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The functional relationship between mentoring relationship, employee development and organisational success

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The dynamic relationship, such as mentoring relationships, has led to achievements and success in organisations. Within the current financial constraints and skills shortages, the successes within small groups, such as mentoring relationships, warrant investigation. This case study investigated the success of mentoring relationships in the pulp and paper industry of South Africa. The purposes of the mentoring programme, mentor-protégé characteristics and mentoring coordinator characteristics emerged from the perceptions of the participants. The success of the mentoring programme of this case study is experience as correlating to the characteristic of the mentors and protégés in the mentoring relationship.

Keywords: World of work, employee relations, group dynamics, dyads, relationships, engineer, employment development, qualitative research, mentor characteristics, protégé characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

The synergistic relationships that are found in groups of people have led to achievements more than just above the norm, such as the first people to reach the summit of mount Everest, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay; the first non-stop transatlantic flight by Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown; and the Internet search engine, Google, that was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin. Note that these examples of outstanding achievements that were highlighted are called dyads, that is, groups consisting of two members (Forsyth, 2009). In the world of work that is facing a global recession, the effective functioning of small groups, such as dyads, is vital to just about all sectors of the organisation (Elwyn et al., 2001; KPMG, 2009). Small groups in organisations should be considered in terms of the employment relationship. Employee relations,

consisting of human resource management and industrial relations, cover everything that impact on the employment relationship (Nel et al., 2005). The mentoring relationship is a form of employee development that falls under employee relations. The personal relationship in mentoring dyad can have an impact on the development of high achievers (DeLong et al., 2007). Mentoring is therefore used to develop talent. In a study of global organisations, it was found that having a well-developed system to identify, develop and effectively manage talent within an organisation, has a distinct advantage over organisations without such a system (McDonnell et al., 2010). Mentoring relationships are such a system, as the dynamic relationship of mentoring dyads can be one of the means by which high achievers and you can be helped (Stone, 2007).

The original focus of the mentoring relationship was that of the mentor-protégé dyad, from which the peer and group mentoring conceptualisations move away (Bozionelos, 2004; Dansky, 1996; Eby, 1997; Kram, 1985). A dyad is a group consisting of only two members, which is connected by and within a social relationship (Forsyth, 2009). A mentor-protégé dyad is therefore a mentoring relationship consisting of only two members,

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namely the mentor and the protégé. Bozeman et al. (2007) move back to the dyadic nature of the mentoring relationship in numbering the participants in mentoring to transmit work-related knowledge as dyads (including sets of dyads). The dyadic nature of the mentoring relationship limits the definition of mentoring to dyads or sets of dyads (Bozeman et al., 2007). The last two decades have provided a surge of interest and research into the topic of mentoring and workplace mentoring, which is a relatively new focus of study (Allen et al., 2008). The dynamic relationship that guides, supports and influences the developing person is known as mentoring (Haynes et al., 2008). The profound effect that influential people can have on our lives, as in the far-reaching effect of mentors, can lead to the *success* of organisations, businesses, churches, children, communities and our country (Steinmann, 2006). The definition for mentoring used in this study is based on the definition adopted by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, where mentoring is "off line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking" (Clutterbuck, 2001). Note that coaching relationships go hand-in-hand with mentoring relationships, because mentoring includes coaching, guardianship, facilitating, counselling and networking of the person being mentored, in other words the protégé (Klasen et al., 2002; Rhodes et al., 2002).

Mentoring is a process of transferring specific knowledge from the mentor to the protégé (Hendrikse, 2003 cited in Janse van Rensburg et al., 2005). Bozeman et al. (2007) define mentoring in the following way: Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).

This definition, which will serve as one of the theoretical bases for this research, limits mentoring to dyads (or sets of dyads) and rejects some current meanings of the term mentoring, such as the current meaning of group mentoring (Bozeman et al., 2007). "Mentoring is an inclusive, confidential relationship between two people who have mutual personal growth and corporate success as common ground" (Brown, 1990, cited in Hattingh et al., 2005). Derived from these definitions, mentoring is an offline relationship between two people for the transmission of knowledge, social capital and psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to professional development between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé). From the above literature review, the following purpose emanates: To gain the experience of mentoring relationship success in a case study.

The aim of the study

Small groups, such as mentoring relationships, warrant investigation within the current financial constraints and skills shortages. According to Scott et al. (2008), the current financial constraints and skills shortages *challenge* the viability of using one-on-one mentoring models to empower subordinates, and provide the group mentoring team as a more viable option to support new graduate nurses. On the other hand, recent mentoring theory challenges the viability of the use of group mentoring, but permits the use of sets of mentoring dyads and labels group mentoring relationships under socialisation (Bozeman et al., 2007). A major concern currently within South Africa is the availability of employment (KPMG, 2009). This is reflected in the current unemployment rate in South Africa, which is at 24% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Low levels of human development are constraining economic growth potential in sub-Saharan African countries, such as South Africa (Ranis et al., 2000). Focused skills development is most beneficial towards human development (Kingdon et al., 2007). Mentoring relationships are a form of human development and therefore take on the employment challenge. Being proactive in taking on unemployment by means of human development initiatives, such as mentoring relationship programmes, is of importance for economic growth in South Africa.

In the workplace, small groups, such as mentoring relationships, relate to certain desires or needs of employees. It is desired, and even expected by much of the workforce today for organisations to provide opportunities to fulfil career and psychological or developmental needs, as well as role-modelling needs (Aryee et al., 1996a; Kram, 1985; Scandura et al., 1993; Wang et al., 2009). A more complete understanding of mentoring relations may make satisfying these needs easier. The mentoring relation can be facilitated by the use of a mentoring programme within an organisation. Literature sources describe contexts in which mentoring schemes (or programmes) exist, including many situations where knowledge, wisdom or experience need to be passed from people with more of the required attribute to people who need to acquire more of this for any reason (Colley, 2003; Klochan, 2002; Klasen et al., 2002). The *purpose* and approach of this mentoring programme are diverse within organisations using mentoring programmes. The implementation of mentoring programmes is one of the ways to promote empowering work environments, for instance for promotion of subordinates, enriched performance and diversity awareness (Table 1) (Cranwell-Ward et al., 2004; Hattingh et al., 2005; Hegstad et al., 2005; Nedd et al., 2006). The mentoring relationships should not be investigated out of the context of the purpose and the approach of a mentoring programme. This case study on mentoring relationships also builds on one of the core subjects in group dynamics, which is the study of

Table 1. Components of a mentoring programme.

Support structure	Support culture	Empowerment
Open physical environment	Top management support.	Loyalty
Mentor training	Team emphasis	Increased retention
Cross-functional work teams	Open communication	Satisfaction
Mentor and protégé team bonding weekend	Employee collaboration	Networking. Protégés' access to resources
Mentor and protégé matching system		Promotion/ advancement opportunities of protégé
Layered or flattened hierarchy		Socialisation into organisational culture
		Organisational learning
		Improved moral
		Diversity awareness
		Enriched performance
		Professional development desire

*Derived from three resent authors (Cranwell-Ward et al., 2004; Hattingh et al., 2005; Hegstad et al., 2005).

leadership (Forsyth, 2009). In a groundbreaking study of five years, 1,435 companies on the Fortune 500 (between 1965 and 1995) were analysed (Collins, 2001). According to Collins (2001), level-5 leadership is the style of leadership that guided 11 of these companies from mediocrity to greatness, with stock market returns averaging at least 6.9 times the general stock market for 15 years. One of the reasons that the author chose to take 15 years of spiralling success after a breakthrough, as a cut for their study, was that 15 years exceed most executive terms and can be seen as significant sustained development.

The potential value addition of the study

Recent research on mentoring relationships in the workplace revealed the problem area, namely that only 11.1% (n = 178) of the research on mentoring was done qualitatively or combined according to research on the state of mentoring research done by Allen et al. (2008). There is therefore a need for more qualitative investigation into mentoring relationships, which is catered for by this research.

The following research objectives are formulated based on the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

1. To obtain the purpose and approach of the mentoring programme of a specific company.
2. To obtain, through literary study interviews, the dynamics of mentoring success.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

The research, pertaining to the specific objectives, consists of a literature review and the empirical study, which is a qualitative research of this case study.

Research strategy

The literature review is based on the research of the relevant literature, to gain an understanding of mentoring relations. Where applicable, the relevant tables or figures were incorporated. Primary and secondary sources that were consulted include various publications such as text-books, journals, newspaper articles and previous studies related to this research topic. The databases that will be used are Nexus, SA journals, LexisNexis, Ferdikat, Emerald, ProQuest and Google Scholar. This empirical study is designed as a case study consisting of quali-tative interviews. In order to achieve the aims of this study, a case study will be conducted in the form of one-on-one interviews. The rationale in the primary use of the qualitative one-on-one interview is that the study is of an explo-ratory nature (Flick, 2009). The interview questions were reviewed and critiqued by experts in related fields of study. The questions were accordingly revised.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research setting

All the interviews were held behind closed doors. The interviews were held on the premises of the specific mill within offices and a conference room.

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

For the purposes of this study, the researcher worked closely with an intermediator. An intermediator gave permission for the inter-views and arranged the interviews and interview locations. The participants (n=10) were limited to mentors, protégés and relevant participants in this case study within the pulp and paper industry. Only employees of a specific pulp and paper mill are included who are/have been in a mentoring relationship or have strong relevance to the mentoring programme at this mill. The geographic location of the participants is in the South African province of Mpumalanga. The mentors of all the mentoring pairs are limited to middle or top management.

Sampling

The sample size of the research is limited by the saturation

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the participants.

| Item | Category | Mentoring pairs | | | | Not in mentoring pair | |
| | | Mentor | | Protégé | | Mentoring custodian | |
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Mentoring	Pair	5	50	5	50	1	10
Gender	Male	5	50	4	40	1	10
	Female	-	-	1	10	-	-
Ethnicity	White	5	50	4	40	1	10
	Black	-	-	1	10	-	-
Occupation	Engineers	4	40	4	40	-	-
	Engineering manager	1	10	-	-	-	-
	Lean manufacturing manager	1	10	-	-	-	-
	Maintenance manager*	1	10	1	10	-	-
	Manager electrical engineering	1	10	-	-	-	-
	Mechanical Engineer in training	-	-	2	20	-	-
	Senior technician	-	-	1	10	-	-
	Risk management	1	10	1	10	-	-
	Risk manager	1	10	-	-	-	-
	Risk superintendent	-	-	1	10	-	-
	Human resource management	-	-	-	-	1	10
	Training superintendent engineering	-	-	-	-	1	10

*The maintenance manager is both a mentor and a protégé.

of the qualitative interviews as seen in Table 2. For the purpose of qualitatively measuring the success of the mentoring programme, five mentoring dyads/pairs and the custodian of mentoring in the specific mill were interviewed, as seen in Table 2. The results therefore convey the perceptions of the mentors, protégés and a mentoring custodian. The mentoring custodian promotes the mentoring programme as a subtask in his job description. The case study of the success of mentoring relations consists of a limited population. Demographically, the highest frequency of participants is male and ethnically white, as seen in Table 2. Seventy present of the study's participants fall under the job category of engineering, as

seen in Table 2. The one female in the study is one of the two participants that fall in the job category risk management, as seen in Table 2. The fact that all the participating engineers are male is not surprising, because the field of engineering is male dominated (Faulkner, 2007). The perceptions of participants in the mentoring relationships of this study are therefore validly dominated by the perceptions of males.

Data collection methods

The case study will be conducted in the form of structured

one-on-one interviews. For this case study, the interviews are recorded digitally with the participants' permission.

Data recordings

According to Silverman (1993), qualitative research should most preferably be carried out by observations, text analyses, interviews, recordings and transcriptions. This case study will utilise interviews with the mentoring pairs and mentoring custodian at the mill, which will be recorded digitally with the participants' permission. The recorded interviews were safely stored on the digital recorder to

Table 3. Perceptions on the success of mentoring programme.

Item	Category	Mentoring pairs				Not in mentoring pair	
		Mentor		Protégé		Mentoring custodian	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Mentoring programme outcome*	Successful*	5	50	5	50	-	-
	Failure	-	-	-	-	1	10
Total		5	50	5	50	1	10

*The Maintenance Manager is both a mentor and a protégé.

prevent a compromise of the quality of the data. Additionally, the data was stored in duplicate in locations only accessible to the researcher. The data captured on the digital audio will be *transcribed verbatim* for content analysis by the researcher and archived in duplicate for verification.

Data analyses

In this qualitative analysis, a thematic content analysis has been done by the researcher on the transcribed interviews. The responses from the qualitative data have been analysed by identifying the relevant utility items. Major themes have been extracted out of the utility items.

Strategies employed to ensure data quality and reporting

For reliability purposes, the researcher made use of Okun's (2002) communication techniques in order to conduct the structured one-on-one interview. An example of one of the stipulations under Okun's (2002) communication techniques is the use of clarifying questions. This method allows the researcher to follow the participants' lead, asking clarifying questions, and facilitating the expression on the participants' perceptions (Streubert et al., 1999). The field notes were made in the form of journal entries. The field notes delivered no relevant information to qualitatively add to the research findings.

Reporting

The reporting style that is used for this qualitative study is that of the American Psychological Association. The major themes and closely related themes will be reported in the findings, discussion and tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Dynamic relationships in dyads can produce a synergy of great achievements. The success of the mentoring relationship is the bottom line of the mentoring programme in organisations. The purpose of this case study is to gain experiences of success in mentoring relationships. The outcomes of mentoring relationships or mentoring programmes can be successful or not. The mentoring programme is perceived as successful by both the mentor and the protégé in the mentoring pairs (as seen in Table 3). There is one interview participant who

perceives the mentoring programme as a failure, which is from the perspective of coordination of the mentoring programme. This one perception of mentoring programme failure can be seen as an unexpected result that is discussed in Theme 4 below. The four major themes that emerged form the perceptions of the mentors, protégés and mentoring custodian that are discussed in the following. The findings were divided into four main areas that will be:

Theme 1. Purpose of the mentoring programme
Theme 2. Characteristics of a mentor
Theme 3. Characteristics of a protégé
Theme 4. Characteristics of a mentoring programme coordinator

The various themes will be discussed in the following:

Theme 1. Purpose of the mentoring programme (Table 4)

The perception of mentoring relationship success was gained within the context of the original reason, purpose or approach of the organisation for the mentoring programme. The reasoning, purpose or approach of the organisation for the mentoring programme is gained to clarify the rationale behind the mentoring programme (Conway, 1998; Klasen et al., 2002; Hattingh et al., 2005). The first and strongest theme that emerged from the responses was the participants' perception of the purpose of the mentor programme of the case study organisation. The purpose or approach of the mentoring programme is mainly for the successful outcomes of the mentoring relationships in the organisation. The purposes of the mentoring programme that emerged from the results include: the mentoring programme should selectively include specific people into the mentoring relationships, the mentoring programme should provide for both formal and informal mentoring relationships and that the mentoring programme should be geared towards sustained development, as seen in Table 4. It emerged from the perception of the participants that the gaining of successful mentoring relationships in the mentoring programme should be approached by selective inclusion into the mentoring programme, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Purpose of the mentoring programme (theme 1).

Sub-theme	Associated keywords
Selective inclusion	
Protégés	Potential development; Identification of certain protégés for mentors; We select the best of the best protégés; Development of identified individuals; Different levels of success depending on individual differences; Identification by twenty employees in the business and attempt to place protégés with mentors, which is of the required quality.
Mentors	People on specific levels of the organisation identified to take a person through the transformation process; The impact of the mentoring programme depends on who is targeted.
Formal and informal mentoring relationships	
Formal	Qualifying employees for engineering fields; 2-year compulsory mentoring period for compliance with Technicon and University requirements; Qualifying for three engineering fields; To gain the government competency certificate; Accommodating trainees for development into competent engineers; For the formal mentoring programme the mentoring relationship may be a bit forced; Encourage mentoring relationships after the compulsory mentoring period.
Informal	Providing mentoring for employees who decide to study. The informal mentoring programme can be better advertised or communicated, because there are employees who do not know about the mentoring programme; Employees not utilising the informal mentoring programme prefer to do things by themselves.
Sustained development	
Promotion	Filling an identified role; Filling new areas in the organisation that need focus and support; The top management always looks at certain aspects such as what would be the best for the plant, e.g. at the characteristics and technical ability of the protégé; Closing gaps.
Requirements	During initial employment some of the protégés do not have an idea what they will do when they arrive here and are not fully prepared for this organisation; Gaining achievement; Improving skill levels of individuals; Achieve previously set standards; Improving productivity; To achieve a successful plan by preparation of new employees; The mentoring programme ensures that the mentor aims at what he wants to ask the protégé; Mentoring can be used as a formal action plan for people who are wasting time.
Maximising	Maximising potential to set a new standard in the junior workforce through replacing habits; Exponential growth in the relationship was perceived; As the mentoring pair cooperates more, your communication skills improve, which increases your creativeness; For reaching the company status of being known as a "people organisation"; The mentoring programme is about being in line and cooperation and thereby brain power, which will ensure this programme will have longer-term success, because there is so much more support. Mentoring is there for reaching things that are more specific and focused than measured goals. Mentoring takes on obstacles and bottle necks faster and strains things forwards.
Knowledge	Transfer of knowledge of the profession; Preventing the loss of information; Knowledge transfer that is difficult to equip for; Socialising protégés into organisational structure; Mentors have the special responsibility to train people that we might employ; If a protégé is mentored he can therein also learn the process of mentoring.

Identification of potential of protégés is perceived to be one of the purposes of the mentoring programme in this case study. It is perceived that the identification of mentors on specific levels of the organisation is needed to take a protégé through the transformation process. In literature, the main reason for this is that there often are only a small proportion of mentors to protégés (Finkelstein et al., 2010). The importance of selecting specific mentors and protégés is especially emphasised in formal mentoring programmes within workplace mentoring, youth mentoring and university mentoring programmes (Brien et al., 2010). The importance of the selection of mentors and protégés can additionally be emphasised through the following themes, namely

Table 5. Characteristics of a mentor (theme 2).

Sub-theme	Associated keywords
Actual mentor characteristics	
Induction	New employees are being brought into the organisational culture; Ensure thorough training of protégés; The mentor is not there to teach the technical things, but to give direction in his career; Expect the protégé to apply what he has learned.
Feedback	A boldness to say to protégés that what he is doing needs to be done better; Preventing problems by feedback and thereby saving money; The mentor monitors the progress of the protégé through the year; My perception is that I can go to my mentor and he will give his honest opinion; Mentoring is a very powerful tool of correcting thought processes; Being helped; The protégé will follow the example of the mentor in having an open relationship; Actively giving feedback on projects.
Goals	Actual assurance of the application of skills and competencies being trained for; By application producing a higher quality of thought; Choosing the project of the protégé; Sending to the protégé projects that look interesting; Setting practical goals for the protégé; A written agreement that is made on the end goals of the relationship; The mentor has to approve the subjects that the protégé wants to study before the protégé can receive money; The outcome of the protégé will reflect on the mentor.
Knowledgeable	My mentor is very knowledgeable; Mentoring training directed me in the right direction when I was young; We (senior employees who are mentors) have knowledge; A successful mentor can transfer knowledge that he has built up; We (protégés) all to try to progress forward because my boss knows the business well.
Experienced	I have been mentoring for many years and have successfully mentored a reasonable number of mentees.
Approachable	My mentor is very approachable; Helps where possible; I learned a lot together with my protégé; The mentoring relationship will go forward if you feel comfortable that you can go to your mentor with anything and he will help you; Be available.
Networking	Sending protégé to people who are strong in certain characteristics; Referring protégé to specific people with specific skills; Mentor ensures that there is an overt positive image of the protégé towards the line manager and upper management.
Ideal characteristics of a mentor	
Induction	Giving new employees guidance; For very young guys to be with seniors; Getting practical help to go in the right direction; A person that can explain technical things well can be seen as a mentor.
Feedback	When the mentor sees a shortcoming it should be tended to; Give attention to problem areas; Personal/Individual support of protégés; A mentor should give feedback; The mentor facilitates learning of the protégé; Feedback needs to be given to the protégé on what is expected of him; Healthy communication from both parties is needed; The mentor and protégé should have open communication.
Trained	The mentoring training needs to be applied; The mentor needs to make the mentoring programme content a way of life; The mentor facilitates learning wider than the technical.
Experienced mentor	A mentor who has important experience; The mentor should be able to do his work; Imparting the experience.
Relationship	The right time or circumstances need to be searched out to convey information; The integrity of the mentor and trainee should be in a way that both do their parts; There should be a proper relationship and understanding between the mentor and trainee; The mentor needs to learn how to communicate with the protégé; Protégés are placed with mentors who are not their line manager where possible; A give-and-take in the relationship that needs to be used in wisdom; Mentoring pairs need to take accountability for their relationship; Mentors need to be able to work with people, not just have a lot of technical ability; I think mentors need good personalities for relating with the protégés; The life stage the mentor is in; Generational theories are applicable to mentoring, because the type of mentorship that we did ten years ago differs from what we do now; The expectations of this current generation differ; Do some research from his side for the relationship; A mentoring relationship cannot be successful if it is not open, because all the development aspects should be touched on, including emotional and social aspects.

Table 5. Contd.

Goals	Help that the protégé passes his course or diploma; Speeding up the training and development process through motivation of the protégé; Development of protégé for sustained success such as the progression can go forward six years from now.
Support	Moral support of protégé; Emotional support of protégé.

Table 6. Protégé success (theme 3).

Sub-theme	Associated keywords
Actual protégé success	
Senior	Senior people in the organisation have been delivered.
Succeed	Overall there are more successes than failures; Some protégés do fail.
Goals	Protégés who have been officially successful in gaining their goals with their mentor; I have reached 80% of my set goals; Protégé has gained accreditation; Protégé is in the final stages of gaining his degree.
Commitment	Compliance to what my mentor proposes; Compliance to procedure. The mentoring relationship is successful if the protégé relays on mentor's experience and knowledge.
Ideal protégé success characteristics	
Goals	The individual reaching his goals at the end of the programme; That he keeps to his list; Getting employed in the organisation automatically.
Commitment	Success depends on the motivation of the protégé to want to help him to improve; The protégé needs to be willing to develop; The protégé should not refuse to improve over time; A protégé needs senior and non-senior mentors; Mentoring pairs need to take accountability for their relationship; The protégé does intend to leave the company immediately.

mentoring characteristics and ideal protégé success characteristics (Hu et al., 2008). These two themes were also strongly reported by participants, as seen in Tables 5 and 6. A more in-depth discussion on the selection of specific people for the mentoring relationship will be expanded upon in Themes 2 and 3.

One of the purposes of the mentoring relationships in the case study is that it caters for both a formal and an informal mentoring programme that is provided for the employees, as seen in Table 4. The purpose of the formal mentoring programme is to enable the compliance to the statutes of the Engineering Council of South Africa (2009). A graduated engineering student, who wants to register as an engineer at the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), is required to be reported on, by a minimum of two ECSA referees, on his/her training and experience period. The ECSA referees include the protégés' mentor(s), immediate supervisor and employer.

The formal mentoring programme complies with the ECSA by ensuring that a mentor is provided to the recruited engineering student. The formal mentoring programme additionally ensures that recruited engineering students are accommodated in completing projects as well as in other areas of development under mentorship.

According to Finkelstein et al. (2010), the formal mentoring programme can be defined in the following way: A formal mentoring program occurs when an organization officially supports and sanctions mentoring relationships. In these programs, organizations play a role in facilitating mentoring relationships by providing some level of structure, guidelines, policies and assistance for starting, maintaining and ending mentor-protégé relationships. The formal segment of this case study's mentoring programme provides structure, guide-lines, policies and assistance for starting, maintaining and ending mentoring relationships. For the employees who are not part of the formal mentoring programme, who decide to study, the inclusion into an informal mentoring relationship is available. The success of the informal mentoring relationship, for which this case study caters, depends on the willingness of the protégés to be helped. This is supported by literature by emphasising the importance of having mutually beneficial relationships in informal mentoring programmes (Allen, 2004a; Dougherty et al., 2007). A social exchange relationship is therefore of importance in an informal mentoring programme. The purposes of the mentoring relationships in this mentoring programme, which emerged from the results of this case study in

terms of sustained development, are *selective* promotion into specific gaps, producing employees who achieve on-job requirements, maximising the junior workforce and preventing a leak in organisational *knowledge,* as seen in Table 4.

It emerged from the perceptions of the participants that one purpose of the mentoring relationships is for the promotion into specific gaps. Mentoring can be expected to have a positive effect on promotion (Allen et al., 2006; Cohen et al., 2007; Hattingh et al., 2005). This positive effect that mentoring can have on promotion indicates that having promotion to fill specific employment gaps as a purpose for the mentoring programme is reasonable. The mentoring relationships of this case study are strongly perceived as producing employees that achieve on-job requirements, which can be seen as sustained development. Achieving job requirements can be included in the evaluation of a mentoring programme, such as in the protégé's readiness for higher level responsibilities (Cranwell-ward et al., 2004). The purpose of maximising the junior workforce emerged from the results of this study. Mentoring programmes contribute to the organisation by means of the faster induction of protégés (Freedman, 2008). The mentoring relationship additionally proactively prevents organisational knowledge or information from getting lost. Mentoring relationships are there to ensure that there is knowledge capital protection, which is of real benefit to the organisation (Hattingh et al., 2005). The purpose of this mentoring programme is therefore to provide successful development for selected protégés in a formal and informal mentoring relationship.

Theme 2. Characteristics of a mentor

According to Dougherty et al. (2007), the characteristics of mentors have not been investigated much within literature. For a successful mentoring programme, mentoring relationship mentors are perceived to have certain characteristics. The characteristics of a mentor emerged as a major theme from the results of this case study on successful mentor relations. The importance of actual and ideal characteristics of mentors for mentoring relationships emerged strongly in terms of mentoring success in the experience of the participants, as seen in Table 5. The actual characteristics of a mentor that emerged, as a theme experienced by participants of this study, are experienced as being performed within the mentoring relationships. The actual characteristics that can be reported are the guidance of new employees in the induction period, feedback on growth areas, guidance in the setting of practical *goals*, having a knowledgeable mentor, having an experienced mentor, having an approachable mentor and networking of protégé with specific people, as seen in Table 5. Participants of this case study perceive there to be guidance of new employees into the organisational culture through the mentoring

relationships. Faster induction of employees is one of many organisational benefits of mentoring that is conveyed by the mentor (Chapman, 2008; Freedman, 2008). A mentor must be able to give constructive feedback provided on the growth areas of the protégé in the mentoring relationship (Ludwig et al., 2008).

It is experienced by participants in this case study that mentors are giving feedback on growth areas within the mentoring relationship, as seen in Table 5. It emerged that mentors collaborate with protégés in the setting of practical goals, which ensures the application of skills and competencies. The experience of having a knowledgeable mentor is highly valued in mentoring relationships and this characteristic of mentors is experienced in this study. In literature, the experience of having a knowledgeable mentor is highly valued in mentoring relationships and this characteristic of mentors is experienced in this study (Jackson et al., 2003). For knowledge transfer to be supported in an organisation, interpersonal *trust* can be used in the mentoring relationship (Preece et al., 2007). Having an experienced mentor, as expected, is ideal for the protégé and should be seen as a favourable characteristic that is experienced by the participants of this study (Jonson, 2008). Successful mentors have the characteristic of being approachable, which is perceived by the participants in this study (Omary, 2008). Mentors can add to the mentoring relationship by providing networking for protégés, ensuring that protégés get referred to specific people (Rabatin et al., 2004; Sambunjak et al., 2010).

Characteristics that are ideal for a mentor to have, according to the participants of this study, are the characteristics of giving guidance in the induction period, giving feedback on the protégé's growth areas, having application of training in mentorship, having an understanding relationship between the mentor and protégé, having an experience, providing guidance in the setting of practical goals, and providing social support, as seen in Table 5. The guidance of new employees is perceived as an actual and ideal characteristic of a mentor, which is an organisational benefit of the mentoring relationship.

The guidance of new employees speeds up the induction of new employees (Chapman, 2008; Freedman, 2008). The feedback given on growth areas of the protégé is also perceived as an actual and ideal characteristic of mentors, which should be provided by mentors (Ludwig et al., 2008). The importance of the mentor providing feedback and being approachable stood out the most under the reasons for mentoring programme success. Job-related feedback can be gained through mentoring dyads (Liu et al., 2009). It is perceived by the participants that the mentors should ideally integrate and apply the skills that are learned into the mentoring training. Training is used to increase the communication skills, and other relevant skills, of mentors for having an effective mentoring relationship (Anderson, 2009; Bally, 2007; Pfund et al., 2006). It is perceived that mentors

should ideally be able to have or form a proper relationship and understanding with the protégé. This characteristic came out strongly. It is favourable to have an experienced mentor, which is perceived as an actual and ideal characteristic of mentors in this case study (Jonson, 2008). Mentoring is, per definition, used for the imparting of experience and knowledge (Bozeman et al., 2007). It emerged that it is ideal for mentors to collaborate with protégés in the setting of practical goals, which ensures the application of skills and competencies. Social support, such as moral and emotional support, is perceived to be a characteristic that a mentor should have. Mentoring research could benefit from research into social support as done in psychological research (McManus et al., 1997; Scandura et al., 2010).

Theme 3. Protégé success

According to the results that emerged from the perceptions of the participants of this study, the protégés have achieved success and ideally should have certain characteristics, as seen in Table 6. One of the criteria that should be measured in a highly successful mentoring programme is individual protégé and mentor development (Cranwell-Ward et al., 2004). The individual protégé is perceived to have success in his mentoring relationships. The success of protégés that has been experienced by the participants of this study understates the mentoring relationship's reaching of its bottom line of success in the mentoring programme. The actual protégé success is perceived in terms of promotion of senior people through the mentoring programme, more protégés succeeding than failing, protégés successfully reaching their goals and the commitment of protégés, as seen in Table 6. The testimony that senior people are delivered by the mentoring programme is an indication of mentoring success. This is supported by research findings that found that the experience of mentoring is related to contributing to promotion rates (Allen et al., 2006). The perception of the participants that more protégés succeed than fail is in agreement with the contribution of mentoring towards promotion rates (Allen et al., 2006). One of the perceptions that emerged from the participants is the protégés successfully reaching their goals in their mentoring relationship. Mentors are there to help the protégé reach personal and professinal goals (Phillips-Jones, 1982; Scott et al., 2007).

The goal of improved job application, for instance, has been found to be one of the outcomes of mentoring relationships (Hallam et al., 2006). Actual protégé commitment was reported in this study and emphasised the choice of compliance towards the mentor. Mentoring and coaching can itself increase commitment of new employees and current employees (Piansoongnern et al., 2008; Pyane et al., 2005). The general perception of the organisation in this case study is that protégés are predominantly successful through the mentoring relationships (Wanberg et al., 2003). The ideal protégé success characteristics that emerge as experienced by the participants of this study are the ideal of the protégés successfully reaching their goals in the mentoring relationship and the ideal of protégé commitment, as seen in Table 6. Both of these two sub-themes that were extracted were also experienced as actually preformed characteristics of protégé success. The ideal of the protégés successfully reaching their goals is relevant, because their mentors are there to help protégés reach their personal and professional goals in the mentoring relationship (Phillips-Jones, 1982; Scott et al., 2007). The protégé is expected to be committed to agreed-upon goals or objectives in the mentoring relationship (Rodenhauser et al., 2000). As supported by literature, the ideal of the protégés having an attitude of commitment is emphasised as a protégé characteristic for informal mentoring relationships (Aryee et al., 1996b; Wanberg et al., 2003). According to Welch et al. (2009), the protégé characteristic of being motivated in the finding of a mentor is of importance in informal mentor relationships.

Theme 4. Ideal characteristics of mentor programme coordinator

These ideal characteristics of a mentoring programme coordinator that emerged are perceptions of mentoring programme failure. The failure that is reported is a lack in capacity of follow-up of the mentoring relationships. It emerged from the experience of the mentoring custodian that the need for following up on the mentoring relationships should be met by means of monthly or quarterly follow-ups. It is perceived that follow-up cannot currently be properly provided for by the mentoring custodian, as seen in Table 7. It should be the role of human resource development (HRD) to follow up mentoring relationships through periodic meetings (McDonald et al., 2005). The importance of the follow-up of the mentoring relationship should not be neglected and therefore recruiting a mentoring coordinator for the mentoring programme is recommended (Carroll, 2004; Morzinski et al., 1994).

RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research on mentoring relationship has the following recommendations, limitations and future research. The implementation and coordination of mentoring programmes are recommended by this study, because of the sustained development of new employees that it can successfully produce. From this study it can be recommended that the characteristics of mentors should be taken into account within the coordination of mentoring

Table 7. Ideal characteristics of mentor programme coordinator (theme 4).

Sub-theme	Associated key words
Following up mentoring relationships	
Follow-ups	A mentoring agreement needs to be followed up monthly or quarterly; It should be good if there is documentation of the HR and the mentoring meetings that are held.
Capacity	At this stage it is impossible to give provision to all the mentoring pairs; Responsibility of the mentoring cannot be on one person. It should come from the side of the mentoring pair in the current circumstances.

relationships. Ensuring regular follow-ups of mentoring relationships can be recommended in coordinating mentoring relationships. The primary limitation in this case study is the relatively small population of this qualitative study (n=20). This study is focused on an organisation that experiences their mentoring programme as a successful programme. This study is therefore limited in not representing the perceptions of mentoring pairs in unsuccessful mentoring programmes. Investigation of the perceptions of mentoring relationships in unsuccessful mentoring programmes can be done in a more in-depth manner in the future. Mentoring research could benefit from research into social support as done in psychological research (McManus et al., 1997; Scandura et al., 2010). There is a need for research in informal mentor programmes in general. In the future, the need for the role of the mentoring programme coordinator should be assessed. The growing amount of research on the topic of mentoring is mainly done as quantitative research and more in-depth qualitative research may bring a more rounded understanding of mentoring relationships (Allen et al., 2008).

Conclusion

This case study supports the findings of the meta-analysis of Allen et al. (2004b) that mentoring relationships have a reliable, but small, effect on several career outcomes. A most notable result is of the senior employees who have been delivered through the mentoring programme of this case study, as seen in Table 6. The success of the mentoring programme of this case study is experienced as correlating with the characteristic of the mentors and protégés in the mentoring relationship. Mentoring success and characteristics of the mentors and protégés should be investigated within the context of the purpose of the mentoring programme in the organisation being researched. This is because the purpose and approach of mentoring programmes are diverse within organisations. The purpose of the mentoring programme is what makes it possible to gauge success of this mentoring programme in terms of the organisation's desired outcomes of the mentoring programme. One of the purposes of the mentoring programme, as indicated in Table 4, is the development of identified protégés. The results indicate that protégés are successfully

developed in the organisation, but the results indicate that certain characteristics of protégés should be taken into consideration as causality towards the success of the protégés, as seen in Table 6.

A second purpose of the mentoring programme, as indicated in Table 4, is utilising identified mentors for the mentoring relationships. The results indicate that mentor characteristics should be considered as causality towards the success of the mentors, as seen in Table 5. This finding indicates the need for further research into mentor characteristics (Dougherty et al., 2007). The importance of the mentor giving *feedback* and being approachable stood out the most under the reason for mentoring programme success. For knowledge transfer to be promoted, interpersonal *trust* can be used in the mentoring relationship (Preece et al., 2007). Proper follow-up, by a mentoring coordinator, of the mentor-protégé relationships should not be neglected if sustained development is desired (Carroll, 2004; Morzinski et al., 1994). Therefore, proper follow-ups of the mentoring relationships are *recommended*. A third purpose of the mentoring programme is sustained development, which emphasises the bottom line of what can be seen as mentoring relationship programme success, namely: the promotion of new employees into specific gaps, producing employees who achieve job requirements and ensuring knowledge and experience that have been built up in the organisations over the years are retained. The mentoring relationship can be successful or dysfunctional (Feldman, 1999; Wanberg et al., 2003).

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