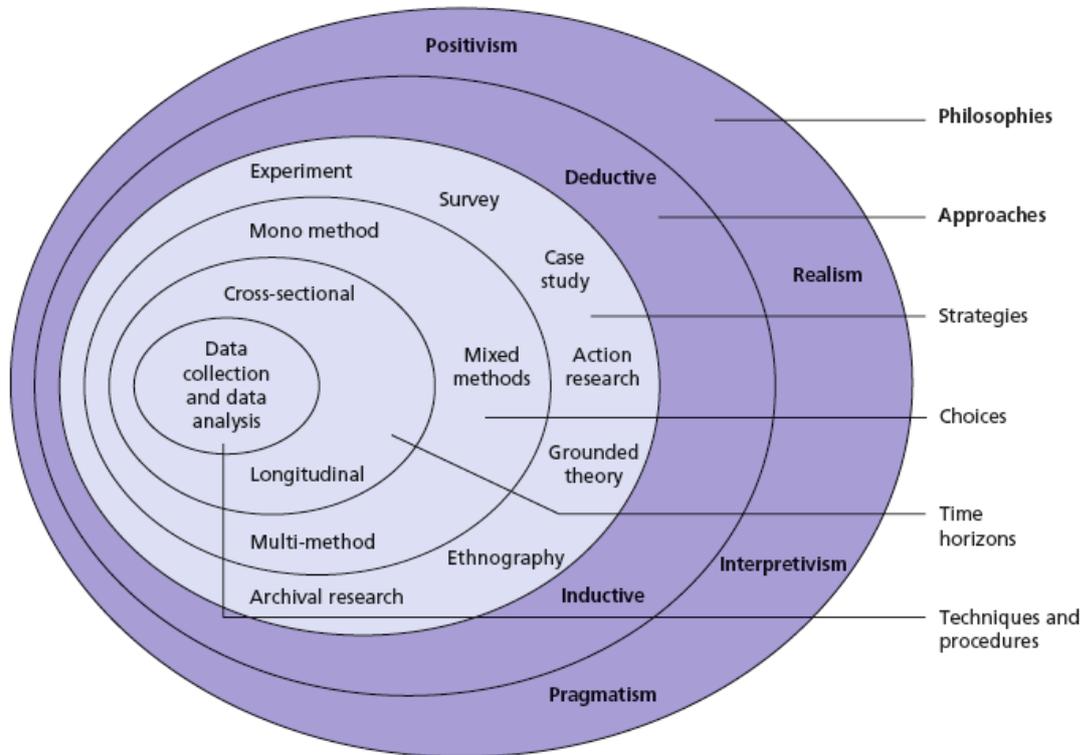
This chapter presents the research methodology, which is the way of thinking about approaching the research and applying the techniques and procedures to enquire into the subject (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). It explains the theory of how to conduct the research and the decisions made that underpin that theory. It also explains methods, which are individual tools, techniques and procedures for conducting the research. The example of research methods would be interviews as data collection tool and coding as data analysis technique (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Tornhill, 2012).

According to Wynekoop and Russo (1997, cited in Reiter, Stewart and Bruce, 2011) the chosen research method depends on the research objectives and aims, the author's current knowledge in the area of the study and data available to them. As each method has its advantages and disadvantages, the majority of social science research methods have to be considered to choose the most appropriate one for the particular study (Reiter et al. 2011).

This research uncovered the truth about phenomena of mentoring relationships from the perspective of the mentors in order to understand their subjective point of view (Marais, 2012). The aim of this research was to identify and analyse mentor's perspective on specific career outcomes, and learning and development of personal skills as a result of mentoring others in a nonsupervisory environment. The study required in-depth investigations and interpretation of the collected data in order to gather deep understanding of mentor's perceptions on their personal development, and the benefits of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships.

The following subsections of this methodology chapter will provide details of various philosophies, approaches and reasons for adopting some and rejecting other methods to meet the abovementioned research objectives. These are based on Saunders, Lewis and Torhill's (2009) Research Onion (Figure 3). The Research Onion gave the author a

structure and guidance for choosing appropriate methods to collect data and techniques to analyse them properly, as well as influenced the quality and nature of the research.



**Figure 3 The Research Onion**

The Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Tornhill, 2009, p.108)

### 3.1. Research philosophy

The first layer of the Research Onion (Figure 3) relates to the research philosophy, which is “the critical analysis of the fundamental assumptions and beliefs held by an individual” (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). It relates to the nature and development of knowledge and influences the way the author thinks about the research process and ways to find out about this knowledge (Saunders et al., 2012). The importance of exploration of basic philosophical concepts, positions and traditions cannot be emphasised enough, as it guides the author to the overall research strategy and data collection techniques through the understanding of assumptions made about the world (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007). The researcher has to be familiarised with the philosophies of the business

environment to clarify the research stages and justify the steps chosen as each philosophy “is suited to ‘achieving’ different things” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 129; Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2008). The three most common concepts within the philosophy of science are:

- ✓ ontology - the nature of reality and social phenomena as entity
- ✓ epistemology - what is considered acceptable knowledge in a field of study
- ✓ axiology - looks at the values about judgements (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012)

### **3.1.1. Ontology**

There are many philosophical concepts that have to be considered in order to guide the researcher into the core of the Research Onion (Figure 3). Ontology reflects the researcher’s assumptions about the world (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Within ontology, which is the starting point for most of the philosophical debates, there are two aspects significant in the business environment: objectivism and subjectivism (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012).

#### **3.1.1.1. Objectivism**

Objectivism assumes that all objects have assigned purpose and existence, which are not influenced by the environment and human intervention (Crotty, 1998, cited in Saunders et al., 2012). People within that environment are independent social actors and have no influence on that external social entity (Saunders et al., 2012).

#### **3.1.1.2. Subjectivism**

Subjectivism, often called social-constructionism, holds the stance that the social entities and phenomena are created and influenced by the perceptions, actions and interactions of people. Subjectivism requires deep understanding of the individuals’ subjective reality, their motives, beliefs, actions and intentions (Saunders et al., 2012). In constructionism,

a researcher presents a specific version of reality that is constantly under revision, rather than something definitive (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Strauss (1993, cited in Corbin and Strauss, 2008) claimed that the world cannot stand still and nothing is strictly determined.

### **3.1.2. Epistemology**

The literature describes epistemology as a philosophy that defines the way knowledge is produced in particular circumstances and answers the question “what is knowledge and what are the sources and limits of knowledge?” (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007, p.14). It also defines what is considered appropriate knowledge about the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Epistemological position distinguishes between three important aspects: positivism, realism and interpretivism.

#### **3.1.2.1. Positivism**

Positivism claims that the reality exists independently of the observer and that “only things that are measurable can be dealt with” (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007, p. 18). The positivist research philosophy, adopted from natural sciences, uses the cause and effect principle by measuring, examining and studying the variables, conditions and reactions between them. This method suggests that the author should propose a hypothesis that can be confirmed or rejected by the findings based on facts rather than impressions of the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders and Lewis, 2012)

#### **3.1.2.2. Realism**

Realism also sees reality as a material that is independent of our knowledge of its existence but can be understood by using multiple methods and identification of various structures (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012). The basis of the research philosophy of realism is that “what our senses show us as reality is the truth” (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 105). Critical realism, a more specific form of realism, aims to identify particular structures in order to amend and change them (Bryman and Bell,

2007). Realism is an important aspect in business research as it urges the researchers to look beneath the surface and see the relationships and structures that influence the reality (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

### **3.1.2.3. Interpretivism**

Interpretivism focuses on studying social phenomena in their natural environment and unlike positivism and realism it is about understanding and interpreting human behaviours, the social world around people and its meaning, rather than proposing and testing theories or conducting research about objects in a law-like manner. Bryman and Bell (2011) suggested that since the natural sciences differ significantly from the social sciences alternative research methods and logic of research procedures should apply in the social studies. The core of interpretivism is the understanding of people as social actors and their subjective emotions, perceptions and behaviour. Unlike positivism and realism it seeks to understand a human action, not the forces that influenced the action (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It investigates the complex world of an organisation with its unique situations and behaviours that create original social phenomena (Saunders and Lewis, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012). In interpretivism, data collection and analysis entail gathering qualitative data through in-depth investigations from much smaller samples than in positivism (Saunders and Tosey, 2012).

### **3.1.3. *The author's research philosophy***

The abovementioned definitions were important to show crucial distinctions between various philosophical positions. The researcher's own philosophical stance and the assumptions about the world underpinned the research strategy and the methods used to meet the objectives (Saunders et al., 2012). As the author believes that the world is a complex place that is influenced by people's action and interactions she adopted a subjective aspect of an ontological position and interpretivism within the epistemological position. The subjective ontology highlights the importance of people in the organisation, in this study the mentors, whose individual actions, perceptions and emotions shape and

add meaning to particular situations. Unlike objective ontology, subjectivism focuses on the role of the 'social actors' not the reality external to those actors (Saunders et al. 2012). The interpretivist aspect of epistemological position gave the researcher more flexibility in gathering in-depth data on the impact of mentoring relationships. The author interpreted the social interactions of mentors with mentees, their perceptions and emotions that influenced their actions within their mentoring relationships. Interpretivism allowed the author to understand the differences between people as the social actors with their subjective view of the world and personal perspective. This value-bond philosophy, where a researcher became a part of the process by entering the business world of mentors, was beneficial in analysing the collected data on individual mentor's personal skills development and the understanding of their perspectives on the career outcomes as a result of their mentoring experience. The personal insight of the mentors enabled the researcher to examine the quality of relationships and their reciprocity. It is argued that interpretivism is an appropriate philosophy for the business environment especially in the human resource management field (Saunders and Tosey, 2012), however, the author had to be wary of its own values and beliefs and make a clear distinction between the subject of the research with its social world and the author's own point of view. The author had to understand participants' views and interpret them from their perspectives without affecting it with her own personal beliefs, biases and pre-conceptions (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Nevertheless, the researcher had to be curious and learn to trust her instincts (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

### **3.2. Research approach**

The research approach constitutes an important part of the research design and explains how the author approached the process of gathering and analysing data, and how they relate to meeting the research objectives (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008).

Saunders and Lewis (2012) identify two main research approaches: deductive and inductive.

### **3.2.1. Deduction**

Deductive approach explains casual relationships between variables and involves designing research strategy to test the theoretical proposition and formulate very specific conclusions (Saunders et al., 2012). The process of deduction is guided by the theory and starts with its revision and deduction of a hypothesis based on what is already known on a particular subject. After thorough data collection, preferably from large samples, testing of the hypothesis and analysis of the findings the proposed hypothesis is either confirmed or rejected. Finally, the theory is revised based on the findings (Bryan and Bell, 2007). Deductive approach measures only the cause and effects between variables or 'unthinking object' through very rigid methodology without allowing the context or environment to influence the findings (Saunders et al., 2012).

### **3.2.2. Induction**

Induction develops and builds theory as a result of an observation and gathering of empirical data, in other words the theory is simply the outcome of research (Bryman, 2008). Social scientists argue that inductive approach is more appropriate in social sciences than deductive approach, as it allows the researchers to understand the interviewees' point of view and their interpretation of the social world. It also provides more flexibility in conducting the research, something that is missing in the deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2012). Induction is more often associated with the qualitative research, as opposed to deductive approach that is mainly used as a tool in quantitative studies (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

### **3.2.3. The author's approach**

Considering the aims of this study and the characteristics of this research the implementation of the flexible inductive approach associated with social sciences was an obvious choice (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). While conducting this research, the author collected data from mentors through semi-structured interviews and explored the

phenomena identifying the patterns and themes emerging from the interview stage. Induction allowed the author to develop deeper understanding of the mentors' work environment and perceive the variety of their perspectives on nonsupervisory mentorship. Consequently, the author attempted to examine the quality of those relationships and whether they had any tangible or intangible influence on their development, career and learning outcomes.

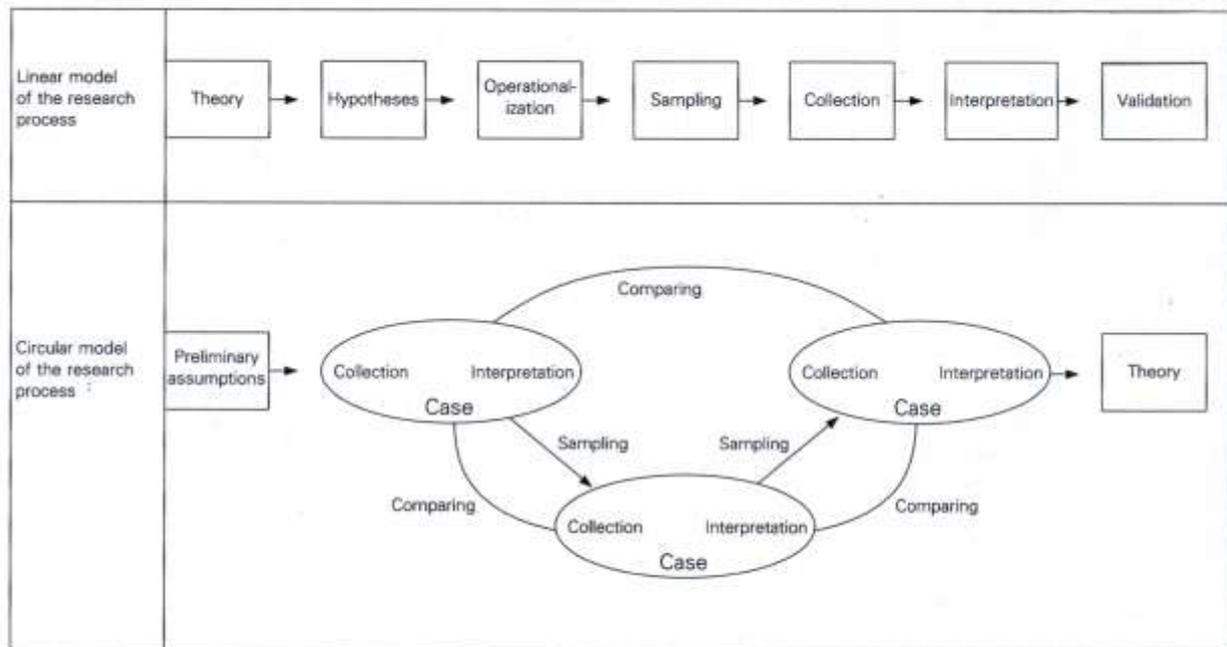
The grounded theory research strategy, described in more details in the following sections, required from the researcher to 'test' the findings through subsequent data collection, which is a feature of a deductive approach (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Therefore, it could be stated that the researcher attempted to the combination of approaches as a result of grounded theory strategy.

### **3.3. Methodological choice**

The methodological choices strongly impact on the overall design and coherence of the project. The researcher had several methodological choices to choose from when designing the project: qualitative, quantitative and mixed (Saunders et al., 2012). For instance, the author could have used a mono method quantitative design using only questionnaires or multimethod quantitative, where more than one quantitative data collection technique is used, for example, structured observation in addition to questionnaires. A mixed method design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering information and analysing it (Saunders and Tosey, 2012) could have been used, however Marais (2012) states that extreme caution is required while using multiple methodological approaches.

Quantitative research method usually follows a very formalised and rigid methodology, focuses on the phenomenon under study in isolation and emphasises numerical data collection and analysis. It is often associated with positivist epistemology and objectivist ontology while following deductive approach (Bryman and Bell, 2008; Marais, 2012). The elaborate theory usually precedes the research process, which tends to follow the

traditional linear model and test the variables instead of getting in-depth understanding of the participants (Figure 4, Flick, 2002, p. 44).



**Figure 4 Models of process and theory**

*Models of process and theory (Flick, 2002, p.44)*

Since the research has an exploratory nature, which is characterised by gaining an insight into the topic of interest through the literature, and interviews with experts in the particular field (Saunders et al, 2012), a mono method qualitative design with corresponding analysis choices were employed. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to get the direct access to participants and build rapport in order to discover the nature of their business and gain understanding of individuals' perspectives through one-on-one in-depth interviews (Saunders and Tosey, 2012). The use of quantitative research method would not have generated the thorough insight into mentors' perceptions on the impact of mentoring relationships on their learning and skills development and the quality of the relationships the same way the qualitative method had.

### **3.4. Research strategy**

Another aspect of the research process concerns the strategy, which is “a plan of action to achieve a goal” (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173) and which is strongly influenced by the methodological choices. Strategies associated with qualitative research are case study, action research, ethnography, narrative research and grounded theory (Saunders et al., 2012). Each strategy is governed by its own procedures and can be applied in variety of circumstances. As the research followed the interpretivism philosophy and was of inductive qualitative nature the grounded theory was applied as it was well suited to explain social interactions, behaviours and processes in various business situations (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007).

#### **3.4.1. Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is a strategy that seeks to develop theory “from data produced from the accounts of social actors” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, cited in Saunders et al. 2012; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The purpose of this social research strategy is to interpret and explain the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences and social interactions (Saunders et al., 2012).

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2007) quote the founders of the grounded theory Glaser and Strauss (1967) who saw it as a ‘comparative method’, in other words it required the researcher to look at the same process in different settings or situations (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007). That is why the author gathered data from various respondents, working in different departments, organisations and even countries. However, the key was to get an insight from mentors, with practical experience in nonsupervisory mentoring relationships. The author endeavoured to infer the critical meaning on the outcomes of those relationships and to understand the social interactions constructed by the mentors.

Another important aspect and strength of grounded theory is its 'circularity' and closeness of collecting and interpreting data which "forces the researcher to permanently reflect on the whole research process and on particular steps in the light of the other steps" (Flick, 2002, p. 43). It is in opposition to the quantitative research method that follows linear research process (Figure 4, Flick, 2002, p. 44). This circularity allowed the author to get a deeper understanding of the mentorship by constant collection of new data and identification of gaps that had to be filled in during the following interviews until reaching the theoretical saturation, where no new data emerged (Saunders et al., 2012)

In grounded theory data are being systematically collected and analysed, so that theories and categories emerge from the findings (Morse and Richards, 2002, cited in Reiter et al., 2011; Urquhart, Lehmann and Myers, 2010). The overall strategy of this study was to develop a theory out of the information collected from mentors. Initially, pursuant to grounded theory, the researcher did not propose, suggest or predict any theories nor tested any hypotheses. Instead, the author analysed the thoroughly recorded data collected through the first in-depth interview, and developed questions and propositions to test them while conducting the following interviews. This circular process of comparing, contrasting and identifying emerging codes, concepts and categories let the author build a new theory (Saunders et al., 2012).

'Grounded Theory' in its original form, created by Glaser and Strauss (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2007; Saunders et al., 2012) evolved significantly since its formation and even their own personal views on the theory diverged, causing confusion on the matter among the researchers (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007). For the purpose of this research, the author applied grounded theory more closely related to that of Strauss, Corbin and Charmaz than Glaser (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012).

### **3.5. Time horizon**

Saunders et al. (2012) suggest two time horizons, these are cross-sectional and longitudinal. Cross-sectional time horizon is a study that is taken at a particular time. It is often applied in the academic environment and explains how different factors are related to one another and influence the organisational environment. The longitudinal design, on the other hand, examines the change and development of events and explores the process of change during significantly longer period of time.

The applicable time horizon for this project was the cross-sectional study, as it called for the analysis and exploration of very particular mentoring relationships. Also, due to time constraints, the longitudinal time horizon was impossible to apply since the author had only three months to conduct and finalise the project.

### **3.6. Sample**

In this particular study the population on which the researcher based the findings relates to all mentors in nonsupervisory mentoring relationships. Since it was beyond the bounds of the author's possibility to interview the whole population of nonsupervisory mentors, a sample that would have represented these had to be chosen (Walliman, 2006). The study was based on non-probability sampling, which implied that the respondents were selected using non-random selection methods and provided specific in-depth and information-rich data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In order to meet the research objectives and be compliant with grounded theory the author used purposive theoretical sampling as it focused on a particular sub-group, which created rich and detailed data from the extensive insight from the participants (Saunders et al., 2012). In this case, the theoretical sampling constituted of executives and managers from various backgrounds, who were in mentoring relationships as mentors, and who were not mentees' immediate supervisors. This non-probability purposive homogenous sampling is often used with grounded theory strategy and allows exploring participants' extensive experience in great depth (Saunders et al., 2012).

In order to identify and get access to primary data sources, the researcher reached to a number of organisations and individuals in Ireland, the United Kingdom and Poland and kept in touch with those who responded in order to clarify researcher's expectations and set the background for the study. The author made the strict time allocations clear, and made sure the mentors were available for interviews in the summer months.

The mentors expressed their willingness to help and to provide their insight into mentoring relationships in which they had been involved for years. Majority of the identified mentors were not from the same organisation or industry, which provided the diversity and variety of perspectives and ensured greater validity of gathered data. They all shared similar extensive experience in management and non-supervisory mentorship, and were in the executive positions in their own organisations. The researcher conducted seven interviews: the first two participants were from the company based in the United Kingdom that provides bespoke training programmes and consultancy services for employers. Participant A was a Health and Social Care Manager and was involved in both supervisory and informal nonsupervisory relationships, which provided the author with a wide range of views on mentorship. Participant B was Equality and Diversity Manager also with both nonsupervisory and supervisory mentoring experience. The third interview with Respondent C was conducted with an Events and Marketing Director, who works in a media publishing company in Poland and is an owner of an event management company; the mentoring experience was based on informal nonsupervisory relationships. The next two participants were from the world's leading management consultancy and advisory firm based in the United Kingdom. Participant D was a Global Knowledge Manager, expert in leadership development, talent and HR and Participant F was Organization Practice Global Operations Specialist. Their company provides a wide range of mentoring initiatives and apart from various informal mentoring relationships that are expected to form within the organisation the company provides a formal nonsupervisory mentoring programme for their employees. Respondent E was an owner of a PR company and was involved with the formal nonsupervisory mentoring programme

geared towards female entrepreneurs starting their own businesses. The programme was organised by the Irish Government and The European Commission. The last interview, with Participant G was with a former General Manager at a Students' Union in one of the universities in the United Kingdom with extensive informal as well as formal external mentorship experience.

### **3.7. Data collection and analysis**

The core of the Research Onion (Fig. 3) relates to the techniques and procedures of data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). The initial step of collecting data in order to meet the research objectives of this study was the use the secondary data. Only after, the author proceeded to primary data collection through interviews with mentors.

#### **3.7.1. Secondary data**

Secondary data such as surveys and journals supplied additional source of information and guided the researcher towards the topic of the study and identification of the gaps in the literature (Saunders et al., 2012). Multiple source secondary data used in the literature review served as a starting point for identifying key mentoring and personal learning issues and set the context for the subsequent primary data collection. It had to be consistent with the specific procedures related with grounded theory strategy to provide information for interpretation and analysis of the findings. In grounded theory the data collection and analysis processes are interrelated and the first steps of data analysis started soon after first interviews were conducted (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

#### **3.7.2. Research Interviews**

Interviewing techniques, etiquette, preparation and delivery was a key for effective interviews. The interaction before, during and after the interview as well as the way the author communicated with the interviewees had an impact on the effectiveness of the meeting (Leanne, 2004). The author made every effort to demonstrate credibility and competence, to arrive few minutes early, make sure the tools and electronic equipment

is working properly, be well-prepared and show professionalism in the way she behaved. The researcher endeavoured to show gratitude about the meeting, make the participants comfortable and tried to establish a good rapport with the interviewees. This way the atmosphere was more favourable and the participants felt more comfortable and willing to talk openly about their feelings and experiences (Leanne, 2004; Saunders et al., 2012)

Saunders et al. (2012) caution to pay particular attention to data quality issues while designing and conducting semi-structured interviews in the qualitative research. These are reliability, forms of bias, generalisability and validity (p. 381). Reliability ensures that alternative studies on this subject conducted by other researchers would entail similar results. However, due to the dynamics, complexity and uniqueness of the mentoring relationships this concept is almost impossible to maintain. Generalisability is similarly difficult to achieve as the study is based on the non-probability small sampling therefore the study cannot make "statistical generalisabilities about entire population" (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 384). Nevertheless, the author could not have used these explanations as a justification for not gathering legitimate and reliable data. As for biases, these are easier to avoid and require the interviewer to behave appropriately, so as not to influence participants' views or attitudes towards the interviewer and the topic under study. Validity can be achieved by gaining in-depth and accurate understanding of participants' knowledge and experience. Data quality issues like reliability and validity can be avoided by providing interviewees with some general themes the author is looking for, even while employing the grounded theory strategy, so that the participants may prepare themselves for the meeting (Saunders et al., 2012).

For the primary data collection, the author conducted partly-standardised semi-structured interviews that were audio-recorded and transcribed (Flick, 2002). The researcher prepared an interview guide with topic-related open probing questions (Appendix 1) as well as general themes and prompts to promote further discussion, without influencing the participants' views. The interviews, appropriate for the grounded

theory, provided the researcher with some flexibility in the way the questions were asked. The interviewer modified the questions to explore the issues discussed by the participants in more details and to supplement already gathered data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The semi-structured and partly-standardised interviews stimulated the interviewees to express their complex knowledge on the subject under study. Participants shared their subjective perspectives spontaneously by being asked the topic-oriented open questions (Flick, 2002).

In-depth individual interviews served as a technique for gaining rich understanding of mentors' experience and perspective on the mentoring relationships. As this study aimed to investigate the influences of the nonsupervisory mentoring relationships on the career outcomes of mentors as well as their perception of these relationships, the author needed to get deep insight of respondents' feelings as well as their practical knowledge. The interviews supported the author with gathering appropriate data to identify the meaning of mentoring relationships and see whether the nonsupervisory relationship were reciprocal and of high quality, stimulated learning and benefited the mentor's development. By careful selection of participants and by modification of the questions asked during interviews, the researcher was filling gaps, clarifying uncertainties, testing their interpretations, and building the emerging theory (Sbaraini et al. 2011).

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis was closely interrelated. It was a very complex and time consuming process as the author had to take a special care in preparing data for analysis. The analysis started soon after the first interview, as the first collected data served as a foundation for further data collection and analysis. The process was repeated until theoretical saturation was reached, which is when no new themes emerge from the findings (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012). The interviews were being audio-recorded and transcribed and the interviewer was also taking notes during the interviews and writing memos soon after each interview. Every effort was made so that

the information gathered during each meeting was analysed a number of times in order to retrieve as much quality data as possible. The transcribed interviews tend to lose some of the attributes that are characteristic of spoken language, such as intonation, emphasis and body language that convey a lot of meaning (Poland, 1995, cited in Mero-Jaffe, 2011). For this reason, and to be consistent with the procedures of the grounded theory analysis, the researcher began analysing gathered data immediately after each meeting by repeated listening of the audio-recordings and by comparing it with the interview's memos made during and immediately after each interview. Only then the transcribed version of interviews were analysed for further identification of codes and themes (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This process corresponded with Reiter et al. (2011) as well as Flick's (2002) importance of a cyclical, not linear, data generation and analysis (Fig. 3) that compelled the researcher to analyse each interview before conducting another one. All cues and information identified in the initial interview were further incorporated in the following ones (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

Coding, which helped to organise the enormous amount of unprocessed data, was the fundamental analytic processes used in grounded theory strategy that required the author to go through different stages of recognition and identification of phenomena. The researcher used a 30-day free trial computer software called NVivo 10 for Mac (QSR International, 2014), which enabled the author to store, compare and access the data effortlessly. NVivo allowed for separate storage of all interviews transcriptions, memos and codes (called nodes in NVivo) and, what was very useful and made the process much easier, showed the connections between these codes, interviews and memos. Bryman and Bell's (2007) handbook on business research methods served as a manual for exploring the NVivo software so that the author could use it to its full potential.

There were three types of codes: open, axial and selective (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Walliman, 2006). The open codes were identified through key points of the interviews' findings that captured individual qualities. These concepts were extracted from raw data and categorised according to their properties to create themes (axial codes). The

purpose of axial codes was to compare and capture connections, similarities and differences between themes in order to create selective codes. Selective coding related to integration of themes and categories to produce theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012). Appendix 2 presents the coded results of the findings with all open, axial and selective codes that served as a foundation for building a theory. Appendix 3 shows detailed examples of how open codes emerged from the raw data.

The analysis of qualitative data was a complex process and required continuous attention of the researcher from the first stages of planning the data collection, up until their interpretation. Saunders et al. (2012) compare the qualitative research analysis to a jigsaw puzzle, where each piece of a puzzle represents data that is interconnected with other pieces – by connecting the pieces and its relationships we create a whole picture. For the grounded theory analysis, however, there is no pre-existing picture that the researcher is trying to recreate, thus the challenge is to create a new picture from the gathered information.

### **3.9. Ethics**

Business and management research ethics concerns the values and the way people should be treated during the research process and beyond (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Saunders and Lewis (2012) state that ethics influences and impacts on every stage of the research process i.e. design, data collection, data analysis and the final stage of writing, and it is a feature that simply cannot be ignored. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) researchers differ greatly on their perspectives on ethics and their stance range from 'universalism', where ethical principles should never ever be broken to 'no choice', where there are no boundaries when there are issues to be investigated.

The author made every effort to avoid violation of any ethical principles and endeavoured to follow ethical propositions of Diener and Cranall's (1978, cited in Bryman and Bell, 2007) ensuring that:

- ✓ no harm came to participants
- ✓ there was informed consent of participants
- ✓ there was no invasion of privacy of research participants, and
- ✓ no deception was involved about the aims of the research

As mentioned above, the research ethics had to be taken into account and adhered to at every stage while designing and conducting the study (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2007). Therefore, during the design stage the author ensured there was informed consent of participants (Appendix 4) and that they were taking part in the study voluntarily. Information about the purpose and the nature of the study were presented as well as the way in which data were to be used (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Saunders and Lewis, 2012). During the data collection stage and prior to the actual interview, the interviewees were asked whether they object to the interviews being audio-recorded, although they were also assured the recording would be destroyed after the research process was completed. The participant were also informed that they could withdraw at any time and refuse to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable with or that were against the company's policies (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Yet another ethical issue was concerned with confidentiality especially in this case of qualitative research, where anonymity was more difficult to maintain than it would have been in a quantitative one. During the data collection and reporting stage interviewees might have got identified through the answers they provided. For the purpose of this research the respondents were not presented by their first names, nor were the companies they work for named (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). For confidentiality reasons transcripts and all interviews-related documents were submitted directly to the research supervisor.

## **Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The researcher pre-arranged the meetings with prospective interviewees while preparing the research proposal. Before each meeting the author has sent a written Informed Consent Form (Appendix 4) so that participants could have familiarised themselves with the research topic, ethical issues that might arise and express their willingness to answer the interview questions. The interviewer began each interview by asking the participant for a general introduction and description of their role and followed it by a question related to their mentoring roles. This served as a starting point for the remainder of the meeting. Following the rules of the grounded theory strategy the questions of each interview differed slightly. The qualitative research method through the information-rich data from the interviews significantly contributed to meet the research objectives. No two answers were the same, however, common themes started to emerge soon after the first interviews, which gave the author concepts to follow in the next meetings. The findings of this study are discussed below.

The two main themes that emerged through the detailed analysis of the data were Relational Relationships and Passing the Torch (Appendix 2). Both have personal development and career outcomes traits and even though both have already been discussed in the mentorship literature the researcher aimed to build a theory based on the nonsupervisory mentoring relationships. So far, to the author's best knowledge, there was not one specific study on the mentors' perception of the impact of nonsupervisory relationships on their career outcomes and skills development, or on the factors that influence the quality of such relationships.

## 4.2. Relational Relationship

The first theme that emerged from the collection and analysis of data was relational relationship. Ragins (2011) explains that the relational relationship does not reject traditional view of mentoring relationship but labels it as an average one with attention solely on the protégé's career advancement, which is not always associated with high-quality outcomes for all involved individuals. This study shows a clear distinction between the level of mentors' personal development and career outcomes and the level of the quality of mentoring relationships especially when comparing supervisory and nonsupervisory mentorship. Nonsupervisory mentoring is closely related to high-quality relational relationships where both the mentor and mentee continually develop and evolve and where, according to literature and collected data, mentors feel satisfied with the relationship and its mutuality. The high-quality aspect of the relational relationship relates to its healthiness and well-functioning and that it is more likely to last if mentors and mentees "engage in effective communication, emphatic listening, personal learning, and self-reflection" (Kram and Ragins, 2007, cited in Ragins, 2011, p. 524). It also fits into the views of Eby, Butts et al. (2010) where the overall quality of the interaction between a mentor and protégé is influenced by their emotions and personal characteristics, their behaviours and expectations, not the possible compensation and promotion at work. Almost none of the Respondents mentioned any kind of reward and compensation expectation as a result of the mentoring relationships, apart from Respondent D and F, where mentoring is part of their job and employees are being rewarded and promoted on the quantity and quality of mentoring they provide. Participant D said *"you're expected and rewarded to be playing the mentor role and if you're not seen as a mentor (...) it won't end your career here but it will hold you back, so we will work with people to help them find ways to be more inspiring, more of a role model, someone people want to come to talk to"*. However, according to their perception, the fact that employees are expected to mentor does not mean it has been forced upon them. They do not feel that it makes the relationship a one way-process or

less quality one. It is further mentioned that mentorship *“gives you a chance to be much more open-minded about what that person needs from you and to understand that they might learn differently from you and they might approach problems differently from you”* (Respondent D). The most important characteristic of relational relationship is its mutuality and reciprocity. Respondent A said *“it’s about the stages of the relationship when after time it becomes more equal and it is about sharing good practice and having someone to help you improve”*. The high-quality relational mentorship, which can be observed in the results of this study, represents the very essence of positive relationship that *“promotes mutual growth, learning and development within the career context”* and beyond (Ragins 2003, cited in Ragins, 2011, p. 519).

The sub-themes that formed the foundation for the relational relationship theory are high-quality, personal skills development and career development, which are discussed in more details below.

#### **4.2.1. High-Quality**

The majority of studies have proved that the traditional mentoring relationships are only marginally effective and are not as successful as their relational counterparts (Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Wanberg, Welsh and Hezlett, 2003). This study revealed that the majority of nonsupervisory relationships are relational of high-quality rather than the traditional ones. They are characterised by mutuality, reciprocity, high level of trust and sincerity and good rapport between a mentee and mentor, where a mentor becomes a critical friend to the protégé. It also requires perseverance, commitment, generosity and willingness to share resources such as time, energy, networks, and knowledge and *“there has to be strong trust, belief, and interest in each other, as well as respect, understanding, and empathy”* (Nickitas, 2014, p.66).

Trust plays a crucial part in high quality relational mentoring relationships. It is related to support, openness, good rapport, mutual respect and psychological contract and was apparent in the responses of the majority of Participants. Respondent E said *“trust is*

*everything really (...), you end up confiding as much to them as they confide to you, otherwise they're not going to open up to you".* This study revealed that building rapport and trust creates higher commitment on both parts and makes the participants feel more secure and comfortable. Trust also allows making mistakes, which might create new opportunities and teach people new experiences and skills. Interviewee C referred to her own experience: *„if something doesn't work out that's absolutely fine. I gained experience and skills in the process and I will use those in my next project, endeavour or whatever it might be".* The concept of trust and allowing others to learn through making mistakes was apparent in Participant G's thoughts, where it was said that we should allow mentees to make mistakes *"and therefore fail because that's the really important place for learning. What you can really do is unpack that and say 'ok, that didn't go how we wanted it to go. What you might have done differently?'"*. It is about taking the safety net away and let them approach the problem themselves. Sir Richard Branson, Founder of the Virgin Group (Virgin Group Ltd., 2014) claims that people should be trusted in making mistakes as those who are afraid of making mistakes and of things that might not work out will never achieve success. Mentors need to support their mentees in their endeavours and should not criticise them when they make mistakes, quite the opposite, they should see what they both can take out of the experience (UniSouth Australia, 2013). Sir Branson (UniSouth Australia, 2013) says that we need to look for people and mentors who will say *„screw it, let's do it"*. Clutterbuck (2004) stated that the developmental mentoring, where both the mentor and mentee grow and develop, is based on the following rule: *"Look into your own experience. Learn your own lesson. Build your own wisdom"* (p.22).

A study by Walsh et al. (2002, cite in Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton, 2009) showed that individuals, who felt psychologically safe and supported, were more willing to disclose their mistakes with their supervisors. This psychological safety, however, occurs only when the relationship has a high degree of mutuality that is achieved by *"being needed, being useful, being able to share your experiences [and] being helpful to another*

*person*" (Respondent D). Mutuality and trust are inseparable traits of the high-quality relational relationship that are more visible in the nonsupervisory relationships. Mentors gain satisfaction and validate their life choices if they see their mentees create new business or achieve success thanks to mutuality and trust of the relationship and when they see their mentee can learn lessons from their own mistakes. The interviews with the research participants showed that trust and higher level of the relationship is more easily gained through nonsupervisory mentorship than formal supervisory one.

The results support Higgins and Kram (2001) position that nonsupervisory mentoring is connected with higher level of intimacy and strength of the relationship in comparison to supervisory relationship. Respondent B noted a clear distinction between their organisational formal supervisory mentoring relationships and external nonsupervisory ones *"I can see how much more open and frank people are with me when I come from the outside"*. Other participants said that supervisory mentoring create different kind of relationships and different power balance, where nonsupervisory mentoring gives individuals independence as they do not have any presuppositions about one another. Such view corresponds with that of Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) and Lankau and Scandura (2002) who claimed that nonsupervisory relationship made mentees more comfortable in discussing difficult matters and provided psychological support. However, there was a voice among the respondents that admitted that supervisory relationship might be more beneficial for the mentee in particular situations. For instance, nonsupervisory mentor cannot *"make things happen"* (Haggard, et al., 2011, p. 290) and only the manager of the mentee can solve the issue. Participant G mentioned: *"you can chat to me about it and I'll listen and support you with some ideas and strategies, but at the end of the day the only person that can sort it out for you is your line manager"*. Studies by Haggard, et al. (2011) and by Fagenson-Eland, Marks and Amendola (1997) claimed that supervisory relationships are more beneficial for the mentee, and that they help the protégés by affecting their skills development and intention to stay in the organisations. The findings of this study show that the

nonsupervisory mentorship seems to be very beneficial for the mentors. However, mentees' perspective would also have to be measured to validate the results.

High quality relational relationship is also linked with the holistic approach, which claims that such relationship not only influences our work life but also positively affects our everyday life (McCorkel-Clinard and Ariav, 1998; Ragins, 2011). Nonsupervisory mentoring appeared to make the interviewed mentors more confident in all situations, not necessarily connected with their jobs and pushed them for new endeavours as well as it thought them new approaches to problem solving.

The study did not find an evidence of a risk, where a mentor might act as an "organisational agent" (Rousseau, 1995, cited in Haggard, 2012), who tries to influence the relationship so that it fits the organisational needs. Nor, as indicated by Scandura and Williams (2004), was there any cue that the mentor tries to reinforce the organisational vision on a mentee. Even though, these examples are associated with supervisory mentoring relationships, the nonsupervisory mentorship is often arranged by the organisation, so it could have been a case in such environment.

Not enough evidence was found in this paper to prove the relation between protégées being more open and sincere with the mentors and mentors' increased learning. Learning, discussed in more details in the following sections, occurs despite the mentees willingness to share their own knowledge and is more related with the fact that people learn through sharing their experience.

#### ***4.2.2. Personal-Skills Development***

One of the themes that emerged from the research of Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) was that the mentors "often learned as much from the protégé as the protégé learned from them" (p.87). These findings have been supported in this study, where the most prevailing concepts throughout the data collection stage were continuous learning and development. Each and every mentor admitted that they have learned something

from their mentee and from the relationship itself. It has been proved that nonsupervisory mentorship developed and reinforced skills like assessment, communication, active-listening, problem-solving, time management and counselling skills. Mentorship has also appeared to trigger self-reflection and self-realisation.

All interviewees have been continuously learning throughout their relationships; only for few the learning process was not immediately apparent. For the majority it was clear that *"you are always learning, especially in these types of jobs that require lots of 'invisible' work, where there is no one way of getting things done we're always learning from other people with different approaches that the one you would have taken yourself"* (Respondent D).

Mentoring helps reinforce existing and develop newly acquired skills (Clutterbuck, 2004). According to the perception of most of the Participants, the skills that were developed and mastered were communication and active listening skills. Through the constant interaction with wide range of people with unique experiences and backgrounds, and because *"it makes you a magnet for a huge volumes of conversations that people wish to have with you"* (Respondent D), mentors greatly develop their communication skills. It takes time and practice to master active listening, which is a key skill of mentorship and communication process as such. Active listening is also strongly connected with problem solving: *"there is a real skill to be able to help you clarify your own problems yourself, it's something that needs to be practised and learned, but I think that the number one biggest thing is just being a good listener and second being able to asks the right questions to help people come to their own conclusions"* (Respondent F). Mentors mentioned that the biggest challenge for them is not to solve the problems for their mentees but allow them to find the solutions themselves: *"it helps me to develop these kind of skills like listening and asking questions to try unpack what it is, what is the underlying issue (...), but not trying to sort it out for them"* (Respondent F).

Developing assessment skills seemed to be an important aspect of mentorship that helps to get to the bottom of an issue. Mentors reflected that one needs to learn how to read mentee's emotions and how to build trust, how to be *"insightful and (...) to see the relationship on different level with different level of questioning"* (Respondent A). A mentor with developed assessment skills can see a potential in a mentee and unpick areas that have to be worked on. It also allows mentors to help their protégés overcome their fears and barriers. Assessment skills also trigger self-reflection *"when you go through a particular issue you think of different ways of approaching the matter, instead of just doing it"* (Respondent C). Interviewee C also reflected that they *"definitely became more aware of myself, my behaviour and behaviour of others"*. It leads to the awareness of diversity and cultural differences between people; their behaviour, views, background, religion and disabilities. Respondent D, as a mentor in an organisation with offices around the globe admitted that *"culture and diversity is one of the biggest challenges and mentoring is one of the best solutions for it"*.

Self- realisation was another concept that emerged from this study and it corresponds with Maslow's (1987) idea of self-actualisation. Maslow (1965) claimed that by *"finding out who you are, what you are, what you like, what you don't like, what is good for you and what is bad, where you are going and what your mission is"* (p.114) one achieves their own potential. It has been reflected in many interviews of this study. Participant C said *"[mentoring] makes you realise your own flaws and the good things about you, it helps you understand things you never thought about before. It's sort of like discovering yourself"*. Other mentors expressed that they discovered skills that helped them achieve more than they ever thought they could have achieved, that it built their confidence and enhanced their professional status.

The results of this study support and add value to the research by Lankau and Scandura (2002) and Ragins (2011) who claimed that personal skills required in mentoring relationships, preferably those aiming to achieve a high-quality level, are effective communication, active and attentive listening, problem solving, cultural awareness, and

creativity in developing relationships with others in the organisation. Assessment skills, counselling skills, self-reflection and self-realisation, which also emerged through this study, complement findings by Kram (1996, cited in Lankau and Scandura 2002) and Ragins (2011) where they recognised mentoring relationship as an important tool through which individuals enhance personal learning.

In a commentary to an article on reflective thinking and double loop learning by Argyris (2002), Tsoukas reflected that in modern world people bring themselves into organisations, as thinking individuals, together with their ideas, opinions and feelings. To be effective, in both everyday life and in the organisational environment, people need to ask critical questions, engage in productive reasoning and reflect on their actions. Reflexivity is a quality that enhances learning. Tsoukas (Argyris, 2002) summed up Argyris's article by saying that individuals need "to be open to criticism [and] to be willing to test their claims publicly against evidence" (p. 15). If one is not open to criticism they basically cannot learn - as they fail they become defensive and are not open to a debate nor reflect on their actions. Double-loop learning is where individuals use reasoning "to design and implement their actions" (Argyris, 2002, pp. 4-5). In other words it is when they reflect on how they think, not only how they feel. Argyris (2002) quoted a manager from one of his studies: "I encourage you to challenge me. You have a responsibility to tell me where you think the leadership made mistakes, just as I have the responsibility to identify any I believe you made. And all of us must acknowledge our own mistakes. If we do not have an open dialogue, we will not learn" (p.6). The learning aspect of this particular situation can also be applied to mentor-mentee circumstances. Mentee needs to feel confident to constructively criticise their mentor if they think the mentor might have been wrong. The mentor, on the other hand, has to be open to such criticism, acknowledge his faults and reflect on his action. Only then learning can occur and the relationship enters into the higher level and become relational and developmental. It also links with putting trust with each other, allowing for mistakes to

happen and acknowledging them, which has already been discussed under the characteristics of high-quality relational relationship.

### **4.2.3. Career Development**

As in personal skills development, career development theme was mostly supported by the concept of continuous learning through getting insight into other people's actions and behaviours, being open-minded and availing of opportunities when they arise. As indicated by this study, nonsupervisory mentoring relationships allow mentors to support each other and provide an insight into other aspects of their businesses. By seeing value in other people work one might benefit from new perspectives and use it in their own careers: *"you do learn an awful lot from other people all the time, even like the little things they've done and you think 'oh, how come I haven't thought of that before' or 'wish, I have done that'"* (Respondent E). Respondent A noticed that as a professional practice, especially one focused on training and development, it is of utmost importance that people within the organisation learn and develop *"from the day you start working till the day you retire"* and that one cannot rest on ones laurels and become stale.

Continuous development leads to building networks, which in turns leads to new experiences and new business: *"you get to know new people and everyone is different, so you build this endless network of people"* (Respondent C). Interviewee E reflected *"I think it's crucial, especially when you're on your own to be networking (...). That is also how you hear about these opportunities; things that are going around that you can avail of"*. Through constant interactions with mentees, mentoring also allows for recognising the scope of other people jobs and can serve as a reminder that people, who one tries to attract to the organisation might have different expectations than one once had. It broadens and opens mentor minds. Building networks and interaction with diverse workforce and people outside of one's organisation greatly expand mentors' networks and build their confidence which has a great impact on their lives. Many participants had enough courage, thanks to the experience with mentorship, to start up new business and

expand the existing ones. Networking skills, flexibility and building reputation are among many other political skills mentioned by Ferris et al. (2005), which lead to the development of high-quality developmental relationships.

This study proved that nonsupervisory mentorship has a slight impact on tangible career outcomes for a mentor, in this case when looking at the two formal nonsupervisory relationships of Respondent D and F, where successful mentoring was correlated with promotions, career advancement, special project assignments and increased salary. Building networks and starting up new ventures thanks to boost in confidence were other examples of more objective career outcomes. However, in other cases the career outcomes of nonsupervisory mentorship were more intangible and related with satisfaction, continuous learning and seeing value in other people's work that could be applied in variety of circumstances. This is consistent with past research on positive outcomes of mentoring others (Allen, 2007; Allen Day and Lentz, 2006; Allen, Poteet and Burroughs, 1997). Although, further study and bigger sample than the one presented in this paper is needed to examine the impact of nonsupervisory mentorship on mentors' tangible career outcomes.

### **4.3. Passing the Torch**

The second big theme that emerged from the study is connected with mentors' willingness to make an impact and a difference on their protégée to ensure that their knowledge will be put to advantage in the future. It is strongly connected with the relational relationship as it involves high-quality relationship, trust and mutuality. Mentors role here is to make the mentees aware of their potential and to pass their wisdom on to them, so that they can do the same in the future. Phil Cousineau, an award-winning writer and filmmaker, teacher and editor, in his lecture during Ted Talks in San Jose, California, said "follow that hunch. You have some unique fire that no one else in the world has. If you follow that you are humble enough to take the advice, to take the direction, to take the affirmation from a mentor, then be smart enough to focus

that fire until you can actually hold something in your hand that you are proud of, that you can stand by, with complete conviction and then finally pass the torch to next generation" (Tedx Talks, 2011a). It also links with Erikson's (1963, cited in Ragins and Scandura, 1999) notion of generativity which is the feeling of fulfilment and sense of immortality derived from passing on the knowledge to next generations. This, however, will be described in more details in the following sections of this discussion.

The sub-themes that formed the foundation for the passing the torch theory are overcoming invisibility, validation of life choices and generativity, discussed in more details below.

#### **4.3.1. Overcoming Invisibility**

It has been believed that people become invisible with age and that they cannot bring anything new and fresh into the society. Apart from few examples where advanced age equals wisdom and life-long experience, there is a tendency to idealise younger people. This research proved that mentoring can make a significant difference for experienced individuals from the baby-boom generation, who became mentors. Data shows that mentoring makes people more energised and proactive and it gives them new purpose in life through providing help to others and, if applicable, development in their own professional careers. The Interviewee A made a strong statement on the matter of age discrimination and invisibility and that mentorship helped her overcome that issue: *"Coming from previous career where you reach a dead end and feel there is nothing left for me, and then you come here and you take up on a whole new profession and become a mentor - it gives you hope that you can develop. Especially with all that age discrimination matters you feel you have nothing to offer and I think that is not necessarily true"* (Respondent A). Sir Richard Branson presented similar point of view, based however on elder and retired individuals, showing concern that retired people are not appointed often enough as being mentors. They are the people with the greatest wisdom, knowledge and experience. Their impact can help both younger individuals

starting new careers as well as themselves. „One set of mentors who do not get tapped into enough are people who just retired. When you retire, you know, life can become quite lonely and to be able to help young students who create new business it’s a great thing for the elders to do” (UniSouth Australia, 2013). The theme of overcoming invisibility through mentoring relationship also links with the theme of generativity and validation of life choices.

A theme that kept emerging on various stages of the data collection process was the fact that mentoring positively influence people and can make a real difference in ones’ lives. Individuals, who take up a role of a mentor, tend to be restless and constantly look for change. Participant A said *“it is a great opportunity to do something different, which I really relish because it helps me not to get stale”*. Data shows that mentorship is very rewarding for mentors, and it can bring that longed-for change about. Career restless mentors cannot or do not want to sit and do paperwork, they look for the insight from people and feel valued when they influence them. Respondent C mentioned: *“to know that you can influence and change someone’s life is fantastic!”*, whereas Respondent G added *“when I see the person grow and develop (...) I really have the feeling that I made and impact on someone else’s life and that certainly has an impact on me and makes me feel valued and that I’m contributing something of value”*. This attitude links with already mentioned holistic approach of high-quality relational relationship, which influences mentor’s life on both work and everyday life level (Ragins, 2011).

#### **4.3.2. Validating Life-Choices**

Validation of people’s life choices is strongly connected with both overcoming invisibility and generativity. According to the great majority of interviewees nonsupervisory mentoring relationships bring happiness, rejuvenation, satisfaction and feeling of fulfilment and *„it validates your life choice when you share what it is what you do”* (Tedx Talks, 2011b). Respondent F said: *“it just gives me a lot of personal satisfaction. I feel like I’m helping people and if I feel that I’m helping people I have a better sense of*

*purpose in my life*". This perspective supports Batson (1998, cited in Allen, 2007) and Brown et al.'s (2003, cited in Allen, 2007) view that mentorship can improve one's health, i.e. decrease the risk of depression by bringing happiness and having a sense of purpose in life. The literature mentions that mentors can experience internal satisfaction from passing on the wisdom, skills, and experience among those who might be experiencing mid-career plateauing as well as fresh perspective and self-rejuvenation as a result of associating with younger people (Chao, 1990, cited in Allen, 2007; Levinson et al., 1978, cited in Scandura and Pellegrini, 2010). The findings of this study did not show positive correlation between associating specifically with younger people and self-rejuvenation; however it showed a significant connection between being a mentor and rejuvenation, regardless of the age difference. Even though the age difference did not play the part, the supervisory aspect of the relationship did. The study distinguishes between mentors who have been in both supervisory and nonsupervisory mentoring relationships and among those the level of fulfilment, satisfaction and rejuvenation was higher in nonsupervisory mentorship. Only one voice, however strong, expressed the contradictory view of generation differences: *"you're beginning to see what are their expectations in terms of what they want from work, so while it can be a positive thing, it can also be a very frustrating thing, so a lot of people in their late thirties and forties looking at the younger generation going 'why do they think they are so entitled to X, Y and Z. We had to do it the hard way.' And now we're talking to the twenty-one year old who thinks he should have our job"* (Participant D).

A concept of validating life choices is also supported by mentors' claims that by getting into a bottom of matters and in-depth analysis they are reassured that what they do have a purpose. It links back to having an influence on other people's lives and adding value to both mentors and mentees' lives. Karen Russell, a Harvard-trained lawyer said: "Bob Dylan said 'the highest purpose of art is to inspire. What else can you do? What else can you do for anyone but to inspire them?' Inspiration might be another reason

why you want to mentor (...) if you have a point of view about ideas you want to share I think you can become a mentor" (Tedx Talks, 2011b).

Also a strong concept within the Passing the Torch theme is the one of triggering like behaviours, which entails being a role model for the mentee. Role modelling seems to be an important theme within the respondent even though some of them do not feel like ones. However, it does make them feel more aware of what advice they give and how they behave. Interviewee D claimed it is not easy to disconnect one's own behaviour and the advice one gives, however, it is best to have two sets of rules: one for oneself and one for the protégés. The study shows that mentors have a sense of responsibility and it makes them think about their own behaviour more, as role modelling often means that *"you never know what things you say have an impact, and I have that quite a bit now, people come back to me and say 'oh when I first met you, you said such and such and it always stuck with me and I still use it today'"* (Respondent G). It is apparent that role modelling makes mentors feel fulfilled, humbled and valued. Especially when they know mentees are following in their steps. Therefore, mentors have the reassurance that the choices they have made in life were the right ones. It also means that they know there will be someone who will do their job just as well in the future.

Based on Scandura's (1992) studies Bozionelos (2004) concluded that role-modelling increases the likelihood that a person, who had a mentor as role model, will exercise this behaviour later on in their career and also become a mentor - majority of respondents used to have a mentor or at least wished they had one when they were starting up their own businesses (Respondent E).

Role modelling has been widely discussed in mentoring literature, however, it has to be noted that role modelling functions are stronger in high-quality relationship where there is trust, mutuality and support (Scandura, 1992; Clutterbuck, 2004; Haack, 2006). Even though the studied nonsupervisory relationships tend to be relational and of high quality they did not reach Thrash et al.'s (2010) ultimate level of mentor's being inspired by the

mentee. Nevertheless, the relationships often did spark new ways of thinking, cast a new light on matters and made Participants confident enough to, for example, open a new chapter in life by starting up a new business.

### **4.3.3. Generativity**

Generativity has been described by Erikson (1963, cited in Ragins and Scandura, 1999) as the feeling of fulfilment and sense of immortality derived from passing on the knowledge to next generations. This view has been supported by the data gathered in this study and shows that nonsupervisory mentors feel fulfilled with passing on their knowledge and wisdom and that they have contributed to the society. Respondent C said *„that is the whole meaning of the mentorship. Why would you pass on your own knowledge and wisdom if you wouldn't like it to be used in the future? (...) It enriches your life through their experiences and it gives you satisfaction, it also, sort of, forces you to behave at your best because you want to give your mentees the best of yourself“*. The collaboration between a protégée and mentor creates something unique and original. The outcomes of that collaboration have been created for a reason with a purpose in mind so that it can improve other people's lives. Interviewee E said: *“I have been doing this job for almost 25 years and [my mentee] just doesn't understand that side of the business at all yet“* and the reason the mentor is taking the effort to pass their knowledge and to make sure their 25 years in business has not been wasted. For some participants, mentoring relationship is more about making a difference in people's lives and for passing on the experience, not necessarily to become best friends, even though it also is possible. However, it is better to preserve the power balance and professional boundaries: *“for the most part, and it's not just a stereotype it's a reality, your mentor is basically a lot more experienced than you and in that sense you're usually living in a different world than they do“* (Respondent F). Generativity is an inseparable aspect the already mentioned validation of one's choices and overcoming invisibility.

#### **4.4. Negative outcomes of mentoring relationship**

Significant amount of studies focused on the mentors' negative experiences and the drawbacks of mentorship. The interviewer asked most of the interviewees about their negative experience with mentoring and they recalled instances where mentees were not fully involved in the process and seemed disappointed for some reason. Respondent D mentioned drawbacks of mentoring relationships without the author's prior prompting and said that it consumes a lot of time and often is discouraging when a mentor spends all that time trying to convey the message and the mentee behaves as if he or she never listened. Karen Russell, in her Ted Talk in Overlake, also mentioned disappointment related to unsuccessful mentorship: "sometimes it is disappointing that things don't work out the way they do. Or they don't appreciate what you have to offer and it's hard to watch people make challenging choices and you might get your heart broken on the road to mentoring. (...) My dad once told me: 'Just do one thing for me. Mentor three people in your life, because two might not work out'" (Tedx Talks, 2011b).

Combining data from all seven interviews, the overall negativity however, did not seem to have significant impact on mentor's willingness to mentor or influence their development, even though the literature claims that negative aspects are much more substantial and significant (Eby, Butts et al., 2010). This research clearly shows that the positive outcomes outweigh the negative aspects of nonsupervisory mentorship, even though the positive outcomes seem to be intangible and not clearly visible. This is in contrast to Eby, Butts et al.'s (2010) research result where overall mentors' bad experience outweighs the overall good in terms of the perception of the relationship's quality. The relationships still require mentors and mentees' patience, perseverance and general hard work for the relationship to reach its full potential.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to examine mentors' perception of the influence of mentoring relationships on their personal skills development and career outcomes. This summary

presents the justification behind each objective based on the research findings and discussion.

#### **4.5.1. Objective I**

The first objective was to explore the influence of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship on a mentor's career outcomes

The prevailing theme of the findings was related with the high-quality developmental and relational relationship, which implies that the relationship between mentor and protégé is mutual with higher level of interdependence between both parties. It is a relationship that fosters mutual growth and development and where the mentor is open about the willingness to take something out from the relationship and is not there only to give, as in traditional mentorship where the focus is solely on mentee's advancement. As indicated by Ragins (2005, cited in Ragins, 2011) the main characteristics of relational relationships is mutual learning and development not only within the career context but also beyond it. The results showed that nonsupervisory mentorship has had an influence on the career development of every mentor that took part in this study. The concept of continuous learning proved to have the strongest connection with mentors' personal and career development, where it gave them insight in other people's jobs as well as confidence to open new businesses and reach out to larger groups of people. In-depth analysis and diversity of perspective on business matters allowed for gaining experience that can be used in future endeavours. By seeing other people's work in action and seeing its value, mentors can transfer that knowledge and experience to their own practices. Also, by building networks, reputation, development of political skills and providing mutual support mentors avail of new opportunities that can influence their professional development and provide them with more flexibility and adaptability. The results of this study showed that subjective career outcomes are more visible within nonsupervisory mentorship, however objective tangible ones are also possible. All in all, nonsupervisory mentorship has a very positive impact on mentors' career outcomes and

the development of growth-fostering relational relationships, which are characterised by the interdependence of mentors and mentees and their mutual growth.

#### **4.5.2. Objective II**

The second objective was to identify skills that mentor learns from and improves through a nonsupervisory mentoring relationship.

The most prevailing concepts among the interviewees were continuous learning and skills development. Every single mentor admitted that they have learned something from their mentee and from the relationship itself. It has been proved that nonsupervisory mentoring relationships develop and reinforce mentors' skills such as assessment, communication, active-listening, problem-solving, time management and counselling skills. Mentorship has also appeared to trigger self-reflection and self-actualisation.

The success of personal skills development is connected with the high-quality relational relationships where mutual growth and learning are the main characteristics. Through the insight into other people practices mentors reflected on their own behaviours. Self-reflection allows for better understanding of oneself and others as well as of the work and life environment. Assessment skills were developed through the necessity to get in-depth analysis of mentees' needs and potential in order to provide the best outcomes of the relationship. The most important skills that were strengthened through nonsupervisory mentorship were communication skills and active listening skills, which, together with providing feedback are the key skills required for successful two-way communication process (Mullins, 2010). A concept that was strongly connected with communication, active listening and providing feedback was problem solving. Mentors admitted that one of the challenges of the mentoring relationship is not to provide ready-made solutions for the mentees but try to listen and ask questions in such a way so that protégés will come up with the solutions themselves. This process provides both mentees and mentors with problem-solving skills. Another learning outcome of the nonsupervisory mentoring relationship is the acquisition and development of counselling

skills. Mentors have to be constantly aware of the things that are going on behind the scenes in mentees' lives in order to maintain trust the high-quality of the relationship. Mentors cannot be too judgemental and harsh and have to provide comfort and guidance for the mentees in hard times. The results showed that trust and rapport are very important aspect of maintaining the high-quality relationships.

#### **4.5.3. Objective III**

The final objective was to analyse mentor's perception of the influence of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship on their development.

A very strong message that emerged through the findings was mentors willingness to pass the torch, in other words, inclination to transfer the knowledge, wisdom and experience they have gained to next generations. Generativity brings the feeling of fulfilment and sense of immortality that follows. Mentors feel they can make a real difference by providing protégés with their knowledge and wisdom. The results of this study showed that through mentoring relationships mentors feel energised and overcome the invisibility that often comes with age. It builds their confidence and helps self-reflect on their actions and behaviours. The theme of passing the torch is strongly related with relational relationships, its mutuality and reciprocity as well as the concept of triggering like behaviours and being a role model. By having the awareness that they might trigger the same behaviours in their mentees they become more alert of their own actions and advice they give to the mentees. Nevertheless, the facts that they are perceived as role models make them feel more responsible, humble and give them a purpose in life. This study confirmed that mentoring relationship, by giving that purpose in one's life, validates one's life choices. Mentors reflected that by seeing their life-long experience being put to good use makes them feel that the choices they made earlier in life were the right ones.

According to the recent study by Hammer, Trepal and Speedlin (2014) on relational cultural theory (RCT), the desire for growth-fostering relationships is a core aspect of

relational relationship. Miller (1986, as cited in Hammer, Trepal and Speedlin, 2014) proposed that people within mutually supportive environment and relationships experience “zest or a sense of excitement and vitality; sense of worth or value in the relationship; clarity of purpose; productivity or energy; and, in turn, a desire for more connection” (p. 6). These assumptions validate the findings of this research.

This study did not show any significant negative outcomes of nonsupervisory mentoring based on the perception of the interviewees; and the overall positive aspects of mentorship outweighed the negativity. Even though majority of participants claimed that it does take a lot of time, it was also said that people who are able to prioritise will always find enough time for their mentoring relationships and that the time will expand around one’s duties. Karen Russell (Tedx Talk, 2011b) in her lecture during Ted Talk in Overlake titled ‘Modern Mentoring: The Good, The Bad and The Better’ said: “I always get the ‘thank you’ when I force people, basically at gunpoint, to go mentor through our programme. They come back rejuvenated, happy. It validates your life choice when you share what it is what you do, so I encourage you to be selfish and go out and mentor”.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to explore mentors' perception of the mentoring relationships. It focused on the mentors' personal development, learning, skills acquisition and their career outcomes, as well as benefits and negative experiences and the quality of the nonsupervisory relationships. This research was not organisation-specific, industry-specific or sector-specific, but a general exploratory study of nonsupervisory mentorship.

The exploratory nature of the study and the grounded theory strategy did not allow the author to suggest any presuppositions nor test any hypotheses. The research aimed to analyse mentors' perceptions and build new theory pursuant to grounded theory. The study met its research objectives, answered them thoroughly and significantly complemented existing literature on the topic of mentoring, particularly the nonsupervisory one. Even though it did not produce a brand new ground-breaking theory it significantly supplemented the current ones and provided a framework for the future research.

In summary, the study challenged the traditional one-way mentorship where a mentee's development is a sole purpose for the relationship to exist. As illustrated by the research findings traditional mentorship may not be the case for some types of mentoring relationships, especially for the nonsupervisory ones, where the reciprocal high-quality relational relationship are formed, which are of advantage to all parties involved. The study showed that what one thought was a traditional relationship turned out to be a relational one, in some cases even high-quality. However a self-realisation and self-reflection was required to become fully aware of that fact. Once realised, it can be nurtured and used to its full potential.

Even if not always rewarding and often very time consuming nonsupervisory mentoring relationships inadvertently develop perseverance and improves mentors' skills like self-realisation, self-awareness and communication skills. It also helps career development

by building networks and dealing with challenging tasks, and by enhancing the feeling of generativity it evokes the feeling fulfilment and accomplishment.

Mentoring relationships, in general, are beneficial for both mentees and mentors and organisations should nature such efforts, especially in formal mentoring programmes. It is also responsibility of mentors and mentees to support and cultivate such relationships, especially the informal ones or where the organisation is not aware of those relationships. Positive outcomes of mentorship, as indicated by the literature and this research, influence mentees to become mentors in the future and increases mentors' willingness to maintain existing and form new relationships.

## **5.1. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the research, the author offers the following recommendations in order for mentors to create favourable environment, where high-quality developmental relationships can be created:

- ✓ Mentors need to strive to make the most of the mentoring relationship by being committed and patient. The negative experience or difficult relationship requires more work on the mentor's part but perseverance will create positive results
- ✓ Mentors need to allocate time and energy to the relationship in order to build trust that leads to high-quality relational relationships
- ✓ Attention to effective communication is a key to successful relationship i.e. providing constructive feedback, active listening, asking open-ended questions, using appropriate body language and other nonverbal communication skills is required
- ✓ Some relationships might seem like traditional one-way mentoring ones, however it is up to a mentor to see the relational aspects and nurture them to create reciprocity within the relationship

- ✓ Both a mentor and mentee need to strive to develop and empower each other in order for the mutuality to occur
- ✓ It is important for the mentor not to be negative, but always see positive aspects in every situation
- ✓ Mentors need to learn how to influence and be influenced
- ✓ Mentors cannot dominate the meeting and do work for the mentees, instead they need to provide guidance for the protégés so that they find solutions for themselves
- ✓ Protégés should be challenged by mentors to make their own decisions. This way also mentors benefit from it by building their confidence and assessment skills
- ✓ Mentors need to maintain confidentiality, unless there is a risk of legal or reputation breach

## **5.2. Recommendations for future research**

Recommendations for future research are closely related to the limitations of the study. Since this research is of a qualitative nature, a quantitative research on the topic of nonsupervisory mentoring relationship would greatly complement this study. Also would additional qualitative research where mentees' insight was investigated. Additional interviews with supervisory mentors, in order to compare supervisory and nonsupervisory mentors' perspectives would also be advantageous and would definitely increase the validity and reliability of the study. Furthermore, longitudinal studies, not only cross-sectional, would be practical to re-examine the relationships and outcomes within longer time-frame. Some other areas identified by the author, which have not been widely explored and would require further research, are as follows: the impact of formal nonsupervisory mentoring programmes on the organisational success; the influence of mentors' personality traits on the quality of the relationships; and the link between subjective career outcomes and intrinsic rewards as a result of mentoring

others. Also, what struck the researcher most and could be an interesting topic to investigate is that the majority of the most prominent authors on the topic of mentoring are female: Kathy E. Kram, Tammy D. Allen, Belle Rose Ragins, Terri A. Scandura, Monica Higgins.

## Bibliography

Allen, T. (2007) 'Mentoring relationships from the perspective of the mentor', in Ragins B.R and Kram, K.E. (eds.) *The handbook of mentoring at work. Theory, research, and practice*. London: Sage Publications Limited, pp. 123-147.

Allen, T., Day, R. and Lentz, E. (2005,) 'The role of interpersonal comfort in mentoring relationships', *Journal of Career Development (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.)*, 31 (3), pp. 155-169. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 17 June 2014).

Allen, T. and Eby, L. (2003) 'Relationship effectiveness for mentors: factors associated with learning and quality', *Journal of Management*, 29 (4), pp. 469-486. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Allen, T., Eby, L., Poteet, M.L., Lentz, E. and Lima, L. (2004) 'Career benefits associated with mentoring for protégés: a meta-analysis', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (1), pp. 127-136. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 29 March 2014).

Allen, T., Lentz, E. and Day, R. (2006) 'Career success outcomes associated with mentoring others. A comparison of mentors and nonmentors', *Journal of Career Development*, 32 (3), pp.272-385. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 29 March 2014).

Allen, T., Poteet, M.L. and Burroughs, S.M. (1997) 'The mentor's perspective: a qualitative inquiry and future research agenda', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51 (1), pp. 70-89. Research Gate [Online]. (Accessed 1 April 2014).

Allen, T., Poteet, M.L., Russell, J. and Dobbins, G. (1997) 'A field study of factors related to supervisors' willingness to mentor others', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50 (1), pp. 1-22. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Argyris, C. (2002) 'Teaching smart people how to learn', *Reflections*, 4 (2), pp. 4-15. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 19 July 2014).

Aryee, S., Chay, Y. and Chew, J. (1996) 'The motivation to mentor among managerial employees: an interactionist approach', *Group & Organization Management*, 3, p. p261. Business Insights: Essentials, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 17 June 2014).

Baker, M.J. (2009) 'Personal professional development', *Marketing Review*, 9 (2), pp. 99-113. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 11 April 2014)

Blumber, B., Cooper, D.R. and Schindler, P.S. (2008) *Business research methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.

Boyce, C. and Neale, P. (2006) *Conducting in-depth interviews: a guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input*. Watertown: Pathfinder International.

Bozionelos, N. (2004) 'Mentoring provided: relation to mentor's career success, personality, and mentoring received', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64 (1), pp.24-46. Science Direct [Online]. (Accessed 29 March 2014).

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007) *Business research methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2011) *Business research methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burke, R. and McKeen, C. (1997) 'Benefits of mentoring relationships among managerial and professional women: a cautionary tale', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51 (1), pp. 43-57. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 17 June 2014).

Carmeli, A., Brueller, D. and Dutton, J. (2009) 'Learning behaviours in the workplace: the role of high-quality interpersonal relationships and psychological safety', *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 26 (1), pp. 81-98. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 13 June 2014).

Chao, G., Walz, P. and Gardner, P. (1992) 'Formal and informal mentorship: a comparison on mentoring functions and contrast with nonmentored counterparts', *Personnel Psychology*, 45 (3), pp. 619-636. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 2 March 2014).

Chopin, S., Danish, S., Seers, A. and Hook, J. (2012) 'Effects of mentoring on the development of leadership self-efficacy and political skill', *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 6 (3), pp. 17-32. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (1990) 'Grounded theory research: procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria', *Qualitative Sociology*, 13 (1), p. 3. SocINDEX with Full Text, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 30 June 2014).

Corbin, J. and Staruss, A. (2008) *Basics of qualitative research. Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Clutterbuck, D. (2004) *Everyone needs a mentor. Fostering talent in your organisation*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Day, R. and Allen, T. (2004) 'The Relationship between career motivation and self-efficacy with protégé career success', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64 (1), pp. 72-91. ERIC, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 17 June 2014).

Duffey, T. (2006) 'Promoting relational competencies in counsellor education through creativity and relational-cultural theory', *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 2 (1), pp. 47-59. SocINDEX with Full Text, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 6 August 2014).

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P.R. (2008) *Management research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Eby, L., Butts, M., Durley, J. and Ragins, B.R. (2010) 'Are bad experiences stronger than good ones in mentoring relationships? Evidence from the protégé and mentor perspective', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77 (1), pp. 81-92. ERIC, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 10 June 2014).

Eby, L., Butts, M., Lockwood, A. and Simon, S. (2004) 'Protégés' negative mentoring experiences: construct development and nomological validation', *Personnel Psychology*, 2, p. 411. Academic OneFile, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Eby, L., Durley, J., Evans, S. and Ragins, B.R. (2008) 'Mentors' perceptions of negative mentoring experiences: Scale development and nomological validation', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (2), pp. 358-373. PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 29 March 2014).

Eby, L., Rhodes, J. and Allen, T. (2010) 'Definition and evolution of mentoring', in Allen, T. and Eby, L. T. (eds.) *The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: a multiple perspectives approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, pp. 7-22.

Ellinger, A.D. and Bostrom, R.P. (1999) 'Managerial coaching behaviors in learning organizations', *Journal of Management Development*, 18 (9), pp. 752-771. Academic OneFile, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 8 June 2014).

Eriksson, P. and Kovalainen, A. (2007) *Qualitative methods in business*. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Fagenson, E. (1989) 'The mentor advantage: perceived career/job experiences of protégés versus non-protégés', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 10 (4), pp. 309-320. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 30 March 2014).

Fagenson-Eland, E., Marks, M., and Amendola, K. (1997), 'Perceptions of mentoring relationships', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 51 (1), pp. 29-42. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 19 June 2014).

Ferris, G., Treadway, D., Kolodinsky, R., Hochwarter, W., Kacmar, C., Douglas, C. and Frink, D. (2005) 'Development and validation of the political skill inventory', *Journal of Management*, 31 (1), pp. 126-152. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Flick, V. (2002) *An introduction to qualitative research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Haack, P. (2006) 'Special mentoring series: mentoring and professional development programs: possibilities and pitfall'. *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 92 (4) pp. 60-64. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 1 April 2014).

Haggard, D. (2012) 'Mentoring and psychological contract breach', *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 27 (2), pp. 161-175. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Haggard, D., Dougherty, T.W., Turban, D.B. and Wilbanks, J.E. (2011) 'Who is a mentor? A review of evolving definitions and implications for research', *Journal of*

*Management*, 37 (1), pp. 280-304. Sage Publications [Online]. (Accessed: 8 March 2014).

Hammer, T., Trepal, H., and Speedlin, S. (2014) 'Five relational strategies for mentoring female faculty', *Adultspan Journal*, 13 (1), pp. 4-14. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 6 August 2014).

Higgins, M., and Kram, K.E. (2001) 'Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: a developmental network perspective', *Academy Of Management Review*, 26 (2), pp. 264-288. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 27 March 2014).

Homer (1996) *The Odyssey*. United Kingdom: Penguin.

Johnson, W. B., Rose, G. and Schlosser, Z. S. (2010) 'Student – faculty mentoring: theoretical and methodological issues', in Allen, T. and Eby, L. T. (eds.) *The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: a multiple perspectives approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, pp. 49-70.

Jones, J. (2012) 'An Analysis of Learning Outcomes within Formal Mentoring Relationships', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 10 (1), pp. 57-72. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 7 June 2014).

Kram, K.E. (2004) 'Foreword: the making of a mentor by Kathy E. Kram', in Clutterbuck, D. and Lane, G. (eds.) *The Situational Mentor: An International Review of Competencies and Capabilities in Mentoring*. Hants: Gower Publishing Limited, pp. xi-xiv.

Kram, K. and Hall, D. (1989) 'Mentoring as an antidote to stress during corporate trauma', *Human Resource Management*, 28 (4), pp. 493-510. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Kram, K. E. and Isabella. L.A. (1985) 'Mentoring alternatives: the role of peer relationships in career development', *Academy Of Management Journal*, 28 (1), pp. 110-132. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 30 March 2014).

Lankau, M.J. and Scandura, T.A. (2002) 'An investigation of personal learning in mentoring relationships: content, antecedents, and consequences', *Academy of Management Journal*, 45 (4), pp. 779-790. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 20 March 2014).

Leanne, S. (2004) *How to interview like a top MBA: Job-winning strategies*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

Marais, H. (2012) 'A multi-methodological framework for the design and evaluation of complex research projects and reports in business and management studies', *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 10 (2), pp. 64-76. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 28 June 2014).

Maslow, A. (1965) 'Self-actualization and beyond', *Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults*. ERIC, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 26 July 2014).

Maslow, A. (1987) *Motivation and personality*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

McCorkel-Clinard, L. and Ariav, T. (1998) 'What mentoring does for mentors: a cross-cultural perspective', *European Journal Of Teacher Education*, 21 (1), p. 91. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 7 June 2014).

McGhee, G., Marland, G. and Atkinson, J. (2007) 'Grounded theory research: literature reviewing and reflexivity', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60 (3), pp. 334-342. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed viewed 16 June 2014).

Mero-Jaffe, I. (2011) 'Is that what I said?' Interview transcript approval by participants: an aspect of ethics in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10 (3), pp. 231-247. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 30 June 2014).

Mullins, L.J. (2010) *Management and organisational behaviour*. 9<sup>th</sup> edn. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780273724094> (Accessed 15th March 2014).

Ng, W. and Coakes, E. (2013) *Business research: enjoy creating, developing and writing your business project*. London: Kogan Page Ltd. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/preview/9780749468965> (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Nickitas, D.M. (2014) 'Mentorship in nursing: an interview with Connie Vance', *Nursing Economic\$,* 32 (2), pp. 65-69. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 6 August 2014).

Nielson, T., Carlson, D. and Lankau, M. (2001), 'The supportive mentor as a means of reducing work-family conflict', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59 (3), pp. 364-381. Abstract only. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 25 June 2014).

Ostroff, C. and Kozlowski S.W.J. (1992) 'Organizational socialization as a learning process: the role of information acquisition', *Personnel Psychology*, 45 (4), pp. 849-874. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 30 March 2014).

Poulsen, K. M. (2013) 'Mentoring programmes: learning opportunities for mentees, for mentors, for organizations and society', *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 45 (5) pp. 255-263. Emerald Group Publishing Limited [Online]. (Accessed 12th April 2014).

QSR International (2014) NVivo 10 for Mac. [Computer programme]. Available at: [http://qsrinternational.com/products\\_free-trial-software.aspx](http://qsrinternational.com/products_free-trial-software.aspx) (Accessed 14th July 2014)

Ragins, B.R. (2011) 'Relational mentoring: a positive approach to mentoring at work', in Spreitzer, G.M. and Cameron, K.S. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*, pp. 519-536. Oxford University Press PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 9 June 2014).

Ragins, B.R. and Cotton, J. (1999) 'Mentor functions and outcomes: a comparison of men and women in formal and informal mentoring relationships', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84 (4), pp. 529-550. PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 12 April 2014).

Ragins, B.R. and Kram, K.E. (2007) 'The roots and meaning of mentoring', in Ragins, B.R. and Kram, K.E. (eds.) *The handbook of mentoring at work. Theory, research, and practice*. London: Sage Publications Limited, pp.123-147.

Ragins, B.R. and Scandura, T.A. (1997) 'The way we were: gender and the termination of mentoring relationships', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82 (6), pp. 945-953. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed: 30 March 2014).

Ragins, B.R. and Scandura, T. (1999) 'Burden or blessing? Expected costs and benefits of being a mentor', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20 (4), pp. 494-509. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 4 March 2014).

Reiter, S., Stewart, G., and Bruce, C. (2011) 'A Strategy for delayed research method selection: deciding between grounded theory and phenomenology', *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 9 (1), pp. 35-46. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 28 June 2014).

Rekha, K.N. and Ganesh, M.P. (2012) 'Do mentors learn by mentoring others?', *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 1 (3), pp. 205-217. Emerald Group Publishing Limited [Online]. (Accessed 1 April 2014).

Roszkowski, M. and Badmus, P. (2014), 'Mentee's interest in becoming a peer mentor as a function of perceived quality of the mentorship experience', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring*, 12 (1), pp. 123-137. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online].

Saunders, M. and Lewis, P. (2012) *Doing research in business and management: an essential guide to planning your project*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9781292017402> (Accessed 6 August 2014).

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Tornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students*. 5th edn. Harlow: Pearson Education. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780273716938> (Accessed: 25th February 2014).

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Tornhill, A. (2012) *Research methods for business students*. 6th edn. Harlow: Pearson Education. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9780273750802> (Accessed: 15 April 2014)

Saunders M. and Tosey, P. (2012) 'The layers of research design', *Rapport Magazine*. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/4107831/The\\_Layers\\_of\\_Research\\_Design#](https://www.academia.edu/4107831/The_Layers_of_Research_Design#) (Accessed 12 March 2014).

Sbaraini, A., Carter, S.M., Evans, R.W. and Blinkhorn, A. (2011) 'How to do a grounded theory study: a worked example of a study of dental practices', *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), pp. 128-137. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 July 2014).

Scandura, T.A. (1992) 'Mentorship and career mobility: An empirical investigation', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (2), pp. 169-174. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 30 March 2014).

Scandura, T.A. (1998) 'Dysfunctional Mentoring Relationships and Outcomes', *Journal of Management*, 24 (3), pp. 449-467. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 July 2014).

Scandura, T.A. and Pellegrini, E.K (2010) 'Workplace mentoring: theoretical approaches and methodological issues', in Allen, T. and Eby, L. T. (eds.) *The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: a multiple perspectives approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited, pp. 71-92.

Scandura, T. and Williams, E. (2004) 'Mentoring and transformational leadership: The role of supervisory career mentoring', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, pp. 448-468. ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 17 June 2014).

Srivastava, S. and Thakur, M. (2013) 'Mentoring and performance: testing a mediated model in supervisory and formal mentoring in business organisation', *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation*, 6 (2), pp. 16-35. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 16 April 2014).

Srivastava, S. and Jomon, M. (2013) 'Mentoring & performance: implications for business organizations', *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 4, p. 711. Business Insights: Essentials, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Stephens, J., Heaphy, E. and Dutton, J. (2012) 'High-quality connections', in Spreitzer, G.M. and Cameron, K.S. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship*, pp. 385-399. Oxford University Press PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Strauss A. and Corbin J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory Procedures and Techniques*. London: Sage Publications Limited.

Tedx Talks (2011a) TEDxSanJoseCA - Phil Cousineau - Mentorship ... Passing the Torch. [Video online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qs1e9hEsF8> (Accessed 19th July 2014).

Tedx Talks (2011b) TEDxOverlake - Karen Russell - Modern Mentoring: The Good, The Bad and The Better. [Video online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSZRtx8m3Z8> (Accessed 18th July 2014).

Thrash, T. and Elliot, A. (2003) 'Inspiration as a psychological construct', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84 (4), pp. 871-889. PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Thrash, T. and Elliot, A. (2004) 'Inspiration: core characteristics, component processes, antecedents, and function', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87 (6), pp. 957-973. PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Thrash, T., Elliot, A., Maruskin, L. and Cassidy, S. (2010) 'Inspiration and the promotion of well-being: tests of causality and mediation', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98 (3), pp. 488-506. PsycARTICLES, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

UniSouthAustralia (2013) Sir Richard Branson at UniSA for AIME (full) - Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience. [Video Online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hPjpAUDtE> (Accessed 19th July 2014).

Urquhart, C., Lehmann, H., and Myers, M. (2010) 'Putting the 'theory' back into grounded theory: guidelines for grounded theory studies in information systems', *Information Systems Journal*, 20 (4), pp. 357-381. Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 7 April 2014).

Walliman, N. (2006) *Social research methods*. London: Sage Publications Limited. Dawsonera [Online]. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9781847878182> (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Wanberg, C., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. and Marchese, M. (2006) 'Mentor and protégé predictors and outcomes of mentoring in a formal mentoring program', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, pp. 410-423. ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Wanberg, C., Welsh, E. and Hezlett, S. (2003) 'Mentoring research: A review and dynamic process model', *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 22 pp. 39-124. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost [Online]. (Accessed 15 June 2014).

Virgin Group Ltd. (2014) 'Biography'. Available at: <http://www.virgin.com/richard-branson/biography#close> (Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014).

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Interviews Guide

- ✓ Please briefly describe your position and how it connects with your mentoring role.
- ✓ Can you please describe your mentoring relationships?
- ✓ What are your expectations from the relationship?
- ✓ What skills are required to be a good mentor?
- ✓ How would you say mentoring relationships influenced your work life and beyond?
- ✓ How the mentoring experience influenced your personal development?
- ✓ What was the impact of mentoring relationship on your career development?
- ✓ How would you describe the mutuality of the mentoring relationship?
- ✓ There is a proverb: 'Trust is good, control is better'. If you think of your work as a mentor, is this your attitude toward the relationship? Does trust make it more mutual or control?
- ✓ How does being a role model make you feel, knowing that the mentee will most probably imitate your behaviour?
- ✓ Can you give me an example when your protégé made you look at some matters in a different light?
- ✓ In what way mentoring helps you build your networks?
- ✓ What are other benefits of mentoring, for you as a mentor?
- ✓ What would be the biggest challenge for you as a mentor?
- ✓ Have you ever had a negative experience?

## Appendix 2: Selective Codes

Themes and codes that emerged from raw data

### SELECTIVE – AXIAL CODES – OPEN CODES

Selective Codes	Axial Codes	Open Codes
<b>RELATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS</b>	Being of High-Quality	Reciprocating Building trust and rapport Building confidence Triggering like behaviours Collaborating Being a critical friend Feedback
	Personal Skills Development	Continuous learning and development Self-actualisation Self-reflecting Developing assessment skills Developing communication skills Developing counselling skills Managing time
	Career Development	Continuous learning and development Seeing value in other people's work Collaboration Building networks
<b>PASSING THE TORCH</b>	Overcoming Invisibility	Energising Being confident Self-reflecting Triggering like behaviours Dealing with change Self-actualisation
	Validating Life Choices	Energising Influencing In depth-analysing Building confidence
	Generativity	Energising Power Balance Passing on the knowledge

### Appendix 3: Open and Axial Codes

Themes and codes that emerged from raw data with examples of Participant’s words

#### SELECTIVE CODES - AXIAL CODES - OPEN CODES- EXAMPLES

SELECTIVE CODE I: RELATIONAL RELATIONSHIP		
AXIAL CODE I: Being of High-Quality		
OPEN CODES	Properties	Examples of participants' words
<b>Reciprocating</b>	<p><i>Mutuality</i> <i>Collaboration</i> <i>Two-way process</i></p>	<p>Looking on the issues that you are facing and just going through it together, if you start a good relationship with someone it creates mutual respect and builds confidence;</p> <p>I was able to recognise and to get to the bottom of why he was behaving like that, and we would never have got into the bottom of that if we hadn't have that in-depth relationship;</p> <p>Looking at their practice and thinking what actually I can take from it rather than me giving all the time;</p> <p>It is a two way process;</p> <p>These are two extremes, trust and control, but I guess you need some of both for the relationship to work properly and so that both parties take something from it;</p> <p>It's about the stages of the relationship when after time it becomes more equal and it is about sharing good practice and having someone to help you improve;</p> <p>It's all about differentiation and including everybody in the process;</p> <p>It is also different from 'picking somebody's brain', mentoring is much more mutual and helpful for both myself and my mentee;</p> <p>I got as much out from it as they did, certainly you do learn from other people all the time (...) and sometimes it reminds you why you did it;</p> <p>It probably comes back to you in other ways, it's just giving somebody a helping hand;</p> <p>You do learn an awful lot from other people all the time, even like the little things (...), that's bound to happen, because if it doesn't happen there's something wrong, it can't all be one-way;</p> <p>They're going to have strengths in areas that you don't have strengths in;</p> <p>I think it gives you a sense of what's going on around you that sort of is beyond your team, and I think that helps you in your job and learn how to get things done better, because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people;</p>

**Building trust and rapport**

*Openness  
Trust  
Respect  
Psychological Contract*

Trust is about your communication skills, active listening skills, problem solving, if you start a good relationship with someone it creates mutual respect and builds confidence;

It is where you see areas to improve and emphasise all the negative and positive points and find the area for improvement in a particular time scale in mind to have that improvement to happen;

Trust is everything really (...) and you end up confiding as much to them as they confide to you, otherwise they're not going to open up to you;

She would confine to me things she wasn't sure how to approach and we would sort of talk about or I would guide her through new ways of thinking about that, so the part of mentoring is focused on 'how can I help you think about managing your career';

I think it gives you a sense of what's going on around you that sort of is beyond your team;

Myers-Briggs (...) gives us a kind of a natural language to use;

Because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people and you get where they're coming from;

That is also how you hear about these opportunities; things that are going around that you can avail of, mentoring programme being one of them;

I had a mentor who was my manager but from the distance and then she took another role and kind of reached out to me again and we have become really good friends. I feel she is still my mentor but we can still go out and have a giggle and be really good friends but she has the experience and the knowledge and she knows how to really advise me on that level;

When I have new colleagues that come on board I've often sat them down and said 'look there is no such thing like a stupid question, and be patient with yourself and the first three months I was here I cried quite a bit and so on;

It certainly makes it easier to go with someone you're friends with as well as being a mentor. You go to them no matter what time of day and night instead of just making an appointment and have lunch it makes it easier a relationship;

Because I supported them so well that it's almost like if I can see them going towards the edge of the cliff it almost like I'm standing there with a safety net ready to catch them;

I expect that the person being mentored is there voluntarily and they may not know exactly what they're looking for but they may need a little help or support;

*Continued on next page*

		<p>I do expect people to commit and say how much commitment they need, whether they want to meet monthly or an hour session, once we agree to that up front and they commit to that and if we need to change it we change it, I'm quite happy with people changing their plans. But let's get in touch, not just forget about the meeting;</p> <p>We would have talked on the phone once a week, every week at the same time and she would confide to me things she wasn't sure how to approach and we would sort of talk about or I would guide her through new ways of thinking about that, so the part of mentoring is focused on 'how can I help you think about managing your career';</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Building confidence</b></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Self-reflection</i> <i>Self-awareness</i></p>	<p>Working with other people gave me the confidence to set up my own business;</p> <p>I realised I have got the skills to go into other organizations and help them;</p> <p>It improved my confidence and consultancy skills and gave me real boost because people were generally appreciative;</p> <p>In a way it enhances my professional status and again gives me confidence in what I'm doing and who I am;</p> <p>I wouldn't think I ever decided to do the [coaching] training if I didn't have mentoring experience;</p> <p>But also I see the person grow and develop (...) and it's good for my self-esteem and my own confidence;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Being a critical friend</b></p>	<p><i>Trust</i> <i>Challenge</i> <i>Constructive feedback</i> <i>Providing guidance</i></p>	<p>We are peers but we have different skills sets;</p> <p>It links into the model of a mentor being a critical friend, which is much easier to be a critical friend when you are more removed and independent from him; people see me as being negative whereas I think it is about critical analysis;</p> <p>It comes back to trust and feedback, where you see areas to improve and emphasise all the negative and positive points and find the area for improvement in a particular time scale in mind to have that improvement to happen;</p> <p>You end up confiding as much to them as they confide to you, otherwise they're not going to open up to you;</p> <p>We often have examples of people who are super, super smart engineering type of people with hard technical skills and they are not great at the people management level it won't end your career here but it will hold you back, so we will work with people to help them find ways to be more inspiring, more of a role model, someone people want to come to talk to;</p> <p>But you know what they're good at, what they have to work on more. The mentoring part of that is to help that person interpret the feedback and how they can address it;</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>I had a mentor who was my manager but from the distance and then she took another role and kind of reached out to me again and we have become really good friends. I feel she is still my mentor but we can still go out and have a giggle and be really good friends but she has the experience and the knowledge and she knows how to really advise me on that level;</p> <p>When I have new colleagues that come on board I've often sat them down and said 'look there is no such thing like a stupid question, and be patient with yourself and the first three months I was here I cried quite a bit and so on;</p> <p>They may need a little help or support and there might be something more intangible, for example they might need more confidence and they just can't articulate what's causing it and what they feel uncomfortable about;</p> <p>I said look, you're one of the best people who I can think of who could do this role and it was about reaffirming her, because she could compete with others on the top senior level. And she got the job. So I was right and she just needed someone who could confirm that. She said she's not ready for it yet and I said 'oh yes you are and go for it', because sometimes by just applying you find out if it's right for you or not;</p> <p>She would confine to me things she wasn't sure how to approach and we would sort of talk about or I would guide her through new ways of thinking about that, so the part of mentoring is focused on 'how can I help you think about managing your career';</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Feedback</b></p>	<p><i>Constructive criticism</i></p>	<p>It is a really key skill in giving good feedback;</p> <p>You need to give very good and detailed feedback and really unpick areas to really discuss them; how to unpick feedback, how to be very detailed about it and how to see improvement that can be made broadly and follow that through to see that it is being made;</p> <p>The mentoring part of that is to help that person interpret the feedback and how they can address it;</p> <p>She would confine to me things she wasn't sure how to approach and we would sort of talk about or I would guide her through new ways of thinking about that, so the part of mentoring is focused on 'how can I help you think about managing your career'.</p> <p>I would ask 'what are you confident in doing' and then we can address it to the areas they don't feel confident in. So it's giving people strategies;</p> <p>Because the solution lies in the person, they usually know deep down where they want to go or it's something about their confidence, some encouragements to help them identify;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

You know what they're good at, what they have to work on more. The mentoring part of that is to help that person interpret the feedback and how they can address it;

**AXIAL CODE II: Personal Skills Development**

**Continuous learning and development**

*Getting other people's insight  
Looking at things in different light  
In-depth analysis  
Self-reflection  
Availing of opportunities  
Having an open-mind*

We all mentor each other to certain extent and provide support; we all have the same problems in the end. That is also how you hear about these opportunities; things that are going around that you can avail of, mentoring programme being one of them;

It gives you a chance to be much more open-minded about what that person needs from you and to understand (...) that they might learn differently from you and they might approach problems differently from you;

We are continuously learning as professional practice and professional development firm and that should happen from the day you start working till the day you retire;

By looking at other people's practice then you can reflect on your own and how you would do it or it is a different way of thinking and reflect on doing things, much more than when you are actually doing it;

You do learn from other people all the time, especially when they're starting a new business, their enthusiasm, and sometimes it reminds you why you did it, you know. It definitely shows you another aspect of business, which you haven't done before so I just enjoyed it;

What you're getting out of it is being needed, being useful, being able to share your experiences that are being helpful to another person, so I think most people enjoy that opportunity;

It gives you hope that you can develop;

It lets you look at things in a different light, gives you an insight into other people's ideas;

They're going to have strengths in areas that you don't have strengths in;

And people have different approaches to things, (...) and it makes you re-think the way you do your own thing;

Not resting on one's laurels, avoiding to become stale;

I think it's a great exercise in developing your empathy but also with that empathy comes education over what is reality and scope of other people's jobs;

That's the interesting lesson to learn, it's a good reminder that the people you're trying to attract to the company or motivate might have very different expectations than you once had;

*Continued on next page*

		<p>Mentoring is really good because it helps me to develop these kind of skills like listening and asking questions to try unpack what it is, what is the underlying issue;</p> <p>Another thing I developed is how to approach conflict and I always was very conflict averse and it always freaked me out and scared me;</p> <p>I definitely believe that the power is in the team and the team being diverse brings a variety of views. I definitely believe that you are always learning, especially in these types of jobs that require lots of 'invisible' work, where there is no one way of getting things done we're always learning from other people with different approaches that the one you would have taken yourself;</p> <p>Not resting on one's laurels, avoiding to become state/stale;</p> <p>Through mentoring people are getting to understand how things work, especially in that conflict situation, it was a very useful tool for me, and helped me to manage the performance of people I work with and be trusted;</p> <p>But also I see the person grow and develop as well, so I really have the feeling that I made and impact on someone else's life and that certainly has an impact on me and makes me feel valued and that I'm contributing something of value. It's good for my self-esteem and my own confidence as well, and it impacts on me in a way that it gives me an understanding of different issues that affect people, so when relationships go I have much more understanding now than I have long time ago;</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Self-actualisation</b></p>	<p><i>Realising one's competences Self-awareness</i></p>	<p>I found out I really enjoyed it and I got as much out from it as they did, certainly you do learn from other people all the time, especially when they're starting a new business, their enthusiasm, and sometimes it reminds you why you did it, you know. It definitely shows you another aspect of business, which you haven't done before so I just enjoyed it;</p> <p>The work I do and the connections I have with those big universities, I don't think I would have done it few years ago. I feel that mentoring made me feel ready to take on new responsibilities;</p> <p>It makes you realise your own flaws and the good things about you, it helps you understand things you never thought about before. It's sort of like discovering yourself;</p> <p>It makes you realise how much you already know and you just reinforce that;</p> <p>I realised I have got the skills to go into other organizations and help them;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>My mentee became a leader who is in charge of everything and again it makes you realise that we can make a real difference for people;</p> <p>I wouldn't think I ever decided to do the [coaching] training if I didn't have mentoring experience;</p> <p>In a way it enhances my professional status and again gives me confidence in what I'm doing and who I am;</p>
<b>Self-reflecting</b>	<p><i>Reflecting on one's behaviour</i> <i>Self-awareness</i></p>	<p>It gives you a sense of what's going on around you that sort of is beyond your team, and I think that helps you in your job and learn how to get things done better, because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people and you get where they're coming from;</p> <p>It lets you look at things in a different light, gives you an insight into other people's ideas;</p> <p>It also helps you consider what to do next and by looking at other people's practice you can reflect on your own and how you would do it or it is a different way of thinking, you reflect on doing things;</p> <p>It is about the impact that you have as a mentor and to be able to see that improvement;</p> <p>You put more thought in doing things, you think before you act, you wonder how much do I really know about my profession;</p> <p>I definitely became more aware of myself, my behaviour and behaviour of others;</p> <p>I never really thought about being a role model, but I suppose it does make you think about your behaviour more;</p> <p>And people have different approaches to things, (...) and it makes you re-think the way you do your own thing;</p> <p>That's the interesting lesson to learn, it's a good reminder that the people you're trying to attract to the company or motivate might have very different expectations than you once had. But it gives you the opportunity to rethink the boundaries of work and what a workplace needs to offer (in ref. to gen. Y);</p> <p>Almost everyone in Company X has come across on the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) quite early and learned a little bit about their own profile, and because we always work in teams the Myers-Briggs becomes a shorthand way of understanding that the person who is possibly driving you insane and giving you hard time is of quite a different profile from you, and it gives us a kind of a natural language to use;</p> <p>You do learn an awful lot from other people all the time, even like the little things they've done and you think 'Oh, how come I haven't thought of that before' or 'wish, I have done that';</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>So it's sort of easier to basically have one set of rules for yourself and then another set of rules for someone junior acting on your advice. It is often hard to become aware that there is disconnect between how you're behaving and what advice you give to somebody else;</p> <p>You get to understand people and their behaviour and you look more psychologically at it. It helps you to be much more reflective;</p> <p>It's a great exercise in developing your empathy but also with that empathy comes education over what is reality and scope of other people's jobs;</p> <p>it gives you the opportunity to rethink the boundaries of work and what a workplace needs to offer;</p> <p>You're always conscious of the advice you're giving and they do take it as a given and you have to be careful what you say to them;</p> <p>It gives you a chance to be much more open-minded about what that person needs from you and to understand, you know, that they might learn differently from you and they might approach problems differently from you;</p> <p>Not letting too much of myself come into the relationship is a challenge;</p> <p>I need to pull it together and not to be so stressed out and acting like a chicken with a head cut-off, because I have got all these things going on. If I'm perceived to not have my act together then people won't come to me for help and definitely not what I want;</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Developing assessment skills</b></p>	<p><i>In-depth analysis</i>  <i>Seeing potential in other people and situations</i>  <i>Judgement</i></p>	<p>By looking at other people's practice you can reflect on your own and how you would do it or it is a different way of thinking and reflect on doing things, much more than when you are actually doing it;</p> <p>How to unpick feedback, how to be very detailed about it and how to see improvement that can be made broadly and follow that through to see that it is being made;</p> <p>You need to know how to build trust and you need to analyse and 'learn' people, it's more like psychology, you need to make sure that the show they are presenting is real and not that when it cracks there is a completely different person inside;</p> <p>Being quite insightful and being able to see the relationship on different level with different level of questioning;</p> <p>When you go through a particular issue you think of different ways of approaching the matter, instead of just doing it, plus you also have your mentee's insight;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>I was able to realise and to get to the bottom of WHY he was behaving like that, and we would never have got into the bottom of that if we hadn't have that in-depth relationship. The fact that he was able to finally confide and unpick that. We were able then to see what is that he feared;</p> <p>Probably I also learned to see the spark and promise and potential in people and you just want to help them develop;</p> <p>Mentoring is really good because it helps me to develop these kind of skills like listening and asking questions to try unpack what it is, what is the underlying issue;</p> <p>Whatever people present you there's stuff going on there and you filter that through your own life experiences;</p> <p>When people behave in a certain way there's usually something going on behind the scenes and we can't be so judgemental and harsh;</p> <p>It's good for my self-esteem and my own confidence as well, and it impacts on me in a way that it gives me an understanding of different issues that affect people, so when relationships go I have much more understanding now;</p> <p>So I now approach conflict from a place of curiosity and ask 'what's that about,/ok, that's interesting that you said that/that's interesting that you did that/what makes you say that/ why did you do that' and it takes the defensiveness out of it, you try to understand the whole package;</p> <p>It is going to make a difference for a person when you can think more deeply;</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Developing communication skills</b></p>	<p><i>Active listening</i> <i>Not solving problems for others</i></p>	<p>If you have a global job when you constantly interacting with different cultural norms, in terms how different people speak to you or how they contact you, it helps if you are mentoring people or in the past you were mentoring people who are coming from that place, so it helps you understand differences a bit better;</p> <p>It is very helpful to have to realise, or it gives you skills that would help you in your supervisory life as well, because it gives you a chance to be much more open-minded about what that person needs from you and to understand, you know, that they might learn differently from you and they might approach problems differently from you;</p> <p>You get to know new people and everyone is different, so you build this endless network of people;</p> <p>Because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people and you get where they're coming from;</p> <p>The mentoring part of that is to help that person interpret the feedback and how they can address it;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>You had to get the message across;  We need to have very strong communication and presentation skills;  Not trying to sort it out for them, for me that is a challenge, because I'm a bit of a problem solver and I find that in my personal relationships as well;  Listening skills, definitely, that's the number one most important thing, how to be an active listener .So ask questions and get people to come to their own conclusions, if you can make them do that, and it takes a really skilled person to ask the open ended questions and not try to direct people;  There is a real skill to be able to help you clarify your own problems yourself, it's something that needs to be practised and learned, but I think that the number one biggest thing is just being a good listener and second being able to asks the right questions to help people come to their own conclusions;  It makes you a magnet for a huge volumes of conversations that people wish to have with you;  Mentoring is really good because it helps me to develop these kind of skills like listening and asking questions to try unpack what it is, what is the underlying issue;  I think it's the ability to listen and not trying to solve their problems but help them find their own solutions, that is a challenge;</p>
<b>Developing counselling skills</b>	<p><i>Not solving problems for others</i>  <i>Guiding</i>  <i>Comforting</i></p>	<p>You become a kind of a sponge that takes all the information on board you have to give your opinion and perspective on it; helps others overcome their fears and barriers;  We will work with people to help them find ways to be more inspiring, more of a role model, someone people want to come to talk to;  People just want to use the meeting to moan and they actually don't take the responsibility for doing anything about it themselves. So it actually might be a challenge to teach people responsibility;  When people behave in a certain way there's usually something going on behind the scenes and we can't be so judgemental and harsh;  It's sort of counselling, you're only allowed to listen and not to give any advice, and you just throw that out of the window;</p>
<b>Managing time</b>	<p><i>Prioritising</i></p>	<p>It is a major time suck, but it doesn't have to be it can be like Goldilocks and The Three Bears, you can find that one that is just right. You can mentor for just a minute and it still can be very rewarding;  I'm quite happy with people changing their plans. But let's get in touch, not just forget about the meeting;  <i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>Time will expand around how you use that time and I think when you are able to prioritise you will get that time;</p>
<b>AXIAL CODE III: Career Development</b>		
<b>Collaborating</b>	<p><i>Working together to achieve goal</i></p>	<p>We set up an action plan and milestones that we had to achieve and implement;</p> <p>It's amazing how two people can bond and create something new, exciting and fresh;</p> <p>It is more about looking at a situation and the issues that you are facing and just go through it together;</p> <p>I go to people to help them solve the problem and help them see that actually the requirements they have to meet are achievable and doable;</p> <p>But you know what they're good at, what they have to work on more. The mentoring part of that is to help that person interpret the feedback and how they can address it;</p> <p>Part of mentoring is focused on 'how can I help you think about managing your career';</p> <p>We will work with people to help them find ways to be more inspiring, more of a role model, someone people want to come to talk to;</p> <p>I think it gives you a sense of what's going on around you that sort of is beyond your team, and I think that helps you in your job and learn how to get things done better, because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people and you get where they're coming from;</p> <p>Sometimes just stepping back and allowing for the silence to happen and not to fill the silence might help us both look at things in a different light;</p> <p>Through mentoring people are getting to understand how things work, especially in that conflict situation, it was a very useful tool for me, and helped me to manage the performance of people I work with and be trusted;</p> <p>We interact with each other a lot and certainly that is what motivates me all day long;</p>
<b>Seeing value in other people's work</b>	<p><i>Seeing it in action and that it actually works</i></p>	<p>You do learn an awful lot from other people all the time, even like the little things they've done and you think 'Oh, how come I haven't thought of that before' or 'wish, I have done that'. And those might be the small things, one of them had this very detailed media list, far more detailed than anything I ever had, so that makes you feel, oh maybe that's what I should be doing;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>Looking at their practice and thinking what actually I can take from it rather than me giving all the time; Getting ideas from other places that I can implement here or I can do such and such there;</p> <p>I think it's a great exercise in developing your empathy but also with that empathy comes education over what is reality and scope of other people's jobs;</p> <p>It lets you look at things in a different light, gives you an insight into other people's ideas;</p> <p>There is always something that you can learn from your colleagues without a doubt and I definitely have had that experience before and I look forward to having that experience more and more. As I speak with new colleagues, especially colleagues who maybe came from a different background or are experiencing McKinsey for the first time, it definitely makes me think back to my earlier days and how I can help people better;</p> <p>Sometimes just stepping back and allowing for the silence to happen and not to fill the silence might help us both look at things in a different light;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Building networks</b></p>	<p><i>New people</i> <i>New experiences</i></p>	<p>You get to know new people and everyone is different, so you build this endless network of people;</p> <p>The work I do and the connections I have with those big universities, I don't think I would have done it few years ago;</p> <p>It makes you a magnet for a huge volumes of conversations that people wish to have with you;</p> <p>There is always something that you can learn from your colleagues without a doubt and I definitely have had that experience before and I look forward to having that experience more and more. As I speak with new colleagues, especially colleagues who maybe came from a different background or are experiencing McKinsey for the first time, it definitely makes me think back to my earlier days and how I can help people better;</p> <p>I think it's crucial, especially when you're on your own to be networking (...), we all mentor each other to certain extent and provide support and we all have the same problems in the end. That is also how you hear about these opportunities; things that are going around that you can avail of, mentoring programme being one of them;</p>

**SELECTIVE CODE I: PASSING THE TORCH**

**AXIAL CODE I: Overcoming Invisibility**

<b>Energising</b>	<p><i>Influencing Changing people's lives Generativity Collaborating with younger people</i></p>	<p>It is a great opportunity to do something different, which I really relish because it helps me not to get stale;</p> <p>They come back rejuvenated, happy, it validates your life choice when you share what it is what you do;</p> <p>It's more about the energy level that you have and the creativity rather than experience;</p> <p>To know that you can influence and change someone's life is fantastic!;</p> <p>It's the feeling of fulfilment, the fact that you have contributed to the society, that you constantly learn. It also gives you a chance to do something else, more original;</p> <p>But also I see the person grow and develop as well, so I really have the feeling that I made and impact on someone else's life and that certainly has an impact on me and makes me feel valued and that I'm contributing something of value;</p> <p>You do learn from other people all the time, especially when they're starting a new business, their enthusiasm, and sometimes it reminds you why you did it, you know. It definitely shows you another aspect of business, which you haven't done before so I just enjoyed it;</p> <p>I would always come away from the mentoring session feeling very positive myself;</p> <p>I just enjoy helping people, I mean that's part of the reason why I'm really good at my job, I look for ways to help people. And I love Company X's ideal that we don't just climb the ladder we bring up the people who are with us at the time;</p> <p>It's energising and also being frank, sometimes it isn't. There are some major generational differences, you know;</p>
<b>Dealing with change</b>	<p><i>Making a difference in others and own lives</i></p>	<p>You can make a real difference to people because you can help them have a new career when their old career draw to an end;</p> <p>It has both upsides and downsides and that's the interesting lesson to learn, it's a good reminder that the people you're trying to attract to the company or motivate might have very different expectations than you once had. But it gives you the opportunity to rethink the boundaries of work and what a workplace needs to offer;</p> <p>We often have examples of people who are super super smart engineering type of people with hard technical skills and they are not great at the people management level it won't end your career here but it will hold you back, so we will work with people to help them find ways to be more inspiring, more of a role model, someone people want to come to talk to;</p>

**AXIAL CODE II: Validating Life Choices**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencing</b></p>	<p><i>Making a change</i></p>	<p>It was rather about my experience and my insight and helping along this road of introducing this new programme in their organization;</p> <p>It just gives me a lot of personal satisfaction. I feel like I'm helping people and if I feel that I'm helping people I have a better sense of purpose in my life;</p> <p>For me is about getting ideas from other places that I can implement here or I can do such and such there; She changed completely and it was a real revelation to me cause what I did was really plant few seeds and said maybe we could try this or maybe we could try that or something else;</p> <p>It makes me feel really proud when I mentor people and I see them achieve things and that I have some role in that that I have contributed to that in some way, so that's a nice feeling as well. But there is a lot of responsibility in that;</p> <p>The skill I use most often in my role is the parenting skills and you want to be the best parent you can and don't swear in front of your children, but every now and then something will come out and I think that's fine as long as you acknowledge it;</p> <p>I see the person grow and develop as well, so I really have the feeling that I made and impact on someone else's life and that certainly has an impact on me and makes me feel valued and that I'm contributing something of value;</p> <p>We were able to break that down to why is it like that and we were able to talk about it and analyse it; People see me as being negative whereas I think it is about critical analysis;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>In-depth analysing</b></p>	<p><i>Getting to a bottom of a matter</i></p>	<p>And also you tend to analyse things more, while you mentor, you get to know yourself better and when you go through a particular issue you think of your own ways of approaching the matter, instead of just doing it, plus you also have your mentee's insight; You put more thought in doing things, you think before you act, you wonder how much do I really know about my profession;</p> <p>It gives you a sense of what's going on around you that sort of is beyond your team, and I think that helps you in your job and learn how to get things done better, because you actually understand how the different parts of your organisation are functioning and therefore you have a clearer communication with those people and you get where they're coming from;</p> <p>As I speak with new colleagues, especially colleagues who maybe came from a different background or are experiencing McKinsey for the first time, it definitely makes me think back to my earlier days and how I can help people better;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>Because the solution lies in the person, they usually know deep down where they want to go or it's something about their confidence, some encouragements to help them identify;</p> <p>So I now approach conflict from a place of curiosity and ask 'what's that about/ok, that's interesting that you said that/that's interesting that you did that/what makes you say that/ why did you do that' and it takes the defensiveness out of it, you try to understand the whole package;</p> <p>Almost everyone in Company X has come across the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) quite early and learned a little bit about their own profile, and because we always work in teams the Myers-Briggs becomes a shorthand way of understanding that the person who is possibly driving you insane and giving you hard time is of quite a different profile from you, and it gives us a kind of a natural language to use;</p> <p>Sometimes just stepping back and allowing for the silence to happen and not to fill the silence might help us both look at things in a different light</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Triggering like behaviours</b></p>	<p><i>Being a role model</i></p>	<p>That can show itself to the learner, mentoring does the same for the mentee as it does for the mentor; it's natural that when you mentor someone and guide him through your steps you do it so that you can have someone who can do your job in the future;</p> <p>If your mentee sees that it is ok to fail there are big chances that he or she will behave the same way, I mean he will come to terms with that failure and treat it as a lesson;</p> <p>I never really thought about being a role model, but I suppose it does make you think about your behaviour more;</p> <p>Often all I say is 'that's just what I think we should do' and it's all based on my experience and it depends on them if they follow my advice. But in fairness they probably did;</p> <p>I'm a role model and I need to act accordingly;</p> <p>It's easier to basically have one set of rules for yourself and then another set of rules for someone junior acting on your advice. It is often hard to become aware that there is disconnect between how you're behaving and what advice you give to somebody else;</p> <p>It's interesting because quite often I say that the skill I use most often in my role is the parenting skills and you want to be the best parent you can and don't swear in front of your children, but every now and then something will come out and I think that's fine as long as you acknowledge it;</p> <p>There is a lot of responsibility in that, yes, and realising that, and knowing that if you're on a social event, even if you're not doing anything somebody may be watching you and noticing how you interact;</p> <p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

		<p>And it's really humbling and makes me think as well to be careful what I say, because you never know what things you say have an impact, and I have that quite a bit now, people come back to me and say 'oh when I first met you, you said such and such and it always stuck with me and I still use it today';</p>
<b>AXIAL CODE III: Generativity</b>		
<b>Power Balance</b>	<p><i>Professional boundaries Differences between supervisory and nonsupervisory relationships</i></p>	<p>Comparing my mentoring relationships (formal supervisory ones) and other external organisation I can see how much more open and frank people are with me when I come from the outside;</p> <p>Whether you should actually mentor someone when you are their line manager because it creates this different relationship and different power balance; It's much nicer to have someone who is not your supervisor because it gives them the independence;</p> <p>I think it's possible and I've had different experiences with different people but I think it's few and far in between that you really become a friend with your mentee or mentor. I think for the most part, and it's not just a stereotype it's a reality, your mentor is basically a lot more experienced than you and in that sense you're usually living in a different world than they do;</p> <p>Because if you're not somebody's supervisor you also might not know how they are performing in their role and what they're talking to you is how they're going to progress to the next level, you need to set certain expectations, you don't know anything about this person. It's kind of a responsibility, and you have to be careful not to de-motivate people;</p> <p>Because if you haven't got the supervisory relationship then one of the things I would probably say to you is that you need to speak to somebody who can do something about it. Because you can chat to me about it and I'll listen and support you with some ideas and strategies, but at the end of the day the only person that can sort it out for you is your line manager, for example, you need to go and talk to them;</p> <p>We tend to mentor people we wouldn't otherwise come across, because we're not their supervisors and so I think it becomes educational, you know, I never really understood that if I sat in India with three hundred other people I wouldn't understand the A, B and C about the firm but now that I mentor that person and try to manage their career I'm learning how it would be if I was in their shoes;</p>

## Passing on the knowledge

It's the feeling of fulfilment, the fact that you have contributed to the society and that you constantly learn;

I'd say that is the whole meaning of the mentorship. Why would you pass on your own knowledge and wisdom if you wouldn't like it to be used in the future?;

It's natural that when you mentor someone and guide him through your steps you do it so that you could have someone who can do your job in the future

But also I see the person grow and develop as well, so I really have the feeling that I made an impact on someone else's life and that certainly has an impact on me and makes me feel valued and that I'm contributing something of value;

It makes me feel really proud when I mentor people and I see them achieve things and that I have some role in that that I have contributed to that in some way, so that's a nice feeling as well. But there is a lot of responsibility in that;

I have been doing this job for almost 25 years and she [my mentee] just doesn't understand that side of the business at all yet;

## **Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form**

### **DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Research Student name:** Dorota Danecka-Mikus

**Research Supervisor name:** Martin O’Dea

**Programme:** Master of Arts in Human Resource Management, Dublin Business School

**Research Study:** „A study of the influences of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships on the skills development and career outcomes of mentors”

I am a post-graduate student at Dublin Business School and I am currently working on my thesis, which is the final project of my course. I explore the topic of nonsupervisory mentoring relationships and their impact on the mentors’ career outcomes. I would be interested in learning your views and perceptions on mentorship based on your real-life experience. I intend to explore existing theories on nonsupervisory mentoring relationships based on the information acquired by means of qualitative research.

I would be very grateful if you agree to participate in my research and answer a series of questions. The semi-structured interview I intend to conduct will last approximately an hour at a date, time and venue suitable to your availability and convenience. I advise you that, subject to your consent, the interview will be recorded, however the recording will be destroyed immediately after the project is completed.

Please understand that you do not have to participate in the research and that you can withdraw at any time without giving reason. Also feel free to ask questions in order to clarify any doubts and to skip any question you do not feel comfortable with.

This research is confidential and your identity or that of the organisation you work for will not be revealed in this or any other research.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you have any questions. My contact details and that of my research supervisor are provided below.

- ✓ I confirm that I have been informed about the purpose of this study
- ✓ I understand that my participations is voluntarily and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason
- ✓ I understand that the research is confidential and that my identity or that of my organisation will not be revealed in this or any other paper
- ✓ I agree to take part in the study
- ✓ I agree to the interview being audio-recorded
- ✓ I understand that all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the project is completed

---

Participant Name

---

Date and Time

---

Signature of Participant

---

Signature of Researcher

Dorota Danecka-Mikus      email: xxx      phone number: xxx

Martin O’Dea                      email: xxx

## **Appendix 5: Learner's Engagement and Reflection**

This section provides an insight into the author's perception of the research topic and the research process itself with a specific focus on skills development, author's strength and weaknesses and a general reflection on the dissertation stage of the course.

### Reflection on the research topic

I have chosen the Human Resource Management course in Dublin Business School in order to broaden my skills set and allow myself to have an option in life, in case I decide to change my career path. When it comes to the topic of mentorship it immediately sparked my attention during one of the modules of the course and it made me realise that I actually have an informal mentor in my life. Mentorship was a subject I strongly identified with ever since and decided to discover it in more details in my future dissertation. Nevertheless, the research topic itself was a very daunting process and it took a while to set it in stone. After reviewing more and more literature it was becoming obvious that there is an enormous amount of books and journal articles on the subject of mentoring. I was aware I would have to focus on mentors' benefits as the protégés' outcomes were researched even more thoroughly. Through the careful analysis of the literature I developed a topic that was new and I did not lose time and effort by making rash decisions and choosing a topic that was just interesting, but not of any significance.

### Reflection on the research process

The research process seemed overwhelming and from day one I decided to focus on small steps so to always have the attainable goal in sight. The literature review, although fascinating, was very tough to write but when drafted it served me as a guide during the rest of the research process. The methodology chapter seemed to be the most straightforward part as Saunders's Research Onion gave relevant instructions for each step. Again, by having a guide I focused on small measurable steps and saw the next stage clearly. Furthermore, I admit that I have not expected the methodology to be so useful in the research process. It proved to be indispensable from the very first

stages, for instance while choosing research philosophes. It all correlated with my world views and my idea on how I want to approach the research process.

Surprisingly for me, the most fascinating part of the whole process was the data collection stage, which I dreaded the most. I knew that getting to know people's insight on the topic will be much more interesting, instead of collecting and analysing questionnaires. However, I did not expect to meet individuals with such enthusiasm and passion about their mentoring relationships. What was even more surprising was that the whole study started to have shape and make more sense from the very first interview. Acquiring access to respondents was challenging, nevertheless, I got a satisfactory response rate from my prospective participants but I definitely had to be resourceful in the way the interviews were conducted as most of my interviewees were based in the United Kingdom. Some of the meeting were face-to-face in London and Dublin, however, some had to be conducted through conference calls and Skype.

The supervisor's tips on the importance of preparation for the interview process were extremely helpful. The idea of conducting interviews made me feel very uncomfortable but the supervisor assurance that there is an abundance of informative literature helped me prepare for the process. It has to be noted that skills needed for conducting a successful interview have to be practiced and even after seven meeting during the data-collection stage I am far from mastering those skills.

#### Reflection on self-development

From the very beginning of the research process I could see myself behaving more and more sensibly and I approached the whole matter of writing the dissertation very practically. I was aware that it would involve enormous amount of work that has to be accommodated with my professional career, frequent travels and every-day life. Even though the previous two years of the course have already thought me to be more responsible, the last few months have definitely reinforced that attitude. My fear was that with the amount of work I would at some stage procrastinate and panic, which

proved to be correct as I had few moment of doubt. Nevertheless, in the end it turned out that the more duties and responsibilities I had the better my organisations skills became. The fact that I have decided to enrol for the Master's course has also been noted by my colleagues and my employer. During the last two years I have been assigned with more project and responsibilities and my role has evolved significantly, which added a great value to my career.

The last two years in college, as well as the research process itself, has improved my writing skills, which I never felt comfortable with. The constant interaction with classmates, lecturers, supervisor and research participants greatly reinforced my communication skills, both verbal and written. I also slightly improved the already mentioned skills needed for conducting interviews, such as active listening, asking open-ended questions, not interrupting the respondents etc. Furthermore, I am positive that my reading comprehension ability has improved thanks to the amount of books, journals, business magazines and researches I went through recently. Also, I enormously developed my research skills and I wish I was so comfortable with finding new sources and looking for new journal articles two years ago, while starting the course. However, it will help me with my future ineluctable educational adventures. Dublin Business School's library has very rich electronic resources thanks to which I accessed the majority of journals and books. As alumni of University College Dublin I also have an access to the UCD's library collection and the Blackrock Business Library proved to be useful as well.

The research process made me realise my strengths, such as organisational skills, time management, resourcefulness and commitment, and weaknesses, for example coping with stress, procrastination and self-doubt. It indicated areas for improvement as well as boosted my confidence and in the end made me believe in my own capabilities. It all greatly influenced on my work life and beyond.