

ONLINE MENTORING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR FEMALE CAREER AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

By

Nadine Oosthuizen

Submitted in full fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management at the
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

April 2017

Supervisor: Professor S Perks

DECLARATION

I, Nadine Oosthuizen, hereby declare that:

- The content of this thesis entitled “Online mentoring as a transformative tool for female career and business development” is my own work;
- All sources used or quoted, have been acknowledged and documented by means of references; and
- This thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree at any other tertiary institution.

Nadine Oosthuizen

PORT ELIZABETH

FEBRUARY, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the following individuals who have contributed to the successful completion of this study:

- To my supervisor, Prof Sandra Perks, for the continued support, relentless help, mentorship, sacrificing of family time and words of encouragement to complete this study. I will forever be grateful to you for your support and transfer of knowledge throughout this study and words cannot express my appreciation;
- To my colleagues in academia, thank you for your moral support and encouragement in the completion of this dissertation;
- To participants and respondents, for without their contribution this study would never have been completed;
- To the National Research Foundation for funding to complete this study;
- To my mother Mabel, brothers and sister-in-law a special thanks for always believing in me and providing me with the necessary support to ensure the successful completion of this study;
- To my husband, Martin, and daughters, Minette and Mikaela, be assured that your love and patience encouraged me and gave me strength and hope during difficult times; and
- Finally, I give all praise and thanks to my Heavenly Father who has helped me through this journey and inspired me each day with new vision, hope and strength.

ABSTRACT

The under-representation of females at management level due to the glass ceiling effect has globally received considerable attention. Research found that one of the remedies for females to progress beyond the glass ceiling, was access to a mentor in senior management. Females receiving mentoring in the workplace perform at greater levels as they gain reflected power, advice and the right to use essential resources. Yet, access to mentors was recognised as a barrier to females' professional career success, both in the corporate field and to develop their small businesses. Fortunately, the revolution in technology has led to online mentoring which combines conventional mentoring relationship approaches with new technology and provides wider access to a pool of mentors. The increasing popularity of online mentoring can be attributed to the benefits it offers stereotyped individuals and those from marginalised groups. The purpose of this study therefore was to ascertain the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa, as well as how it can be used to develop the careers of females (both corporate employees and small business entrepreneurs).

The study followed a mixed method approach with a sequential exploratory design. Background literature on conventional mentoring in addition to online mentoring assisted in contextualising the many issues relating to conventional mentoring which also apply to online mentoring. Primary data was collected in three phases (two qualitative and one quantitative). The data collection method for phases one and two of the enquiry was interviews with the use of a semi-structured interview schedule and for phase three, a survey via an online structured questionnaire.

The biographical profiles of the participants interviewed during phases one and two were presented as case studies. Based on the content analysis of the qualitative interviews with five South African mentors, six female mentees from Africa, two South African online mentoring field specialists and one United States online mentoring field specialist, three main themes were identified viz. online mentoring processes, challenges and enabling conditions. Online mentoring processes identified for effective online mentoring related to the application-, selection-, matching- and conflict

resolution procedures. Mentoring challenges related to matching preferences, technology impediments, cultural fit problems, language differences, lack of mutual trust, scheduling and frequency and duration of meetings, the impersonal nature of online mentoring and specific mentee- and mentor-related challenges. Based on the content analysis, the conditions for creating an effective online mentoring environment addressed some of the challenges alluded to and could be classified as generic, mentee-specific and mentor-specific enablers.

Generic online mentoring enablers are those conditions necessary for creating an effective online mentoring environment for the mentoring pair such as the ability to establish a trusting relationship, flexible meeting schedules, training offered, the expression of emotions online, having a technology infrastructure in place, clear objectives and relationship boundaries, a desirable programme- and meeting duration with adequate meetings, using multiple contact methods and following a hybrid mentoring approach. Mentor specific issues to create an effective online mentoring environment are mentors with exceptional personal qualities that are knowledgeable and experienced, while mentee specific issues relate to continuous mentee commitment and that mentees should have been previously exposed to mentoring. The constant comparative data analysis provided insight into how similar or dissimilar institutions approach online mentoring process and the challenges related to the local (South African) online mentoring environment as compared to those globally.

Sixty-three respondents (South African mentors both male and female and female mentees who have undergone conventional mentoring) completed the online structured questionnaire on their perceptions of the online mentoring conditions necessary for effective online mentoring. From the exploratory factor analysis results of the online survey in phase three of the study, six valid and reliable conditions necessary for online mentoring were identified namely, infrastructure readiness, demographic matching preference, mentor characteristics, the communication process, mentoring pair perceptions and mentoring pair relationship. The multiple regression analysis performed established one statistically significant relationship. The perception that the mentoring pair hold of online mentoring influence the achievements of the mentee.

This study has thus identified several conditions necessary for effective online mentoring globally, as well as for South Africa. South Africa has a pool of knowledgeable mentors involved in global online mentoring programmes and they can assist with online mentoring in the South African communities in need of assistance. However, South Africa can learn from well-established global online mentoring institutions how to implement an effective online mentoring programme, but will need the necessary financial resources to do so. This study further provided evidence on how online mentoring can be utilised for the career advancement of female corporate employees and those owning small businesses. Some guidelines were provided on how to overcome the various challenges associated with online mentoring globally, and those specific to South Africa. The use of mobile technology instead of computer-mediated technology was recommended as it provides greater access to online mentoring, especially for rural communities. It is also more user-friendly for those with limited computer technology skills.

KEY WORDS: Online mentoring, online mentoring enablers, female career advancement, career development, small business development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xix
LIST OF FIGURES	xxi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	CONCEPT CLARIFICATION	2
1.2.1	Female entrepreneurs	2
1.2.2	Conventional mentoring	3
1.2.3	Online mentoring	3
1.2.4	Career development	4
1.2.5	Business development	4
1.3	PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.4	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	7
1.4.1	Primary objectives	8
1.4.2	Secondary objectives	8
1.5	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
1.5.1	Research paradigm	9
1.5.2	Population, sample and sampling method	10
1.5.3	Data collection processes	12
1.5.4	Data analysis	12
1.5.5	Trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the research findings	13
1.6	STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	14

CHAPTER 2**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

2.1	INTRODUCTION	16
2.2	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	17
2.2.1	Research paradigms and approaches	17
2.2.1.1	Positivistic research paradigm	18
2.2.1.2	Interpretivistic research paradigm	19
2.2.1.3	Comparison of positivistic and interpretivistic research paradigms	21
2.2.1.4	Mixed method research paradigm	23
2.2.1.5	Paradigms and research approaches followed in this study	26
2.3	POPULATION AND SAMPLE	28
2.3.1	Population	29
2.3.2	Sampling frame	30
2.3.3	Sampling	31
2.3.3.1	Probability sampling techniques	31
2.3.3.2	Non-probability sampling	33
2.3.3.3	Sample size	37
2.3.3.4	Sample size and sampling methods employed in the study	38
2.4	DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES	41
2.4.1	Secondary research	41
2.4.2	Primary research	43
2.4.2.1	Primary data collection methods	44
2.4.2.2	Measuring instruments for data collection	55
2.4.2.3	Data collection methods and measuring instruments chosen for the study	57
2.4.3	Data analysis	61
2.4.3.1	Qualitative data analysis	61
2.4.3.2	Quantitative data analysis	66
2.5	TRUSTWORTHINESS, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	67

	Page	
2.5.1	Trustworthiness of the qualitative research findings	68
2.5.1.1	Credibility	68
2.5.1.2	Dependability	69
2.5.1.3	Confirmability	70
2.5.1.4	Transferability	70
2.5.2	Validity and reliability of the quantitative research instrument	72
2.5.2.1	Validity	72
2.5.2.2	Reliability	74
2.6	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	75
2.7	SUMMARY	76

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF CONVENTIONAL MENTORING

3.1	INTRODUCTION	78
3.2	DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS CONSULTING, MENTORING AND COACHING	79
3.3	DEVELOPMENT OF MENTORING	80
3.3.1	Origin of mentoring	80
3.3.2	Move to a more modern view of mentoring	81
3.3.3	Expansion of mentoring to the professional business arena	82
3.4	MENTORING IN CONTEXT	83
3.5	DEGREE OF FORMALITY OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP	85
3.5.1	Informal mentoring programmes	86
3.5.1.1	Benefits of informal mentoring relationships	87
3.5.1.2	Challenges of informal mentoring relationships	88
3.5.2	Formal mentoring programmes	89
3.5.2.1	Benefits of formal mentoring relationships	90
3.5.2.2	Challenges of formal mentoring programmes	91
3.5.3	Comparison of informal and formal mentoring	92
3.6	CONVENTIONAL MENTORING DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES	93

	Page	
3.6.1	Psychosocial support approach	95
3.6.1.1	Role modelling	95
3.6.1.2	Acceptance and confirmation	96
3.6.1.3	Counselling	96
3.6.1.4	Friendship	96
3.6.2	Career support approach	97
3.6.2.1	Sponsorship	97
3.6.2.2	Coaching	98
3.6.2.3	Protection	98
3.6.2.4	Challenging assignments	98
3.6.2.5	Exposure	99
3.6.3	Integrated approach to mentoring	99
3.6.4	Relational approach	100
3.6.4.1	Personal learning and growth	100
3.6.4.2	Mutual respect, influence and inspiration	101
3.6.4.3	Shared norms, trust and commitment	102
3.7	NON-CONVENTIONAL MENTORING	102
3.7.1	Peer mentoring	103
3.7.2	Group mentoring	104
3.7.3	Adult learner mentoring	105
3.7.4	Reciprocal mentoring	106
3.8	CHALLENGES PERTAINING TO MENTORING PROGRAMMES AND HOW THEY CAN BE OVERCOME	107
3.8.1	Generic challenges	108
3.8.1.1	Mismatch within the mentoring pair	108
3.8.1.2	Mentor specific challenges	111
3.8.1.3	Mentee-specific challenges	114
3.8.2	General challenges	116
3.8.2.1	Overcoming mistrust	116
3.8.2.2	Time-related issues	118

	Page
3.8.2.3 Clear planning and direction	119
3.8.2.4 Negating locational differences	120
3.8.3 Business-specific challenges	120
3.8.3.1 Obtaining management commitment	121
3.8.3.2 Setting policies and plans	121
3.8.4 Small business-specific challenges	121
3.8.4.1 Increasing the understanding of the benefits of mentoring	121
3.8.4.2 Creating awareness of mentoring and its opportunities	122
3.8.4.3 Restricted resources	123
3.9 BENEFITS OF MENTORING	124
3.9.1 Benefits of mentoring for mentees and mentors	124
3.9.1.1 Benefits of mentoring for mentees	125
3.9.1.2 Benefits of mentoring for mentors	127
3.9.2 Benefits of mentoring for the business	128
3.9.2.1 Primary benefits	129
3.9.2.2 Secondary benefits	129
3.9.3 Benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs	129
3.9.3.1 Benefits of mentoring during start-up	130
3.9.3.2 Benefits of mentoring during the growth stage	132
3.10 SUMMARY	133

CHAPTER 4

A REVIEW OF ONLINE MENTORING IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION	135
4.2 CONVENTIONAL VERSUS ONLINE MENTORING	135
4.3 ONLINE MENTORING TOOLS	139
4.3.1 Tools used for direct communication	140
4.3.1.1 Email	140
4.3.1.2 Instant messaging	141
4.3.1.3 Chat rooms	143
4.3.1.4 Online voice and video chat	143

	Page
4.3.2 Tools used for collaboration	146
4.3.2.1 Online discussion forums	146
4.3.2.2 Blogs	146
4.3.2.3 Wiki	147
4.3.2.4 YouTube	148
4.3.3 Social media tools	148
4.3.3.1 Facebook	149
4.3.3.2 MySpace	149
4.3.3.3 Twitter	150
4.3.3.4 LinkedIn	151
4.4 BENEFITS OF ONLINE MENTORING	152
4.4.1 Easy and widened access	152
4.4.2 Transcending geographical barriers	153
4.4.3 Affordability	154
4.4.4 Equalisation of status	155
4.4.5 Written and quality interactions	157
4.4.6 Active two-way communication	158
4.4.7 Greater networking opportunities	159
4.4.8 Multiple and timeous mentor interactions	159
4.4.9 Means to overcome professional isolation	160
4.5 CHALLENGES OF ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMMES	161
4.5.1 Technology challenges	163
4.5.2 Communication skills barriers	165
4.5.3 Speed and effectiveness of relationship development	167
4.5.4 Availability and suitability of mentors	168
4.5.5 Ethical considerations	169
4.5.6 Organisational barriers	170
4.6 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONAL ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMMES	171
4.6.1 Pre-programme guidelines to consider	172

	Page
4.6.1.1 Purpose and long-term plan	172
4.6.1.2 Systems and technology development	173
4.6.1.3 Participants' recruitment	174
4.6.1.4 Participants' selection and matching	175
4.6.1.5 Training using systems	177
4.6.1.6 Communications system access and modes	180
4.6.2 Aspects to consider during the implementation of the programme	181
4.6.2.1 Administrative support	181
4.6.2.2 Technical support	181
4.6.2.3 Authentic relationship building	181
4.6.2.4 Conflict resolution mechanism	186
4.6.2.5 Recognition and appreciation system	186
4.6.2.6 Continuous reflection and evaluation	187
4.6.3 Post-programme feedback	188
4.7 SUMMARY	189

CHAPTER 5

THE ONLINE MENTORING LANDSCAPE

5.1 INTRODUCTION	192
5.2 FIELDS OF AND USES OF ONLINE MENTORING	193
5.2.1 Education	193
5.2.1.1 Primary and secondary education	194
5.2.1.2 Tertiary education	197
5.2.2 Healthcare Industry	202
5.2.3 Construction Industry	203
5.3 GLOBAL ONLINE MENTORING INSTITUTIONS	204
5.3.1 Online mentoring institutions with no South African affiliation	205
5.3.1.1 Online mentoring institutions from the United States of America	206
5.3.1.2 Online mentoring institution from Canada	209
5.3.1.3 Online mentoring institution from the United Kingdom	209

	Page	
5.3.1.4	Online mentoring institutions from Europe	210
5.3.1.5	Online mentoring institutions from Australia	211
5.3.1.6	Online mentoring institution from Africa	216
5.3.2	Online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation	217
5.3.2.1	Online mentoring institutions from the USA	218
5.3.2.2	Online mentoring institution from the United Kingdom	221
5.3.2.3	Online mentoring institutions from Africa with South African affiliation	223
5.3.3	South African mentoring environment	227
5.3.3.1	Mentoring institutions in South Africa	228
5.4	SUMMARY	237

CHAPTER 6

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

6.1	INTRODUCTION	239
6.2	BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF MENTORS	239
6.2.1	Mentor A	239
6.2.2	Mentor B	241
6.2.3	Mentor C	242
6.2.4	Mentor D	243
6.2.5	Mentor E	245
6.2.6	Summary of biographical details of participating online mentors	246
6.3	BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE MENTEES	248
6.3.1	Mentee A	248
6.3.2	Mentee B	250
6.3.3	Mentee C	251
6.3.4	Mentee D	252
6.3.5	Mentee E	254
6.3.6	Mentee F	255
6.3.7	Summary of biographical profile of participating online mentees	256

		Page
6.4	BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE ONLINE MENTORING FIELD SPECIALISTS	258
6.4.1	Online mentoring field specialist A	258
6.4.2	Online mentoring field specialist B	259
6.4.3	Online mentoring field specialist C	260
6.5	SUMMARY	261

CHAPTER 7

THE RESULTS OF THE ONLINE MENTORING INTERVIEWS

7.1	INTRODUCTION	263
7.2	ONLINE MENTORING INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS EXPERIENCED	263
7.2.1	Purpose of online mentoring involvement	263
7.2.2	How was opportunity presented	265
7.2.3	Type of mentoring programme involved	267
7.2.4	Perceived benefits of online mentoring	268
7.3	THEME IDENTIFICATION	270
7.3.1	Results of the online mentoring processes	271
7.3.1.1	Application process	271
7.3.1.2	Selection procedure	272
7.3.1.3	Matching procedure	274
7.3.1.4	Conflict resolution procedure	276
7.4	RESULTS OF THE ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES	278
7.4.1	Matching preference	278
7.4.2	Technology impediments	280
7.4.3	Cultural fit	282
7.4.4	Language differences	284
7.4.5	Lack of mutual trust	285
7.4.6	Meeting scheduling, frequency and duration	286
7.4.7	Impersonal nature of online mentoring	288

	Page	
7.4.8	Mentee-related challenges	289
7.4.9	Mentor-related challenges	290
7.5	ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS	291
7.5.1	Generic online mentoring enablers	291
7.5.1.1	Establishing a trusting relationship	291
7.5.1.2	Flexible meeting schedules	293
7.5.1.3	Training offered	295
7.5.1.4	Expressing emotions online	297
7.5.1.5	Technology infrastructure readiness	297
7.5.1.6	Clear objectives and relationship boundaries	299
7.5.1.7	Desirable programme and meeting duration and frequency	300
7.5.1.8	Using multiple contact methods	302
7.5.1.9	Hybrid mentoring approach	304
7.5.2	Mentor-specific online mentoring enablers	306
7.5.2.1	Having knowledgeable and experienced mentors	306
7.5.2.2	Having mentors with exceptional personal qualities	307
7.5.3	Mentee-specific online mentoring enablers	308
7.5.3.1	Continuous mentee commitment	308
7.5.3.2	Previous mentoring experience	309
7.6	SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTRY SPECIFIC ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS	310
7.7	INSTITUTIONAL ONLINE MENTORING ANALYSIS	311
7.7.1	Application procedure	311
7.7.2	Selection procedure	311
7.7.3	Matching procedure	312
7.7.4	Conflict resolution process	313
7.7.5	Additional support offered	313
7.8	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL VERSUS SOUTH AFRICAN ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES	314
7.9	SUMMARY	314

CHAPTER 8**QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

8.1	INTRODUCTION	316
8.2	HYPOTHESISED MODEL OF ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS INFLUENCING MENTEE ACHIEVEMENTS	317
8.3	RESPONSE RATE	320
8.4	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS	320
8.4.1	Demographic profile of the corporate employee respondents	322
8.4.2	Demographic profile of the business entrepreneur respondents	323
8.5	RESULTS OF GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING RESPONDENTS	325
8.6	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT	326
8.6.1	Mentee achievements	329
8.6.2	Infrastructure readiness	330
8.6.3	Demographic matching preference	332
8.6.4	Mentor characteristics	332
8.6.5	Communication process	333
8.6.6	Mentoring pair perceptions	334
8.6.7	Mentoring pair relationship	335
8.7	REVISED HYPOTHESISED MODEL AND HYPOTHESES	336
8.8	PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS	338
8.9	RESULTS OF THE MULTI-COLLINEARITY DIAGNOSTICS TESTING	340
8.10	MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS	341
8.11	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	344
8.12	SUMMARY	345

CHAPTER 9**SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1	INTRODUCTION	347
-----	--------------	-----

	Page
9.2	SUMMARY OF STUDY 348
9.3	HOW THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES WERE MET IN THE STUDY 350
9.4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ESSENTIAL ONLINE MENTORING PROCESSES 353
9.4.1	Conclusions and recommendations on the application process 353
9.4.2	Conclusions and recommendations on the selection process 354
9.4.3	Conclusions and recommendations on the matching procedure 355
9.4.4	Conclusions and recommendations on the conflict resolution procedure 357 358
9.5	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES 358
9.5.1	Language differences 359
9.5.2	Cultural fit 360
9.5.3	Unethical mentee behaviour 361
9.6	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENABLING ONLINE MENTORING CONDITIONS 361
9.6.1	Technology readiness 362
9.6.2	Mutual trust 364
9.6.3	Meeting time frequency and flexibility 365
9.6.4	Mentee unpreparedness and unrealistic expectations 366
9.6.5	Impersonal nature of online mentoring 367
9.6.6	Having knowledgeable and experienced mentors 369
9.6.7	Training offered 370
9.6.8	Having mentors with exceptional personal qualities 371
9.6.9	Continuous commitment 372
9.6.10	Duration of programme and meeting times 373
9.6.11	Multiple contact methods 374
9.6.12	Hybrid online mentoring approach 375

	Page	
9.7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOUTH AFRICAN ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE MENTORING	376
9.7.1	Matching perceptions	378
9.7.2	Technology infrastructure requirements	378
9.7.3	Knowledgeable and experienced mentors	379
9.7.4	Additional small business support	380
9.7.5	Access to programme implementation funding	381
9.7.6	Promotion of online mentoring	382
9.7.7	Conclusions and recommendations on the enabling conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa	383
9.7.7.1	Conclusions on the enabling conditions necessary for the online mentoring environment in South Africa	384
9.7.7.2	Conclusions of the mentee achievements	385
9.7.7.3	Conclusions of the statistically significant relationship between mentoring pair perceptions and mentee achievements	386
9.7.7.4	Recommendations on the enabling conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa	386
9.8	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO THEORY AND PRACTICE	388
9.9	SELF REFLECTION AND LEARNING	389
9.10	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	390
9.11	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	391
9.12	FINAL CONCLUSION	391
	SOURCE LIST	394
	ANNEXURE 1:INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	435
	ANNEXURE 2: SELF-ADMINISTERED ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE	437
	ANNEXURE 3: ETHICS CLEARANCE	444

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1:	Characteristics, uses of and criticisms against, the positivistic research approach	19
Table 2.2:	Characteristics, uses of and criticisms against, the interpretivistic research approach	20
Table 2.3:	Mixed method research approaches	24
Table 2.4:	Summary of probability sampling methods	33
Table 2.5:	Summary of non-probability sampling methods	36
Table 2.6:	Advantages and disadvantages of secondary analysis	42
Table 3.1:	Differences between mentoring and coaching	79
Table 3.2:	Formal and informal mentoring	86
Table 3.3:	Development approaches of mentoring	94
Table 3.4:	Challenges influencing mentoring programmes	107
Table 3.5:	Benefits of mentoring for mentees and mentors	125
Table 3.6:	Benefits of mentoring for the business	128
Table 4.1:	Conventional mentoring versus online mentoring	136
Table 4.2:	Challenges to online mentoring programmes	162
Table 5.1:	Online mentoring institutions with no South African affiliation	205
Table 5.2:	Online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation	217
Table 5.3:	Mentoring institutions in South Africa	229
Table 6.1:	Summary of biographical profile of participating online mentors	246
Table 6.2:	Summary of the online mentoring history of mentors	247
Table 6.3:	Summary of biographical profile of online mentee participants	256
Table 6.4:	Summary of mentee online mentoring involvement	257
Table 7.1:	Main themes and sub themes emerging from participant interviews	270
Table 8.1:	Operationalisation of the variables in the hypothesised model	318
Table 8.2:	Summary of the demographic profile of respondents	321
Table 8.3:	Summary of demographic profile of corporate employee respondents	322
Table 8.4:	Summary of demographic profile of small business entrepreneur respondents	324
Table 8.5:	Results of general information regarding respondents	326
Table 8.6:	Factor matrix for the variables	327
Table 8.7:	Validity and reliability for the mentee achievements construct	330

	Page
Table 8.8: Validity and reliability for the infrastructure readiness construct	331
Table 8.9: Validity and reliability for the demographics matching preference construct	332
Table 8.10: Validity and reliability for the mentor characteristics construct	333
Table 8.11: Validity and reliability for the communication process construct	334
Table 8.12: Validity and reliability for the mentoring pair perceptions construct	335
Table 8.13: Validity and reliability for the mentoring pair relationship construct	335
Table 8.14: Re-operationalisation of the variables in the revised hypothesised model	337
Table 8.15: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of variables	339
Table 8.16: Multi-collinearity diagnostics for the variables	341
Table 8.17: Analysis of variance for mentee achievements	342
Table 8.18: Summary of regression statistics for mentee achievements	342
Table 8.19: Multiple regression results of the online mentoring influencing mentee achievements	343
Table 8.20: Descriptive statistics of the variables	344
Table 9.1: How the secondary objectives in this study were met	351

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1: Features of positivistic and interpretivistic research paradigms	22
Figure 2.2: Strengths and weaknesses of mixed method research approaches	25
Figure 2.3: Paradigms and research approaches followed for this study	26
Figure 2.4: Steps in the sampling procedure	29
Figure 2.5: Sample size and sampling methods employed in the study	41
Figure 2.6: Summary of the data collection procedure and measuring instruments	61
Figure 3.1: Benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs	130
Figure 4.1: Types of tools used for online communication	140
Figure 4.2: Guidelines for implementing online mentoring programmes	172
Figure 8.1: The proposed hypothesised model of the online mentoring	317

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African females remain notably under-represented in executive and decision-making positions, regardless of the existence of equal opportunity and affirmative action policies (Republic of South Africa, 2015). This reflects the situation world-wide (Catalyst Census, 2010), which has given rise to trepidations about the potential impact on business growth and economic development (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:3; Monks, 2007:26). These authors caution against the risk to businesses in a globalised society if they fail to understand what factors contribute to the workplace success of females in various cultures. Awareness of and knowledge about these factors are deemed vital to the development of future female executives, which is necessary for sustainable business success. Research in areas such as career development, organisational support and family responsibility may be a critical step in understanding why females are globally under-represented in upper management positions (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:30; Howe-Walsh, Turnbull, Papavasileiou & Bozionelos, 2016: 54).

Research (Maurtin-Cairncross, 2009; Daft, 2010; Howe-Walsh *et al.*, 2016) in the domain of females in management, attributes the under-representation of females at executive level to a multitude of barriers inhibiting females' progress beyond an apparent 'glass ceiling'. World wide under-representation of females in executive positions may curb business growth and restrict economic development (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:3; Monks, 2007:26). The challenge for females to progress beyond the glass ceiling has led to an escalation in research into the nature of the barriers to females' professional success. Research has confirmed that females who have a mentor perform at greater levels as they gain reflected power, advice and the right to use essential resources and senior managers through their mentorship relationship (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212). However, one of the most prominent issues identified is lack of female mentors with whom females can identify (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:306; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016:306).

In the business context, Ayer (2010:2) mentions that lack of mentoring and derisory knowledge of marketing and business development are amongst other probable

reasons for female entrepreneurial failure. Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013:549) confirm that a primary barrier to females' success in both the business and entrepreneurship field has been access to mentoring. Female entrepreneurs in particular could benefit from mentoring and time, space and cost flexibility enable the simple acquirement of new information and skills (Petridou, 2009:524; Laukhuf & Malone, 2015:70).

As occupation and supervisory structures advance, the conventional model of mentoring, in which a high-ranking organisational member teaches a junior employee how to perform his or her role face-to-face, is changing. With the revolution in technology, online mentoring – mediated through electronic technology – has emerged as an alternative mentoring method (Headlam-Wells, Gosland & Craig, 2005:445; Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:204). Many authors have described how online mentoring combines conventional mentoring relationship approaches with new technology (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445; Petridou, 2009:524; Rockwell, Leck & Elliott, 2013:2). This study explores online mentoring as an effective transformative tool for female career and small business development.

A number of notions are used in the study, and because various definitions can be found in the literature, central concepts are clarified in the following section before proceeding with the problem statement of the study.

1.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The concepts to be clarified are female entrepreneurs, conventional mentoring, online mentoring, career development and entrepreneurial growth.

1.2.1 Female entrepreneurs

For the focus of this study, a female entrepreneur is defined as a self-employed female who starts, organises, manages, and assumes responsibility for her business (Segal, Borgia & Schoenfeld, 2005:44; Ahl, 2006:585).

1.2.2 Conventional mentoring

Conventionally, mentoring was defined as a reciprocal process whereby a more skilled or experienced person in age or experience (mentor) provides advice, support, knowledge and encouragement to a less skilled person (mentee) (Ensher, Heun &

Blanchard, 2003:267). Conventional mentoring is associated with a one-on-one, face-to-face relationship which is confidential and protected (Hunt & Atherfold, 2004:1). Key elements of mentoring involve a relationship, an adult learning context, professional development goals, and reflection and re-examination of goals (Perren, 2003:520; Bourke, Waite & Wright, 2014:3). Mentoring is a process whereby the mentoring pair become familiar with one another and build a trusting relationship in which the mentee can feel secure in sharing the issues that impact on his or her professional and personal success (Harrington, 1999:2; Clutterbuck, 2008:9; Management Mentors, 2015a:3).

For the purpose of this study conventional mentoring is regarded as a face-to-face relationship between a mentor and mentee in a trusting environment with a focus on the growth and development of the mentee for the purpose of affecting professional and/or personal success.

1.2.3 Online mentoring

Online mentoring encompasses the use of a technologically-mediated dimension in the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Bierema and Merriam (2002:214) note that it is a computer-mediated and beneficial relationship providing learning, advising, encouraging, promoting and modelling and that it is often without boundaries, is unrestricted, and is qualitatively different from conventional face-to-face mentoring and is characterised by its non-face-to-face nature. Hunt (2005:7) describes online mentoring as the process that utilises technology in assisting two people to grow and learn in a safe and supportive relationship. Online mentoring can be mentoring performed through the use of the internet as a communication channel, and is otherwise referred to as 'online mentoring', 'virtual' or 'cyber mentoring' (Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007). Online mentoring can also be mediated using mobile applications where software is created exclusively for use on small, wireless (mobile) computing devices such as smartphones and tablets, rather than desktop or laptop computers. Many experts argue that the future of computer technology rests in mobile computing with wireless networking (Techopedia, 2016).

For the purpose of this study online mentoring refers to technologically-mediated mentoring between the mentor and mentee, characterised by its non-face-to-face nature and can be computer or mobile based.

1.2.4 Career development

Career development refers to the formation of a work identity or progression of career decisions and/or events as influenced by life or work experience, education, on-the-job training, or other factors. Individuals must assume responsibility for their own career management, must be able to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, engage in self-reflection, and seek advice when necessary, and they must be constant learners in order to remain employable (Kram & Isabella, 1985:112; Patton & McMahon, 2006:153; Career Development Association of Alberta, 2012).

For the purpose of this study career development refers to the lifelong process of managing learning, leisure, work and transitions within or between businesses in order to move toward a personally-established and evolving preferred future.

1.2.5 Business development

According to Nieman, Hough and Nieuwenhuizen (2003:232, 234), entrepreneurial growth is a successful business that performs well and grows in terms of sales, increased income, or other quantifiable goals. Business development can be summarised as the ideas, initiatives and activities aimed towards improving the business, which includes increasing revenues, growth in terms of business expansion, increasing profitability by building partnerships, and making good business decisions (Seth, 2015). For the purpose of this study business development refers to a growing business that is regarded as successful and which includes all the activities necessary for improving the business.

The following section will deliberate on the problem statement of the study.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Certain advantages present themselves when online mentoring is compared with conventional mentoring. Ensher *et al.* (2003:264), Headlam-Wells (2004:212) and Leck and Wood (2013:104) list the following advantages of online mentoring:

equalisation of status, reduced costs, greater access, decreased emphasis on demographics, and a record of interactions. Bierema and Merriam (2002:220) state that both the shortage of female mentors and the complications associated with cross-gender mentoring have driven the increasing popularity of online mentoring. Leck *et al.* (2014:15) claim that online mentoring allows mentees from remote areas or with problems of mobility (for example, disabled persons) to access mentors with the expertise they seek (provided they have internet access).

Martin (2012:223) states that the face-to-face interactions of conventional mentoring may involve the distraction of visual clues and aspects of setting, context and atmosphere which may hamper communication. Since online mentoring is faceless – or bodiless – it reduces potential negative stereotyping and discrimination. Cross-gender mentoring relationships are less likely to be misinterpreted with the physical separation of mentor and mentee (Leck *et al.*, 2014:17). Online mentoring is, therefore, especially beneficial for stereotyped individuals and those from marginalised groups (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Online communication is a ‘cleaner’ communication channel in this sense in that it allows for more direct information transfer, thereby minimising contextual concerns (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:19). However, Ensher *et al.* (2003:264) indicate that although there has been an increase in online mentoring websites, their effectiveness is under-researched.

The research of Leck *et al.* (2014:1) reveals that females and visible subgroups face considerable obstacles with regard to workplace mentoring. The three common challenges that emerge are that: there is a scarcity of non-white males and females in senior roles to mentor; female mentees receive sub-optimal mentoring due to conscious or sub-conscious predispositions on the part of the mentor, such as stereotyping or discrimination; and in order to develop leadership skills and advance in their careers females need more career-related support, yet it is psychosocial support that is often requested and provided. A further challenge is how to select a suitable mentor or mentee (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:81). In conventional mentoring, mentees usually know a great deal about their prospective mentors and vice versa, because they typically work in the same geographical area or business. However, in an online environment, information may be restricted to biographical profiles and resumes.

While online mentoring holds promise, it is not without its drawbacks (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Leck *et al.* (2014:22) caution that although access to mentors and mentoring is considerably superior in an online mentoring environment, it is unclear if the quality and effectiveness of online mentoring equals that of conventional mentoring. The research examining the quality of the online mentoring experience has mixed findings. Some have found that online mentoring relationships may be harder to develop than those of a conventional face-to-face mentoring nature given that the majority of the communication lacks non-verbal cues like flow of speech, facial expression, pitch of voice, and body language, thereby making it easy for participants to misinterpret feelings conveyed in communications (Smith-Jentsch Scielzo, Yarbrough & Rosopa, 2008:204; An & Lipscomb, 2013:S33; Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

There is limited empirical research examining the effectiveness of online mentoring programmes (Nchindila, 2007:12; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:552). Mentoring programmes for females are clearly desirable (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2008:32), but the question that still needs to be answered is how online mentoring programmes need to be tailored to best suit the requirements of females and how the challenges associated with them can be overcome to foster career advancement and business development. In the South African context, online mentoring is even more crucial for previously disadvantaged individuals.

There are no published South African studies exploring the use and viability of online mentorship as an effective support structure for female career and business development. A shortfall exists in recent literature and empirical evidence on South African female corporate and entrepreneur experiences and perceptions of online mentoring as a transformative assistance tool. It is clear that online mentoring is distinctive because it challenges the conventional wisdom that mentoring must be based on a personal face-to-face relationship and it allows for modern ways of mentoring.

Single and Single (2005:304) report that online mentoring activities can present unique technological challenges. Online mentoring requires access to the necessary technology, such as the physical devices (specialised software and hardware) and

networks required for the online mentoring relationship to be made possible (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Rowland, 2012:3; Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013:223). The same is true when working with mobile technology since access to mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, is required (Techopedia, 2016). A number of authors (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Bierema & Hill, 2005:557; Homitz & Berge, 2008:332) warn that an online mentoring relationship requires a definite level of computer literacy and internet knowledge otherwise communication will be flawed. The same applies for knowledge of mobile technology as users must be acquainted with how to use the device as well as how and when to use specific functions (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:6). More research is required in this field to adequately determine which online mode may be suitable for online mentoring. The results obtained can serve as a significant step towards improving efforts to utilise online mentoring to enhance females' career development and/or develop of their small businesses.

Therefore, the problem statement for the study is formulated as follows:

What are the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring as a transformative tool for females' career development and the development of their small businesses in South Africa?

This study can be regarded as exploratory since it considers the uncharted world of online mentoring and attempts to understand the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa, as well as how it can be used to develop females (both corporate employees and small business entrepreneurs) for career advancement.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In the previous section, the research problem to be investigated has been discussed. The primary and secondary objectives of this study will now be addressed.

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to attempt to determine the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa and how it can be effectively used as a transformative tool to develop South African females (both corporate and entrepreneurs) for career and small business development.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

To help achieve the primary objective of the study, the following secondary objectives were identified:

- To conduct a literature review on conventional and online mentoring;
- To provide an overview of the global online mentoring landscape, with reference to online mentoring institutions operating in South Africa;
- To identify and implement an appropriate research methodology for this study in order to assist the achievement of the overall primary objective;
- To empirically establish what female employees and small business entrepreneurs regard as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring; and
- To suggest ways in which online mentoring can be effectively utilised for females to advance their corporate careers and develop their small businesses in South Africa.

Based on the purpose and primary objective of this study, the following seven sub-questions were developed:

- For which purpose do female employees and small business entrepreneurs utilise online mentoring?
- What do female employees and small business entrepreneurs perceive the challenges to be to effective online mentoring activity?
- How can online mentoring be made more effective?
- What according to the corporate employees and small business entrepreneurs could be done to create an effective online mentoring environment?
- What is the preferred online mentoring mode for female mentees?
- How can online mentoring be used to create and revolutionise career advancement and small business opportunities for females in South Africa?
- What can be done to accelerate the use of online mentoring by females in South Africa?

It must be mentioned that although the study was intended to be delimited to South African participants, the sample was extended to include female mentees from other African countries as it was difficult to source female mentees from South Africa only.

The research design and methodology employed in this study will be presented in the following section.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to assess both the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa, and how it can be used effectively as a transformative tool to develop females (both corporate employees and small entrepreneurs) for career and small business development.

According to Bryman and Bell (2014:382), a research design is a framework for the collecting and analysing of data and information in order to increase the understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. The main function of research design is to maximise the validity of the investigation by enabling the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate type of research should be, in order to effectively answer the research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:73).

The research paradigm followed in the study will now be presented.

1.5.1 Research paradigm

Two paradigms can be distinguished – a positivist and an interpretivist, or phenomenological, research paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2014:46). The positivist paradigm is known as quantitative, scientific, experimentalist, objectivist or traditional research, and the interpretivist or phenomenological paradigm is known as qualitative, humanistic, subjectivist or interpretive research (Cooper & Schindler 2008:164; Collis & Hussey 2014:46).

The exploratory nature of this inquiry during the first two phases of the research process suited the interpretivist paradigm and required a qualitative research approach. For the third phase a positivistic research paradigm was followed. Consequently, both positivist and phenomenological research methods were used to collect and analyse data for the study and hence a mixed-method research approach was followed (Given, 2008:526; Bryman & Bell, 2014:62). The population, sample, sampling method, measuring instrument, data collection and data analysis implemented in this study will be presented in the sections to follow.

1.5.2 Population, sample and sampling method

The population of a research study can be defined as all of the individuals, members or units relevant to a study (Quinlan, 2011:206). As this study has three data collection phases, the population for each of the phases is as follows:

- first qualitative research phase – females employed or owning small businesses who currently receive or have previously received online mentoring (mentees) and mentors (males and females) who have recently (2016) provided online mentoring; and
- second qualitative research phase – online mentoring field specialists actively engaged in online mentoring;
- third quantitative research phase – females employed or owning small businesses in South Africa that have been involved in conventional mentoring as well as mentors (female and male) that have provided conventional mentoring.

With the population defined, the sampling frame has to be constructed and can be defined as the concrete group from which the sample will be chosen (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:174). Although the researcher contacted various institutions claiming to offer online mentoring, it was found that because of confidentiality agreements and some of the institutions not keeping a formal data base of their mentors and mentees, the size of the sampling frame could not be established. It was also clear that very few institutions are actually offering online mentoring in South Africa which confirmed the necessity of following a qualitative research approach in the first two phases of this study.

Sampling is concerned with the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of concern, especially for intents of statistical interpretations, and should be characteristic of the population (Bryman & Bell, 2014:176). There are two main types of sampling techniques namely, probability and non-probability sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2014:172-175; Struwig & Stead, 2013:116-120). Probability sampling is established on the idea that every member of the population has an acknowledged non-zero probability of occurring in the sample and is selected on a purely random basis and it uses methods such as simple random, systematic, cluster and stratified sampling (Struwig & Stead, 2013:118; Bryman & Bell,

2014:170). A non-probability sampling technique is a technique in which the members are chosen without observing their probability of being included, but based on convenience, judgement or quota (Sekaran, 2006:276). Four types of non-probability sampling can be identified from the literature namely, convenience, purposive, snowball and quota sampling (Cooper & Schindler 2008:169-170; Struwig & Stead, 2013:116; Bryman & Bell, 2014:178).

For the first qualitative research phase, a combination of convenience, purposive and snowball sampling was applied whereby five South African mentors (male and females) and six female mentees from Africa were approached based on their availability, willingness to participate and by the recommendation of their mentors. For the second qualitative research phase of this study convenience and purposive sampling were utilised whereby two online mentoring field specialists from institutions in South Africa and one online mentoring field specialist from the USA who are actively engaged in online mentoring, were approached based on their availability and willingness to participate. The sample for the first and second qualitative phases of the inquiry was small, which is consistent with qualitative research. For the third quantitative research phase, 100 South African respondents were invited to participate in the online survey. Information was canvassed from both female mentees, and mentors (both male and female). Male mentors were included in the study as they also mentor female mentees and were deemed able to provide further insight into the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring.

1.5.3 Data collection processes

To address the objectives of this study, both secondary and primary research was undertaken. Cooper and Schindler (2008:104) and Bryman and Bell (2014:267) define secondary data as interpretations of primary, original data. The aim of secondary research is to collect appropriate and up-to-date secondary data to be used in a study and to contextualise the study within the general body of scientific knowledge. A comprehensive literature search was conducted on both conventional and online mentoring globally and in South Africa, and on the various mentoring methods available. International and national data searches were completed through the library of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University including SABINET ONLINE, EBSCOHOST, EMERALD INSIGHT, NEXUS and Google searches. Data from

international and national libraries was accessed through the inter-library loan facility at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Primary research includes all data collected through the researcher's own efforts and excludes all data that existed before the start of the study (Struwig & Stead, 2013:82; Collis & Hussey, 2014:343). There are various methods available for the collection of primary data namely, surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, experiments, action research and case studies (Quinlan (2011:228; Collis & Hussey, 2014:60, 102). This study incorporated two different data collection research approaches and measuring instruments: qualitative – in the form of a semi-structured interview schedule during phases one and two – and quantitative – in the form of a structured self-administered online questionnaire during phase three.

1.5.4 Data analysis

With data analysis it is important to note that the analysis and interpretation of data differs for qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Struwig & Stead, 2013:155). Several data analysis methods (case study, content analysis, constant comparative method and grounded theory) were utilised for the first two phases of the research which followed a qualitative approach to ensure a deeper analysis of the collected data (Quinlan, 2011:182-185; Bryman & Bell, 2014:344-354).

Various quantitative data analysis methods exist, such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Aaker, Day & Kumar, 2007:444; Wiid & Diggins, 2009:240). Bryman and Bell (2014:318) view descriptive statistics as associated with percentages and the measurement of central tendencies such as the mode, the median and mean, and standard deviations from the mean. In this study, descriptive statistics were employed to analyse and describe the results from the self-administered online questionnaire in the third phase of the study. The enabling conditions for effective online mentoring and resultant mentee achievements are described and presented in the form of percentages, means and standard deviations. The online mentoring conditions (enablers) were described as perceived by the South African respondents as necessary for effective online mentoring.

Inferential statistics can be applied to surmise what the total population might think or do based on the study of a sample of the population. Several inferential statistical methods exist, namely correlation tests, regression analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and T-tests (Quinlan, 2011:401). Inferential statistics such as Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple regression analysis were conducted to analyse the data in phase three of the study to determine if there is correlation between the online mentoring conditions necessary for effective online mentoring as well as whether the online mentoring conditions (enablers) have an influence on mentee achievements.

1.5.5 Trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the research findings

In qualitative research, quality is established by ensuring trustworthiness of the research, which refers to the neutrality of its findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:277). Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2012:277), state that the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings can be established by using the following four qualitative suppositions: credibility (analogues to internal validity), dependability (analogues to reliability), conformability (analogues to objectivity), and transferability (analogues to external validity). The trustworthiness of the research findings of phases one and two of this qualitative inquiry was strengthened by addressing these matters.

Validity and reliability tests are generally associated with the theoretical paradigm of positivism, and the reason for testing for validity and reliability is to assess the internal consistency of the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2014:39; Struwig & Stead, 2013:270-272). The computer programme Statistica 12 was used to conduct validity and reliability testing for the third phase of the study.

Content validity is related to face validity and refers to the extent to which a measure reflects the theoretical content of the construct being measured (Quinlan, 2011:335; Struwig & Stead, 2013:146). Both face and content validity were ensured in this study as items in the questionnaire were based on the literature study and the expert information obtained from the two phenomenological phases of the study. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilised to determine the validity of the questionnaire items and factors in the third phase of the study (Collis & Hussey,

2014:173). Construct validity ensured that the intended constructs were measured, rather than irrelevant constructs, as items with a factor loading of less than 0.5 were deleted in the EFA. However, where a variable loaded with a factor loading of 0.5 or higher and that same variable loaded onto a different factor (cross-loading), that variable was also disregarded for further statistical analysis.

One of the most commonly used reliability measures is Cronbach's alpha (Gliem & Gliem, 2003:83). For this study, a Cronbach's alpha cut-off point of 0.7 was used. George and Mallery (2003:50) state that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 and higher is considered reliable.

It is acknowledged that the main aim of this research was not to conduct a quantitative study, but to merely quantify the qualitative findings.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is divided into the following nine chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study. Aspects included are problem identification, research objectives, research questions, a brief overview of the research methodology, and the content to follow in the subsequent chapters.
- Chapter 2 covers the research methodology used in the study and includes the research paradigm, sampling design and measuring instruments and data analysis procedure utilised in the three phases of the study.
- Chapter 3 comprises a literature study on conventional mentoring.
- Chapter 4 comprises a literature study on online mentoring highlighting the latest developments and the importance and role of online mentoring globally and in South Africa.
- Chapter 5 provides an overview of the global online mentoring landscape with reference to online mentoring institutions operating in South Africa.
- Chapter 6 summarises the biographical profiles of the selected online mentors, mentees and online mentoring field specialists, who participated in this study, with a clear indication of their involvement in online mentoring.

- Chapter 7 presents the results of the online mentoring interviews with the selected online mentors and mentees, as well as online mentoring field specialists by indicating the emerging themes, sub-themes and issues that emerged.
- Chapter 8 presents the results from the self-administered online questionnaire in the third phase on the enabling conditions for effective online mentoring and the intended outcomes thereof are summarised and presented in the descriptive and inferential statistics.
- Chapter 9 summarises the study, concludes the findings and offers recommendations and guidelines on how to implement the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa and how it can be effectively used as a transformative tool to develop females (both corporate and entrepreneurs) for career and small business development. The contributions of the study are provided as well as some limitations and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study and commenced with a background to the importance of mentoring for females' career and small business development. The research problem to be investigated was discussed, as well as the primary and secondary objectives of the study. Based on the purpose and primary objective of the study, the main research question was formulated with seven sub-questions. A number of concepts to be used in the study were clarified, after which a brief overview of the proposed research design and methodology was presented.

A research design relates to the multiple structures that can be used to gather and analyse data (Bryman & Bell, 2014:100). When planning the research, a number of features need to be considered, such as the purpose of the study, the nature of the information, data sources and means of data collection (Collis & Hussy, 2014:59). The primary function of the research design is to obtain maximum validity from it by enabling the researcher to foresee what the appropriate method of investigation should be, in order to effectively answer the research questions (Mouton, 2009:107). The purpose of this research is to assess the enabling conditions for effective online mentoring and how it can be used as a transformative tool for females' career and small business development.

This chapter commences with a discussion regarding the research design, and the primary research paradigms available in modern-day research are presented. The population, sample size and sample selection for each of the three phases of the study, are discussed followed by the data collection methods where reference is made to the secondary and primary research that was undertaken. The measuring instruments used in the three phases of the empirical investigation are described, after which the data analysis for these phases is subsequently discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion regarding how the following was ensured: trustworthiness of the interview schedule used in phases one and two, and the validity and reliability of the online questionnaire used in phase three.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Babbie and Mouton (2012:75) observe that the research design centres on the overall research plan which enables the researcher to address the research problem, while the methodology focuses on the processes and forms of research instruments that will be employed to gather and analyse data. A research design summarises the comprehensive strategy for running a research study (Collis & Hussey, 2014:344) and acts as a structure to collect and examine data and respond to the research questions or hypotheses formulated (Bryman & Bell, 2014:100). A research design refers to the systematic procedure of gathering and analysing information and data with a view to improving the understanding of the issue being explored (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:4).

According to Bryman and Bell (2014:100) the research design indicates decisions about some vital elements of the research process, such as:

- how to express fundamental associations between variables;
- whether, and how, the results can be made relevant to a larger group of individuals or businesses than those actually forming part of the current study;
- how to comprehend and explain behaviour and the significance of that behaviour in its particular context; and
- how to explain social incidences, their interdependence and changes over time.

The starting point in the research design is to select a research paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2014:59). The different research paradigms available are presented in the following section.

2.2.1 Research paradigms and approaches

A research paradigm is a philosophical strategy and structure that guides how scientific research should be conducted. There used to be only one research paradigm for centuries because the research primarily originated from a single foundation, namely the natural sciences (Collis & Hussy, 2014:43). The systematic methods employed by scientists involved observation and experiments, and researchers used inductive reasoning to uncover descriptive theories that could be used for forecasting. Beliefs about knowledge were based on positivism. With the commencement of industrialisation and capitalism, researchers began to change their interest to social

aspects, which refer to observed objects, facts or occurrences leading to the interpretivism method (Collis & Hussey, 2014:44).

The positivistic paradigm is known as quantitative, objectivist, scientific, experimentalist or traditional research, and the interpretivist paradigm is known as qualitative, subjectivist, humanistic or phenomenological research (Cooper & Schindler 2008:164; Collis & Hussey 2014:46). These two paradigms are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.2.1.1 Positivistic research paradigm

Positivism emphasises the belief that reality is not dependent on people and the goal is to ascertain theories based on empirical (observation and experiment) research (Collis & Hussey, 2014:44). Since it is supposed that social occurrences can be appraised, positivism is associated with quantitative methods of analysis based on the statistical analysis of quantitative research data. Data collected by positivistic research must therefore be expressed in numbers (Struwig & Stead, 2013:6). The positivistic model uses deductive reasoning as a prevailing theory is tested (Bryman & Bell, 2014:10). According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:162), the purpose of positivistic research is to measure consumer conduct, knowledge, thoughts or attitudes. Quantitative researchers are not particularly concerned with portraying *how* things are, but attempt to expound on *why* things are the way they are (Bryman & Bell, 2014:40). Positivistic researchers assess variables on a sample of subjects, and show a relationship between variables using statistics such as correlations, relative frequencies or differences in means, with consideration to examining the theory (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:221). Table 2.1 summarises the characteristics and uses of the positivistic research approach and indicates some of the main criticisms against this approach.

Table 2.1: Characteristics, uses of and criticisms against the positivistic research approach

Characteristics and uses	Criticisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examines the key research features that the research questions are based on • Attempts to establish cause and effect relationships between independent and dependent variables • Findings can be generalised beyond the boundaries of the particular setting where the research was conducted and beyond the research sample • A representative sample must be created in order to generalise the findings beyond the particular cases that participated in the study • The individual is the focus of the inquiry as survey instruments are administered to individuals • High levels of control are used during research to ensure that precise numerical data is provided • Data analysis is relatively less time consuming as statistical software is used • Useful for studying large numbers of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not possible to separate people from the social settings in which they live • People and social institutions are not distinguished from the natural world • People cannot be understood without examining the views and opinions they have of their own behaviours and the connection between research and everyday life can be missed • A strict research design imposes limitations on the results and may disregard other significant findings • Researchers are not objective, as they bring their own interests and values to the research • Capturing complicated events in a single measure is misleading as it is based on the presumption that all respondents interpret key terms similarly when in fact this is not the case

Source: Adapted from Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004:19); Quinlan (2011:12); Struwig & Stead (2013:4); Bryman & Bell (2014:50); Collis & Hussey (2014:45)

As is evident from Table 2.1 the positivistic paradigm can be extensively applied in a research context where the findings need to be generalised and a large number of people need to be researched. However, a number of criticisms have been raised against following this research approach and due to these criticisms researchers often opt to choose the interpretivistic research paradigm, which is presented next.

2.2.1.2 Interpretivistic research paradigm

Interpretivism derived from the inadequacy of positivism to meet the requirements of social scientists (Collis & Hussey, 2014:44). Interpretivism is reinforced by the belief that reality created through social interaction is not objective, but highly subjective, because it is moulded by views and opinions. Interpretivism focuses on exploring the complexity of social occurrences to improve interpretive understanding, and interpretivists set off from the belief that the subject matter of social sciences – people

and their institutions – is essentially dissimilar from that of the natural sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2014:14). A separate research reasoning is therefore required for the study of the social sciences where the distinctiveness of humans is reflected. Collis and Hussey (2014:45) state that interpretive research is any type of research where the outcomes and deductions are not derived from the statistical examination of quantitative data. Instead, the outcomes and deductions stem from qualitative methods of analysis which are based on the interpretation of qualitative research data. Interpretivistic research thus relates to the collection and examination of principally non-numerical data such as words, pictures and actions (Bryman & Bell, 2014:41; Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2015:63).

The purpose of this paradigm is to highlight content and to cultivate new theories, instead of testing existing theories (Crotty, 1998:3). The interpretivist paradigm varies from the positivistic paradigm in the sense that inductive reasoning is utilised and new theory will be created (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:14). This approach to research generates theory and different categories are established as a consequence of the analysis of the data collected (Bryman & Bell, 2014:42). Myers (2009:5) states that one of the benefits of this kind of research is that it permits the researcher to understand the context in which decisions and activities are undertaken and focuses on *how* and *why* things happen the way they do. Maree (2007:51) affirms that this type of research primarily attempts to examine the ‘why’ questions of research. The challenge in drawing a sufficient sample of respondents and obtaining an adequately high response rate (as in a quantitative survey) adds to the appeal of using the qualitative approach (Yin, 2011:6). Table 2.2 summarises the characteristics and uses of the interpretivistic research approach and specifies some of the central criticisms against this approach.

Table 2.2: Characteristics, uses of and criticisms against the interpretivistic research approach

Characteristics and uses	Criticisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempts to understand the issues from the perspective of participants to provide understanding and description of people's personal experiences of issues• Attempts to understand something about an area where there is insufficient knowledge available or where previously offered facts seem derisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too subjective• Findings are biased and value-laden as the results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and habits• Difficult to replicate findings• Difficult to generalise the findings to other

Characteristics and uses	Criticisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data are usually collected in real world settings• It is assumed that each case is special and unique• Issues are described, in rich detail, as it is situated and embedded in local contexts• Examines interrelated events over time and as they develop• Useful for studying a limited number of in-depth cases• Useful for making sense of complex situations• Mindful of, and attentive to, system and situation dynamics• Research is conducted in an open and unstructured manner• Identifies contextual and setting factors as it relates to the issue of interest	<p>settings and contexts due to the narrow scope of the research, as findings may be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May lack consistency and reliability because the researcher can employ different probing techniques and the respondent can choose to share some information and ignore others• Lacks transparency on how the research was conducted• Generally takes more time to collect the data and is more expensive when compared to quantitative research, and data analysis is often time consuming

Adapted from: Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004:19, 20); Crotty (1998:2, 6); Richards & Morse (2013:27); Struwig & Stead (2013:11); Bryman & Bell (2014:50); Collis & Hussey (2014:45)

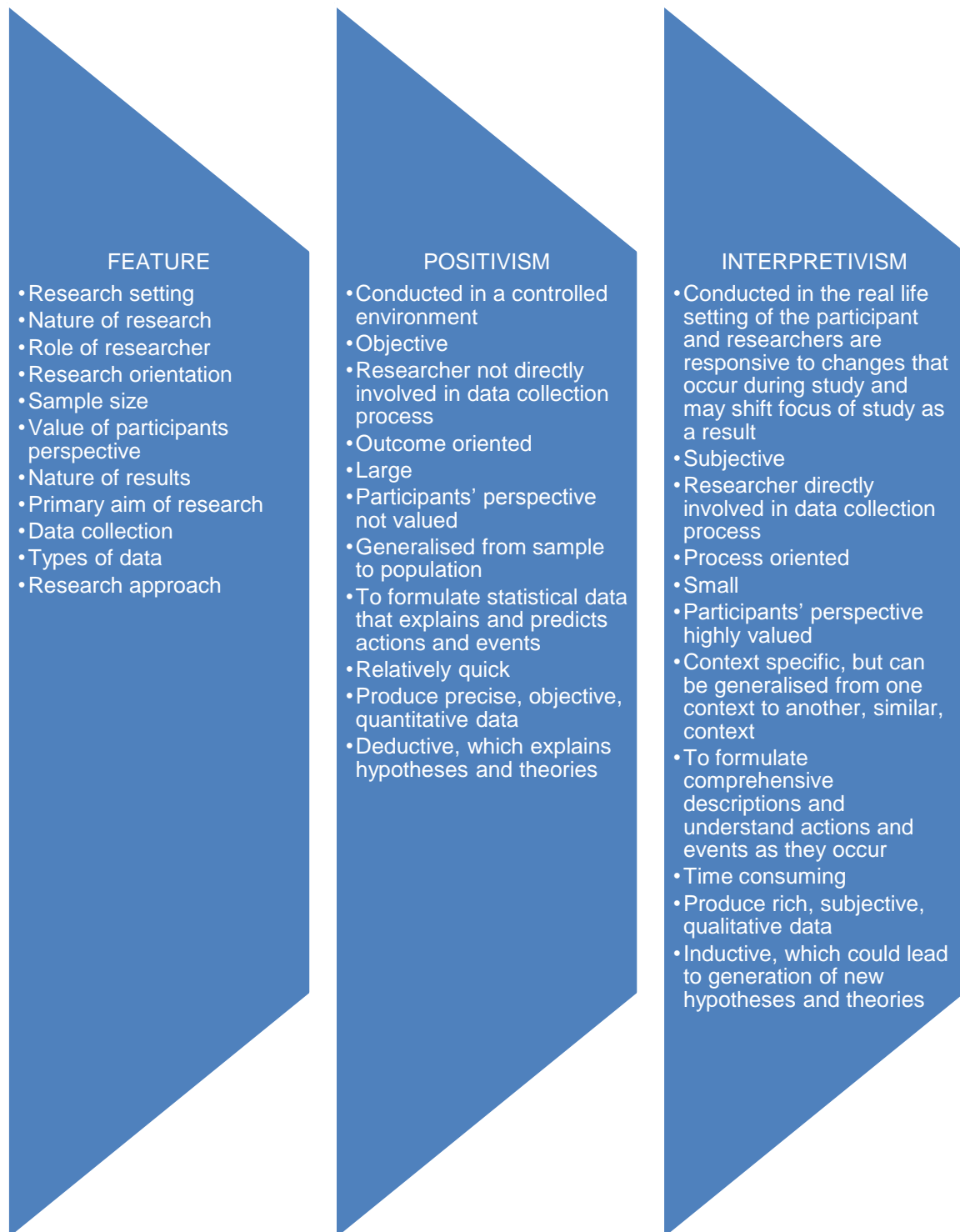
As is evident from Table 2.2 the interpretivistic paradigm can be applied in a research context where there is a need to understand issues from the perspective of individuals and how they experience these issues. However, as noted a number of criticisms have been raised against following this research approach.

In summary of this section it is acknowledged that even though both the positivistic and interpretivistic research approaches have their own characteristics and are widely used, both approaches have also been subject to criticism. Following is a detailed comparison of the two main research paradigms.

2.2.1.3 Comparison of positivistic and interpretivistic research paradigms

The main features of positivism and interpretivism, as discussed previously, are summarised in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Features of positivistic and interpretivistic research paradigms



Source: Adapted from Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004:19); Bryman & Bell (2014:51); Collis & Hussey (2014:50)

It is evident from Figure 2.1 that a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research can be made, but it is not to say that there are no points of similarity – there are examples of research that transcend the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research. One way in which this occurs is through mixed method research, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods and which is presented in the following section.

2.2.1.4 Mixed method research paradigm

A mixed method research approach is offered as the third research paradigm: it can aid in crossing the divide between quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:14). Although Collis and Hussey (2014:72) claim that there is much deliberation over the employment of mixed methods, researchers should be allowed to combine methods from different models, selecting them on suitability for solving the research questions. According to Given (2008:526), a mixed method approach is defined as research in which data is gathered and examined, and the findings combined so as to draw conclusions by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches in one research project. Bryman and Bell (2014:62) contend that not all researchers believe that such incorporation merging is either desirable or feasible, but state that despite this, mixed method research has become progressively popular since the early 1980s, particularly in business and management.

By making effective use of quantitative and qualitative techniques within the same structure, mixed method research can combine the strong points of both methodologies. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:17) observe that the mixed method approach's argumentation includes the use of induction (or discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations) for understanding the results of the research. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:18) claim that in order to combine research in an effective way, it is vital that researchers take into account all the relevant characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research. For example, the foremost features of conventional quantitative research concentrate on deduction; confirmation; theory/hypothesis testing; explanation; prediction; standardised data collection; and statistical analysis, while the foremost features of conventional qualitative research concentrate on induction; discovery; exploration; theory/hypothesis generation, with

the researcher being the main channel of data gathering, and qualitative examination.

The reasoning for using a mixed approach is derived from the assertion that the drawbacks in each single method will be compensated by offsetting the strengths of another (Bryman & Bell, 2014:62). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods can create a final study that can highlight the valuable contribution of both research approaches (Collis & Hussey, 2014:54). Given (2008:526) confirms that with the current approval of qualitative research and the long-term use of quantitative research, the mixed method approach offers a means for merging the strengths of both approaches to best understand research problems, but contends that a researcher requires the necessary skills to use both quantitative and qualitative research procedures (Given, 2008:527). Silverman (2010:201), however, warns that sometimes the use of multiple methods only serves to show the inadequacies of the research, although the researcher has at least succeeded in covering the research topic from many angles. Table 2.3 depicts the different types of mixed method research approaches that can be used.

Table 2.3: Mixed method research approaches

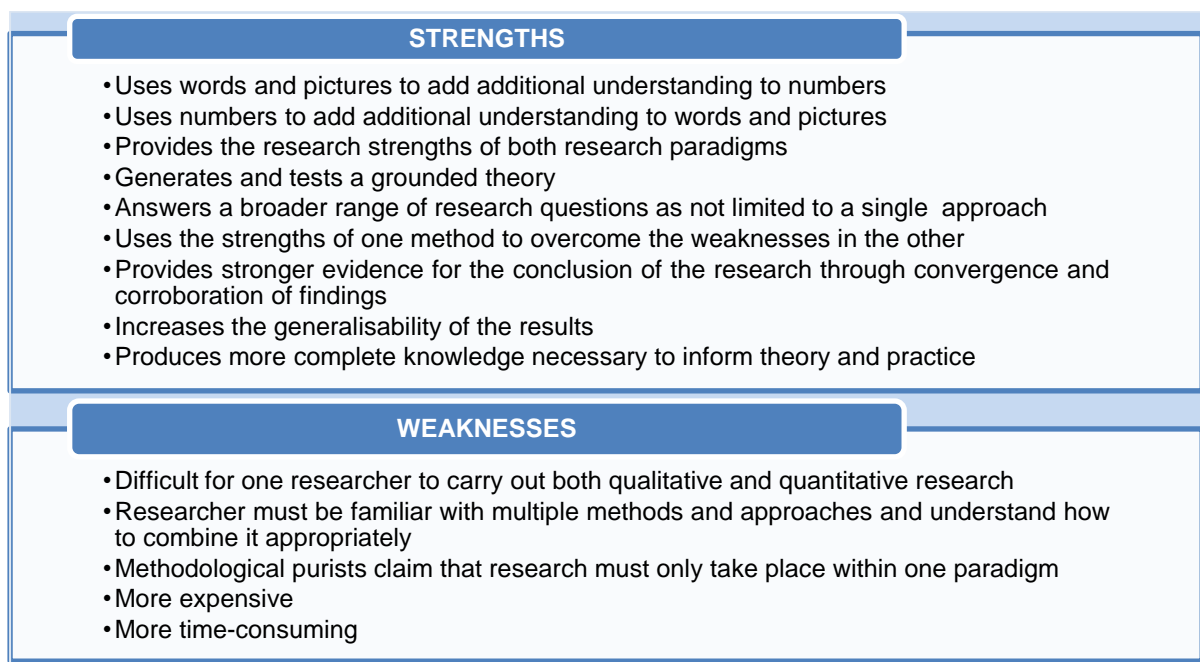
Mixed method approaches	Reasons for and how to use
Concurrent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a more complete understanding of the research problem • Collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time and merge the data to form one interpretation which would provide both quantitative information about magnitude and frequency as well as qualitative information from individual participants' perspectives in the context they were commenting on about the research problem • Quantitative and qualitative data are thus merged in the data analysis stage
Exploratory sequential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To follow up on initial exploratory findings • Qualitative data may be collected and analysed in the first phase of the study while the results of this analysis might then be used to identify items for a questionnaire or to develop hypotheses or instincts that can be further tested quantitatively in the second phase
Explanatory sequential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To better explain initial quantitative results • Begins with quantitative data collection and analysis in a first phase and then follows up with a second phase of qualitative data collection and analysis to help explain, in more detail, the results of the first quantitative phase
Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance a larger data set with a smaller, more focused, data set • Conducts an experiment, and within that experiment collects qualitative data that provides information as to how the participants experienced the intervention

Source: Adapted from Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner (2007:117); Given (2008:528-529); Bryman & Bell (2014:62-64)

It is evident from Table 2.3 that four mixed method research approaches are available to use. It is appropriate to use the concurrent approach when a more extensive understanding of the research problem is needed; the exploratory sequential approach when a follow-up is needed on early exploratory findings; the explanatory sequential approach to improve the understanding of the initial quantitative results; and an embedded approach when a larger data set needs to be improved with a smaller, focused data set.

Figure 2.2 provides a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed method research approaches.

Figure 2.2: Strengths and weaknesses of mixed method research approaches



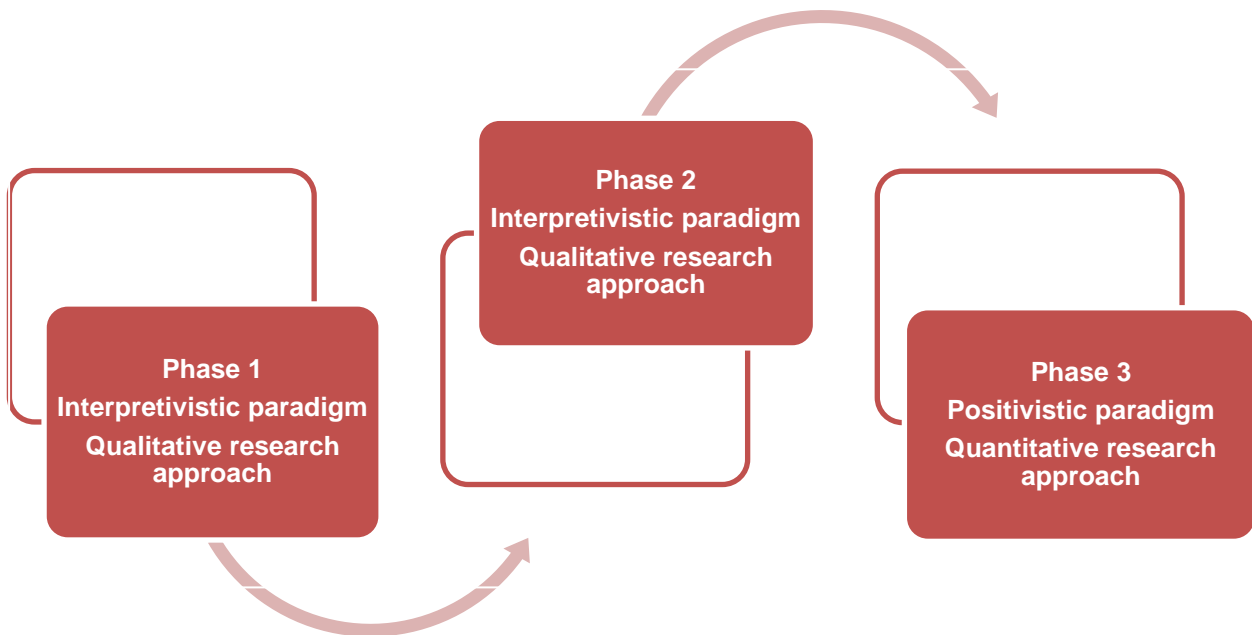
Source: Adapted from Johnson *et al.* (2004:19); Given (2008:528-529); Bryman & Bell (2014:51); Collis & Hussey (2014:50)

The strengths of mixed method research provided in Figure 2.2 can justify the use of this research approach, although some weaknesses inherent in it are noted. A strong rationale must exist for the use of mixed methods. The paradigms and research approaches followed in this study are presented next.

2.2.1.5 Paradigms and research approaches followed in this study

The specific paradigms to be embraced in research are determined by the research assumptions and the nature of the research problem to be investigated (Collis & Hussey, 2014:50). This study's mixed method inquiry can be regarded as exploratory as it considers the uncharted world of online mentoring and attempts to both understand the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring, and reveal how this support tool can be used in South Africa to advance the career development of females, as well as to develop small businesses owned by females. Figure 2.3 depicts the paradigms and research approaches followed for this study.

Figure 2.3: Paradigms and research approaches followed for this study



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The exploratory nature of this inquiry, during the first two phases of the research process, suited the interpretivist paradigm and required a qualitative research approach. The first phase of this inquiry followed a qualitative research approach and interviews were conducted with six female employees and/or small business entrepreneurs who have undergone online mentoring (mentees), as well as five mentors who are currently or have previously provided online mentoring. Mentors could be either female or male as long as they have mentored a female mentee since

the focus of this study is online mentoring as a transformative tool for female career and business development. The interviews were conducted to develop an understanding of:

- why mentees are, or have been, involved in online mentoring;
- how the online mentoring process developed;
- online mentoring challenges; and
- what contributes towards effective online mentoring.

As it was rather difficult to find participants for these interviews, it became evident that very little online mentoring is taking place in South Africa, therefore the study sample had to be expanded to include mentees from Africa. Although many institutions claim they have an online mentoring programme they view sending emails to arrange and confirm mentoring appointments as online mentoring and actually meet in a face-to-face manner. For this reason, three online mentoring field specialists were interviewed.

During the second qualitative phase, three interviews were conducted with online mentoring field specialists – of which two were from South Africa (providing online mentoring platforms for corporate employees and small business entrepreneurs respectively) and the third a university professor from the United States of America (USA) who was instrumental in the implementation of an online mentoring student facility at his university. The interviews were conducted to develop an understanding of:

- the reasons for utilising online mentoring rather than conventional mentoring;
- the online mentoring processes;
- challenges associated with online mentoring; and
- the necessary conditions for effective online mentoring.

The researcher wished to confirm what it was that could provide an enabling environment to increase the use of online mentoring in South Africa as a transformative tool for females in business. For this reason, it was decided to employ a positivistic research paradigm in phase three of the study whereby a structured questionnaire was distributed to a sample of females employed in a business, or owning their own small businesses, in South Africa and who had undergone conventional mentoring in order

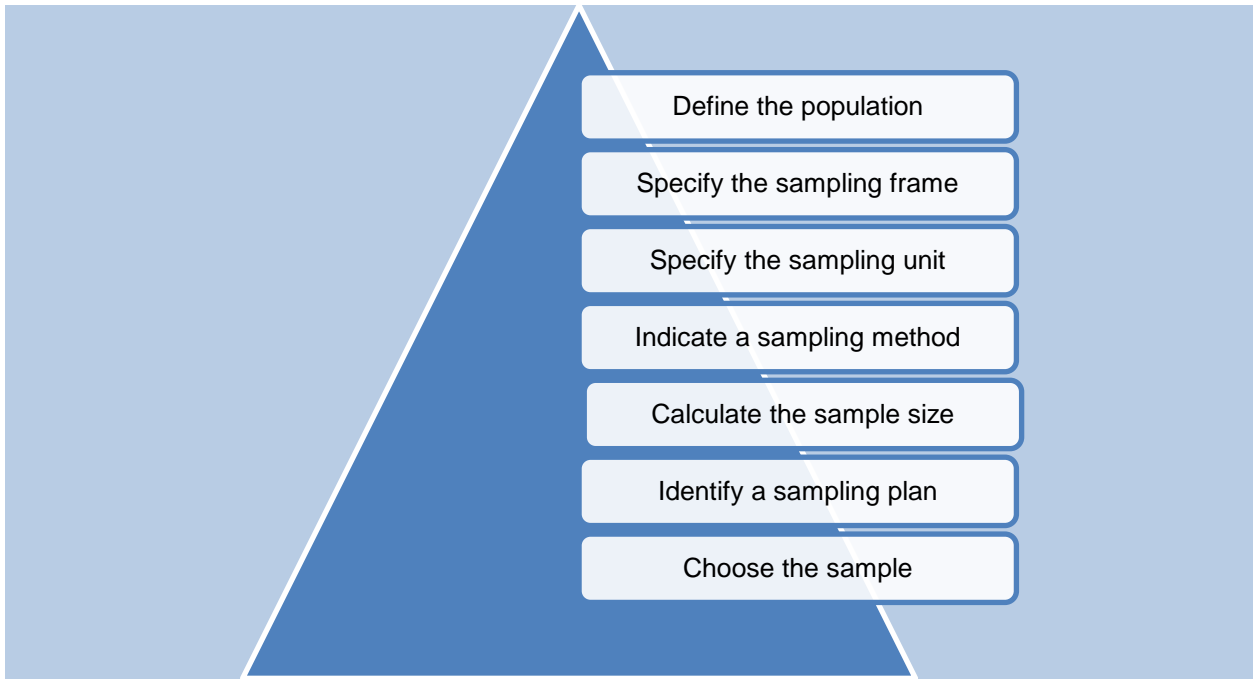
to quantitatively determine what they would perceive as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring, as well as what their expectations would be regarding mentee achievements at the conclusion of the mentoring process. Although these mentees had not undergone online mentoring previously, due to the fact that they had been exposed to the mentoring process, they were deemed to be knowledgeable regarding what the mentoring process entailed. It was further assumed necessary to include both SA female and male mentors to establish their views on both what could be regarded as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring and what they think the expectations would be regarding the mentee achievements whether a corporate employee or small business entrepreneur, at the conclusion of the online mentoring process. Thus, for the third phase of the inquiry information was canvassed from both SA mentees (females only) and mentors (males and females).

The population, sample, sampling method, measuring instrument, data collection and data analysis implemented in this study will be described in the sections to follow.

2.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Struwig and Stead (2013:115) outline the procedure for drawing a good sample as depicted in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Steps in the sampling procedure



Source: Adapted from Struwig & Stead, (2013:90)

A discussion of the sampling procedure followed in this study, and as partially depicted in Figure 2.4, follows.

2.3.1 Population

In Figure 2.4, the first step in defining a research sample is to define the population. The population of a research study can be defined as all of the individuals, members or units relevant to a study (Quinlan, 2011:206). Mugenda and Mugenda (2010:30) further expand the meaning and define a population as a comprehensive set of individuals, cases or objects with certain mutual observable features. If the population is moderately small, the entire population can be selected; otherwise an arbitrary sample needs to be selected (Collis & Hussey, 2014:197). Struwig and Stead (2013:115) affirm that as it is not always practical to collect data on every conceivable observation in a population, there is a need for sampling the population.

This study has three data collection phases – the population for each of the phases are as follows:

- first qualitative research phase – females employed, or owning small businesses, who currently receive, or have previously received, online mentoring (mentees) as well as mentors (male and female) who have recently (2016) provided online mentoring;
- second qualitative research phase – online mentoring field specialists actively engaged in online mentoring; and
- third quantitative research phase – females employed, or owning small businesses (operating for at least three years), who have been involved in conventional mentoring, as well as mentors (female and male) who have provided conventional mentoring in South Africa.

After defining the population of a research study, it is important to construct a sampling frame, which will be discussed next.

2.3.2 Sampling frame

With the research sample clear, the sampling frame can be built and can be defined as the concrete group from which the sample will be selected (Mouton, 2009:135). Struwig and Stead (2013:115) note that in order to establish how many members there are in the population, an appropriate sampling frame should be constructed. The sampling frame can be defined as the actual group from which the sample can be drawn (Collis & Hussey, 2014:344). The researcher contacted various institutions claiming to offer online mentoring on their websites: those that indicated they offered this service were emailed, requesting access to their data-bases. As mentioned in chapter one, because of confidentiality agreements between mentors and mentees and lack of a formal data base of mentors and mentees, none of the institutions were willing or could provide access to this information. Therefore, the size of the sampling frame could not be established, but it was clear that very few institutions are actually offering online mentoring regardless of what their claims are on their website, because when probing more information regarding the tools used for online mentoring they could not provide an acceptable answer, or would simply indicate that they use face-to-face meetings. This confirms the necessity of following a qualitative research approach in this study.

2.3.3 Sampling

For most research it is impossible and impractical to include everyone in the sample population (Struwig & Stead, 2013:114). Sampling is concerned with the selection of individual observations with the intention to yield some information about a population of concern, especially for intents of statistical understandings and should be characteristic of the population (Bryman & Bell, 2014:176). There are two primary forms of sampling techniques, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2014:172-175; Struwig & Stead, 2013:116-120). These two sampling methods are elaborated on in the following sections.

2.3.3.1 Probability sampling techniques

According to Struwig and Stead (2013:118), probability sampling is established on the basis that every member of the population has a recognized non-zero probability of occurring in the sample and is chosen on a purely random basis. A representative sample is more probable when this method of choice is used (Bryman & Bell, 2014:170) and includes methods such as simple random, systematic, cluster and stratified sampling, which are briefly discussed below.

(a) Simple random sampling

A simple random sample is an unbiased surveying method and the most basic form of probability sample (Bryman & Bell, 2014:172). In simple random sampling each attainable sample grouping within the population has an equal likelihood of being chosen and included in the sample, and the researcher requires a comprehensive and accurate list of all members in the population (Struwig & Stead, 2013:118). Quinlan (2011:210) observes that in order to create random samples researchers frequently use tables of random numbers and that these tables can also be computer generated. Struwig and Stead (2013:118) warn that although random sampling is perceived as the most precise sampling method, the selected sample might not always be an exact replica of the population as no research statistic is ever absolutely correct.

(b) Systematic sampling

Struwig and Stead (2013:120) describe systematic sampling as a method in which only the first member of a sample is selected arbitrarily, and the remaining members of the sample are selected at fixed intervals. This method involves the selection of members

from an ordered sampling frame. According to Black (2004:41), the most common method of systematic sampling is the equal probability method. In this approach, the selection of members is conducted in a cyclical fashion by going back to the top of the list once all members have had an opportunity to be chosen. Struwig and Stead (2013:120) posit that the sampling should begin by choosing a member from the list at random and then every n^{th} member in the frame is selected subsequently. However, Black (2004:45) warns that systematic sampling should only be practised if the given population is relatively homogeneous, since systematic sample units ought to be uniformly distributed over the population. Bryman and Bell (2014:173) confirm that it is vital to ensure that there is no intrinsic ordering of the sample frame, since this may bias the subsequent sample.

(c) Cluster sampling

It is sometimes not possible to select respondents independently and, as a consequence, it is appropriate to use cluster sampling (Quinlan, 2011:211). The researcher divides the members of a population into groups, and then selects any number of these groups arbitrarily, including all the members in those groups (Bryman & Bell, 2014:174). Quinlan (2011:211) observes that cluster sampling is particularly helpful with populations that are geographically split into clusters.

(d) Stratified sampling

Struwig and Stead (2013:119) define stratification as the process of choosing a predetermined number of members from each stratum (or group), splitting members of the population into similar subgroups – referred to as strata – instead of selecting from the complete population. Questions should be asked with regard to the criteria used to group the sample; the number of groups; and the sample size within each group (Struwig & Stead, 2013:119). According to Sekaran (2006:272), stratified sampling comprises a procedure of stratification or segregation, followed by random selecting of members from each stratum. Hunt and Tyrrell (2004:14) suggest that when there are varying sub-populations within the population, it is valuable to sample each sub-population (stratum) independently. Bryman and Bell (2014:174) add that the sample taken from each stratum can be either balanced (distributed in the same way as the population) or unbalanced in terms of the number of members in the stratum. According to Sekaran (2006:273) once the population is stratified, simple random

sampling or systematic sampling can be used within each stratum. This often improves the representativeness of the sample by reducing the sampling error. Bryman and Bell (2014:174) posit that stratified sampling can only happen when it is relatively easy to detect and allocate members to groups.

A summary of the probability sampling methods is provided in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Summary of probability sampling methods

Sampling method	Description
Simple random	Each possible sample combination within the population has the same probability of being selected and included in the sample
Systematic	Only the first member of a sample is chosen randomly and the remaining members of the sample are selected at fixed intervals
Cluster	Members in the population are divided into groups; any number of groups are selected at random; samples are taken of all members in those groups
Stratified	Choosing a predetermined number of members from each group which divides members of the population into similar subgroups known as strata rather than choosing from the total population

Source: Adapted from Black (2004:41); Hunt & Tyrrell (2004:14); Sekaran (2007:272); Quinlan (2011:210); Struwig & Stead (2013:118-120); Bryman & Bell (2014:172-174)

All the probability sampling methods outlined in Table 2.4 are important for valid statistical analysis as it helps to avoid bias when sampling occurs. The next section briefly presents non-probability sampling.

2.3.3.2 Non-probability sampling

A non-probability sampling technique is one in which the members are selected without observing their probability of being included, but founded on convenience, judgement or quota (Sekaran, 2006:276). Struwig and Stead (2013:116) posit that researchers have confidence in personal judgement and that there are times when non-probability sampling will be appropriate to employ. Non-probability sampling techniques cannot be employed to extrapolate from the sample to the general population, since it ignores the probability of occurrence. Yeager, Krosnick, Chang, Javitz, Levendusky, Simpser and Wang (2011:711) are of the opinion that non-probability samples may intermittently produce results that are just as accurate as probability samples. If the

factors that determine a population member's presence or absence in the sample are all uncorrelated with the significant variables in a study or if they can be fully accounted for by making modifications before or after data collection, then the perceived distributions of those variables in a non-probability sample should be similar to the distributions in the population. Nevertheless, if these conditions are not adhered to, survey results from non-probability samples may not be similar to those that would be gained from probability samples.

Four types of non-probability sampling can be acknowledged from the literature, namely convenience, purposive, snowball and quota sampling (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:169-170; Bryman & Bell, 2014:178; Struwig & Stead, 2013:116). These non-probability sampling methods are discussed below.

(a) Convenience sampling

According to Bryman and Bell (2014:178) convenience sampling involves choosing members by virtue of their accessibility. Wiederman (2009:59) states that it is an appropriate method to use if data collection is expensive. Struwig and Stead (2013:116) note that convenience sampling can be utilised when the population has a great deal in common. According to Lucas (2013:54), since members of the population are selected based on their relative ease of access, this method is subjective because researchers may interact with some respondents and deliberately avoid others. In addition, respondents who volunteer for the study may differ from non-participants considerably. The data will not allow conclusive findings to be produced, because of the problem of generalisation, however, it could provide a catalyst for additional research (Bryman & Bell, 2014:178).

(b) Purposive or judgemental sampling

A purposive or judgemental sample is when participants are chosen for their distinctive characteristics and experiences, and allows a researcher to use cases that have the necessary information with regard to the objectives of the study (Richards & Morse, 2013:231). According to Marshall (2006:522), the researcher selects the sample based on who they think would be suitable for the study. Small (2009:12) is of the view that this method should primarily be used when there are a restricted number of people who have expertise in the area being researched. Babbie and Mouton (2012:166)

suggest that in situations where the researcher has data on the characteristics of the population to be studied and where it is almost unattainable to enumerate the entire population, a purposive or judgemental sampling procedure is suitable. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:287) claim that if the purpose is not to generalise a population, but to gain insight into a phenomenon, individuals, or events (as will often be the case in the qualitative component of a mixed method study), the researcher purposefully chooses individuals, groups, and settings for this stage that will stretch comprehension of the primary phenomenon. This is affirmed by Babbie and Mouton (2012:167). Thus, many mixed method research approach studies utilise some form of purposeful sampling. In this case individuals, groups, and settings are considered for selection if they are rich sources of information.

(c) Snowball sampling

With snowball sampling the researchers initially communicate with a small group of people who are relevant to the research subject, and then employ these people to generate contact with others (Bryman & Bell, 2014:178). Zikmund (2004:58) posits that a few identified members propose others who they know have the necessary characteristics. The first member refers a friend who, in turn, refers the researcher to another friend, and so on. This process is followed until the researcher has the necessary sample size. A snowball sampling approach can be used when there is no readily available sample frame for the population from which the sample is to be taken, or where the features of the population are not fully recognised (Kothari, 2004:58; Bryman & Bell, 2014:179). Babbie and Mouton (2012:167) suggest that snowball sampling is chiefly employed in qualitative research and for exploratory purposes. Struwig and Stead (2013:118) note that this process is also utilised to trace members of uncommon populations through a referral process. Berg (2006:43) asserts that such samples are biased, since it gives those with extra social networks an indeterminate, but greater possibility of being included.

(d) Quota sampling

A quota sample is chosen according to the features of the members (e.g. age, income, status, gender) and includes various groups or quotas of the population in the study, based on some criteria (Struwig & Stead, 2013:117). Berg (2006:76) states that the researcher chooses a quota of the sample from identified sub-groups of the population

so as to replicate a population according to the relative proportions of people in different groupings. In supporting this view, Bryman and Bell (2014:180) argue that this method is comparable to stratified sampling, but in quota sampling the choice of the sample is non-random, because the final selection of the members is assigned to the interviewer. Bryman and Bell (2014:180) further observe that a quota sample is moderately easy to manage and when speed is important, a quota sample is invaluable when compared to the more unwieldy probability sample. Babbie and Mouton (2012:167) caution against the use of this method stating that it is challenging to obtain precise and up-to-date information on the sub-groups of the populations. According to Bryman and Bell (2014:180), another drawback of quota sampling is that the sampling error cannot be measured, because the method of selection is non-random. A summary of the non-probability sampling methods is provided in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Summary of non-probability sampling methods

Sampling method	Description	Authors
Convenience	Selecting members by virtue of their accessibility	Wiederman (2009:59); Lucas (2013:54); Struwig & Stead (2013:116); Bryman & Bell (2014:178)
Purposive/ Judgemental	Selecting members for their unique characteristics and experiences	Marshall (2006:522); Small (2009:12); Babbie & Mouton (2012:167); Richards & Morse (2013:231)
Snowball	Initial contact is made with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then these people are used to establish contact with others	Kothari (2004:58); Zikmund (2004:58); Berg (2006:43); Babbie & Mouton (2012:167); Bryman & Bell (2014:178)
Quota	The population is classified per group/ quota based on some set criteria and the sample is selected in a non-random manner	Mugenda & Mugenda (2003:50); Berg (2006:76); Babbie & Mouton (2012:167); Struwig & Stead (2013:117); Bryman & Bell (2014:180)

Based on the preceding discussion it is clear that the non-probability sampling methods depicted in Table 2.5 are applied when a researcher is unconcerned about selecting a sample representative of the population, ultimately not making inferences or generalisations about the population.

2.3.3.3 Sample size

The calculation of the sample size is as significant as the choice of the sampling method because it also informs the degree to which the researcher can make statistical and/or analytic notions and suggestions (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007:288). Bryman and Bell (2014:176) suggest that the extent of the sample depends on a number of considerations. There is no one definitive answer and a compromise will have to be made between the constraints of time and cost, the need for an adequate sample, and other considerations. According to Aosa (2006:125), a suitable sample refers to the fact that the sample should be large enough to allow reasonable estimates of variables to be attained, capture variability of responses and enable comparative analysis. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population.

Bryman and Bell (2014:171) warn that subjectivity and bias are noteworthy aspects of sampling that need to be considered cautiously. Under a positivist paradigm, a sample is an unbiased subset that denotes the population (Collis & Hussey, 2014:197). Care should be taken if a non-probability method of sampling is used as human judgement can affect the selection process, making some members of the population more likely to be selected than others. If the sampling frame is not comprehensive or accurate, the sample cannot denote the population.

Struwig and Stead (2013:124) note that the determination of the sample size can be complex and is affected by the essential characteristics of the population, such as homogeneity and heterogeneity. When a sample is diverse, a larger sample will be necessary as there will be greater differences than when a sample is homogeneous (Bryman & Bell, 2014:177). Struwig and Stead (2013:126) indicate that one way of choosing the sample size for a study is to check what other researchers have done as traditions in the specific research area relating to appropriate sample size can direct the decision of sample size.

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:288) suggest that small samples are habitually being linked with qualitative research, and large samples with quantitative studies. Yet, small samples can be used in quantitative research that signify exploratory research or fundamental research such as single-subject designs, which routinely utilise quantitative approaches. Conversely, qualitative research can utilise large samples, as

in the case of programme evaluation research. Struwig and Stead (2013:124) affirm that the sample size will be moulded by the objectives of the research, as the sample should be planned to acquire the accurate quality and quantity of data needed. Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:288-289) confirm that for a mixed method design for causal-comparative research a sample size of 51 respondents are adequate and for interviews a sample size of 12 participants are desirable.

2.3.3.4 Sample size and sampling methods employed in this study

The sample for the first and second qualitative phases of the inquiry was small (eleven and three respectively), which is consistent with qualitative research whereby the participants are chosen based on convenience and, in this study, should have experience in online mentoring (purposive sampling). Non-probability sampling techniques (convenience, purposive and snowball sampling) were used for the third quantitative phase of the inquiry. As this study has three data collection phases, the sample for each of the phases will be described in greater detail.

(a) Phase one: Qualitative research approach

For the first qualitative research phase a combination of convenience, purposive and snowball sampling was applied. The names of the SA mentors were obtained using snowball sampling, with the supervisor of the study providing the name of the first participant. Mentors could be either female or male as long as they had mentored a female mentee, as the focus of this study is on online mentoring as a transformative tool for female career- and business development. A total of eight interviews were arranged with mentors, but although these potential participants indicated that they were engaged in online mentoring, it was found that three of them had not yet been allocated a mentee and could thus not provide accurate information on either the process, its challenges or what could contribute towards effective online mentoring. The results of these three interviews would thus have been based on mere speculation or based on their perception of online mentoring. Therefore, a final sample of only five mentors were reported on in the study.

At the inception of this first phase of the study the global online mentoring institutions whom the SA metnors were involved in were emailed and requested to supply the researcher with the names of some mentees. However, due to the confidentiality

clause between the institution, mentor and mentee, no mentee names could be provided. For this reason, the contact details of the mentees were obtained from the online mentors who participated in the study. The mentors (both male and female) sent the interview schedule to their (female) mentees in an email, requesting their willingness to participate in the study and copied the researcher in on the communication. The researcher then followed up with a telephone call or email to receive confirmation of their willingness to participate. Unfortunately, some of the recommended mentees were not willing, due to work commitments or they simply did not respond to the email request to grant an interview, or complete the questionnaire. The researcher spent an inordinate amount of time attempting to obtain mentees willing to complete the interview schedule. The total sample obtained was three female mentees from South Africa and three residing in other African countries, all of whom are employed or own small businesses and had recently (2016) undergone online mentoring. An attempt was made to include mentees that participate in online mentoring from different institutions for different development reasons, to enable a comparison for the detection of commonalities and differences across institutions.

(b) Phase two: Qualitative research approach

For the second qualitative research phase, convenience and purposive sampling were utilised whereby two online mentoring field specialists in South Africa and one from the USA, were approached based on their availability and willingness to participate. A website search was conducted to establish which institutions are engaged in online mentoring and the results indicated that the Small Business Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), the local Business Chamber, Shanduka Umbrellas and some private institutions such as the Cherie Blair Foundation, Kamva Leadership Institute and Grassroots Consulting, offer online mentoring. Although many indicated on their website that they engage in online mentoring, when telephoning these institutions, it was established that they had not yet done so, but are merely intending to do so (for example Seda and local Business Chamber), or were operating mostly outside South Africa (for example Cherie Blair Foundation). As the core criterion for inclusion in the sample was that institutions had to be engaged in online mentoring, it was found that most of these institutions could not participate. Since this is a South African study, it was also preferable to include South African-based institutions so that personal interviews could be conducted as it is easier to probe participants if interviewing in

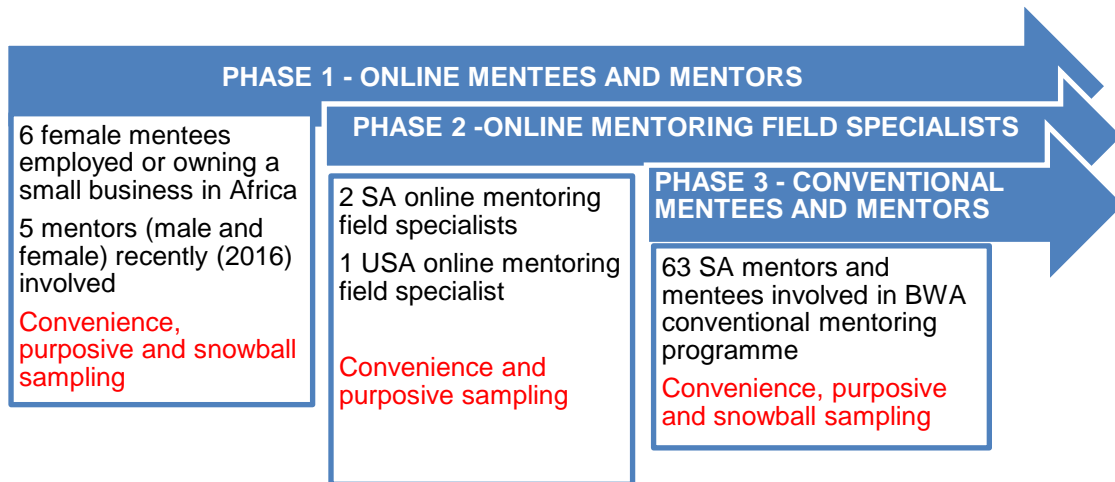
person. Only two participants (founders) of Kamva Leadership Institute and Grassroots Consulting, offering online mentoring and residing in South Africa, were willing to be interviewed for the first stage. An email was sent to these two participants with the interview schedule attached to prepare them for the personal interview. Fortuitously the researcher met – at an international conference – a male professor from a national university in California in the USA, who were instrumental in the implementation of online mentoring at the university he is employed in and who was prepared to grant an interview. An appointment was set outside of the conference time and an interview was conducted along the lines of the interview schedule, which provided the perspective of an international online mentoring specialist in education. Literature has indicated that online mentoring is extensively used in education.

(c) Phase three: Quantitative research approach

For the third quantitative research phase 100 SA respondents were invited to participate in the online survey. Information was canvassed from both female mentees and mentors (both male and female). Male mentors were included in the study since they also mentor female mentees and were deemed able to provide further insight into the conditions necessary for effective online mentoring. This also permitted a deeper data analysis whereby the responses from the male mentors could be compared to those of the female mentors.

Only 63 respondents completed the survey. It was found that some of the respondents were unfamiliar with how to complete an online survey, while others were reluctant to divulge information online, which could account for the response rate of 63 per cent. Some of the names of the respondents were known to the researcher and the supervisor, as they had participated in the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWA) conventional mentoring programme. The other names were obtained using snowball sampling whereby these females forwarded the email containing the link to the survey, to other potential female respondents who satisfied the criteria for inclusion into the sample. The criterion for inclusion was that participants must have been involved at some stage, in conventional mentoring – either as a mentor or as a mentee, as reflected in the qualifying question in the online questionnaire. Figure 2.5 provides a summary of the final sample and sampling methods employed in this study for the respective phases.

Figure 2.5: Sample size and sampling methods employed in the study



Source: Researcher's own compilation

From Figure 2.5, it is evident that the data collection process was tedious and exhausting as considerable attention and time was devoted to the process. The following sections will present the data collection processes that can be used in research.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES

To address the objectives of this study, both secondary and primary research was undertaken. A discussion of each follows.

2.4.1 Secondary research

Cooper and Schindler (2008:104) define secondary data as interpretations of key, original data. The goal of secondary research is to gather relevant and up-to-date secondary data to be utilised in a study and to contextualise the study within the general body of scientific knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2009:565). According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2008:8), secondary research becomes a platform on which to amass a literature review which augments the ability of the study to achieve the research objectives and address the research questions. According to Bryman and Bell (2014:267), secondary data has been collected for another reason, and may also be used in combination with primary data so that a relative element can be amalgamated

into the research design (Bryman & Bell, 2014:268). Figure 2.7 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of secondary analysis.

Table 2.6: Advantages and disadvantages of secondary analysis

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Cost- and time-savings➤ Data is readily available➤ Trends can be identified➤ Can be performed on a subgroup or subset➤ Opportunity for cross-cultural analysis➤ More time for data analysis➤ Data can be analysed in different ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Data is collected by others➤ Data can be complex➤ Cannot control data quality➤ Inappropriateness of the data➤ Key variables of research may not be present

Source: Adapted from Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005:19); Struwig & Stead (2013:82); Bryman & Bell (2014:268-271)

As is evident from Table 2.6, a chief benefit of using secondary data has always been the saving of cost and time (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005:19). Internet access has made the process less difficult and has ensured that high-quality data files may be acquired (Bryman & Bell, 2014:268). The viability of comparative studies has increased and new understandings can be obtained from earlier analyses. Re-analysing data can also lead to further findings and may pose new understandings: a secondary specialist may duplicate the influence of chosen variables that the first researchers had not foreseen or were not considering (Bryman & Bell, 2014:269).

As depicted in Table 2.6, limitations of secondary data can include unfamiliarity with the data as the researcher needs time to acquaint him/herself with the variables and aspects of the data. The intricacy of the data, as well as the fact that the researcher has no control over the quality of it, poses further restrictions to the use of secondary data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:259). For this reason, quality issues must be verified. One or more chief variables of the present study may not be present in the previous data gathered (Bryman & Bell, 2014:271). Usually, data collected by the researcher (primary data) is collected with a distinct idea in mind, in order to answer a research question or meet certain objectives. In this sense, secondary data sources may provide the researcher with a vast amount of information, but quantity is not synonymous with appropriateness. This is simply because it has been collected to

respond to a different research question or objectives and is therefore not regarded relevant (Cheng & Phillips, 2014:374).

For the purposes of this study a comprehensive literature search was conducted on conventional mentoring and on online mentoring, as many of the issues were found to be similar. The literature search further elucidated how online mentoring has developed from, or has been used in conjunction with, conventional mentoring. International and national data searches were conducted through the library of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, including SABINET ONLINE, ISAP (Index of South African Periodicals); EBSCOHOST; EMERALD INSIGHT: Emerald Management Reviews; and Google searches. Data from international and national libraries was accessed through the inter-library loan facility at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

While there was a relatively large amount of empirical research available on conventional mentoring and less so on online mentoring, there still remains a void in empirical research available on online mentoring within the South African context. Consistent to the research procedure for qualitative studies (phases one and two of this study), secondary data collection and empirical data collection took place in conjunction with each other as the findings in the first two phases informed the researcher with regard to conducting further secondary research in order to become more knowledgeable about the institutions offering online mentoring and aspects of the online mentoring process requiring further exploration. The primary data collection process is discussed in the section to follow.

2.4.2 Primary research

Primary research comprises all data gathered through the researcher's own efforts, and excludes all data that existed before the beginning of the study (Struwig & Stead, 2013:82). According to Collis and Hussey (2014:343), all data created from a key central source such as interviews, surveys or focus groups is referred to as primary data. Driscoll (2011:3) notes that the eventual goal in conducting primary research is to study something new that can be approved and supported by others, while decreasing inflexible ideas during the course of study.

2.4.2.1 Primary data collection methods

There are various means available for the gathering of primary data, namely surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, experiments, action research and case studies (Quinlan, 2011:228; Struwig & Stead, 2013:89; Collis & Hussey, 2014:60, 102). All of these data collection methods are discussed in the following sections after which their respective measuring instruments will be referred to.

(a) Surveys

According to Harwell (2011:149), a survey is a suitable method if the study is quantitative in nature, and if a representative sample of a large population is required. Collis and Hussey (2014:343) affirm that quantitative data is often collected through surveys and questionnaires that are carefully established and organised to provide numerical data that can be examined statistically and produce a result that can be made relevant to some larger population. In business research, surveys are the most common method used in generating primary data (Zikmund, 2003:68). A survey can be defined as a research method where data is gathered from a sample of individuals by means of a questionnaire (Eybers, 2010:30).

In survey research, structured questions are utilised to reduce the variances in answers provided (Bryman & Bell, 2014:215). Structured questions are built founded on theory, research and/or the experience of the researcher (Struwig & Stead, 2013:90). The questions are planned so that each respondent is asked precisely the same question with the same wording (Crotty, 1998:33). This technique does not allow the researcher additional exploration, or to obtain information beyond the fixed questions posed (Struwig & Stead, 2013:90). When a survey design is to be employed, Harwell (2011:150) notes that a choice must be made between longitudinal design, in which data is gathered on a sample at different points in time, or cross sectional design, in which data is gathered at a single point in time.

Denscombe (2008:31) indicates that surveys are prevalent as they have a wide and inclusive coverage, can be completed in a short space of time at relatively low cost, lend themselves to quantitative data, and supply empirical data to emphasise tangible things that can be measured and recorded. Quinlan (2011:182) suggests using surveys particularly when the population is geographically spread. A survey can be

applied in order to determine business behaviours, attitudes and needs, and people may be asked about their beliefs, opinions, characteristics, past or present behaviour, expectations and knowledge. Quinlan (2011:182) mentions the use of the internet in survey research and notes that online surveys are becoming common.

(i) Online surveys

Struwig and Stead (2013:106) note that performing survey research on the internet has great benefits as it supplies expanded contact to diverse people and at a low cost. According to Bryman and Bell (2014:286), web-based means of data collection are accomplished by using the internet, and a distinction can be made between email surveys and web surveys. When using email surveys, the questionnaire is sent via email to the respondent and in web surveys, the respondent is provided a link to a website in order to complete a questionnaire. According to Struwig and Stead (2013:107) emails are utilised to conduct questionnaires in the same manner as conventional mail surveys. Quinlan (2011:224) affirms that respondents can also be sent a link to the questionnaire, which can be uploaded to a website, inviting them to respond.

This type of survey is inexpensive and quick to conduct as the researcher is able to send them to several users simultaneously (Struwig & Stead, 2013:107). Advantages of online surveys also include a faster return rate, unrestricted geographic coverage and automated data entry (Bryman & Bell, 2014:293). Drawbacks include diminished response rates, restrictions to an online population, a need for motivation to complete the survey, confidentiality and anonymity issues, and there is a chance that some individuals may complete the questionnaire more than once (Quinlan, 2011:224; Bryman & Bell, 2014:293). According to Bryman and Bell (2014:292), a key issue and constraint in sampling in these cases is that not everybody has access to the internet or has the technical aptitude and knowledge to manage the questionnaire online. Another feature that can be a challenge is the difficulty in accessing a sampling frame of the online population as it is controlled by internet service providers, or may be confidential. These issues have led to non-probability sampling becoming synonymous with sampling for online surveys (Bryman & Bell, 2014:292).

(b) Interviews

Denscombe (2008:232) expounds on the use of interviews for more complicated and understated issues in which a researcher needs to reach a clearer insight into, or deeper knowledge of, aspects such as people's opinions, feelings, emotions, experiences, sensitive issues and privileged information. Sekaran (2006:232) indicates that interviews permit the researcher to choose, adapt and elucidate questions, and ensure that the responses are properly comprehended, by rephrasing the questions. Kothari (2004:43) notes that interviewing is a more costly method than survey administration, because the researcher is required to be physically present, especially in face-to-face interviews. According to several authors (Struwig & Stead, 2013:89; Bryman & Bell, 2014:215) interviews can be semi-structured or unstructured.

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered. The semi-structured interview has the capacity to be easily adjusted to allow the interviewee to raise issues and explain points of relevance (Bryman & Bell, 2014:216). The interviewer creates and utilises an interview schedule, which is a list of questions and topics to be covered during the conversation – usually in a specific order (Crotty, 1998:34). In qualitative interviewing, more meaning is attached to the interviewees' viewpoint and there can be considerable deviation from the questions asked in the interview schedule (Silverman, 2010:194). The researcher wishes for rich, comprehensive answers and the interviewee may be questioned more than once, and even on several occasions. This technique permits the researcher to achieve diverse responses to defined questions, and make provision for thorough responses (Crotty, 1998:34). The interviewees are given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions' precincts.

An interview that is informal and is used for in-depth exploration of a subject of general interest, and which allows the interviewees to use their own words is referred to as an unstructured interview (Silverman, 2010:194). Struwig and Stead (2013:102) perceive the open-ended interview, also referred to as the in-depth or unstructured interview, as the most recognised form of interview in qualitative research. It does not utilise predetermined questions, as these would limit the interviewee in expressing his or her opinions or views freely (Richards & Morse, 2013:126) and, therefore, no structured interview schedule is used (Crotty, 1998:35). The questioning style is usually informal

and the vernacular and advancement of questions will differ from interview to interview (Bryman & Bell, 2014:216).

The interviewer may explain the topic to the interviewee, but not postulate guiding questions. The interviewer will not know all the questions beforehand as the interviewee plays a vital role in establishing which aspects of the topic will be covered (Richards & Morse, 2013:127). The interviewer asks questions in response to statements made by the interviewee. This requires considerable interview skills from the interviewer, who must have the capacity to formulate perceptive questions quickly, without clarifying and deciphering the interviewee's responses (Struwig & Stead, 2013:102). This interview technique can make it challenging for the interviewer to establish patterns or common themes among interviewees with varied responses (Struwig & Stead, 2013:102). Crotty (1998:36) mentions that unstructured interviews can serve as an initial stage toward the development of more organised interview schedules or surveys. However, its main advantage is that it delivers comprehensive data on the topic being explored. This type of interview also allows for the interviewee to be interviewed on multiple occasions (Richards & Morse, 2013:127). Crotty (1998:35) advises the researcher to keep a recording of the interviews and transcript the recordings at a later stage for analysis since discussions may go in unexpected directions. Interviews can occur via telephone or face-to-face (Quinlan, 2011:220). The latter will be elaborated on next.

(i) Telephone interviews

According to Beck (2005:411), telephone interviews are generally ignored in research literature and are often perceived as a less desirable alternative when compared to face-to-face interviewing. Quinlan (2011:222) affirms that the lack of visual signals in telephone interviews leads to a loss of contextual and nonverbal data, and that rapport, probing, and clarification of responses are undermined. However, Burke and Miller (2007:33) oppose this view and argue that telephone interviews permit respondents to feel comfortable and capable of disclosing sensitive information. Struwig and Stead (2013:91) disagree, warning that interviewees are commonly unwilling to provide confidential information over the phone. Bryman and Bell (2014:218) contend that telephonic interviews may produce inferior quality of data when compared to face-to-face interviews, as respondents might be less engrossed and are more likely to be

disgruntled with the time taken. It is, furthermore, a challenge for the interviewer to form the same level of accord with the participant, and it may be problematic during telephonic interviews to notice when the participants may require further information (Quinlan, 2011:222). Caution should also be exercised with questions that require long drawn-out answers, as interviewees tend to answer briefly and it is difficult to maintain their interest while answers are recorded.

Advantages of the telephone interview cover the following (Knox & Burkard, 2009:3; Quinlan, 2011:222; Babbie & Mouton, 2012:257; Struwig & Stead, 2013:91; Bryman & Bell, 2014:217):

- It is easier to manage than the personal interview, and the replies might be less influenced by, for instance, the age, class, gender or ethnicity of the interviewer, thereby eliminating bias.
- It is more cost-effective than personal interviews.
- It is faster to obtain replies as it uses economic and human resources efficiently, for instance, diminishing the need for travel, allowing more respondents to take part, and permitting applicable and expedient data collection.
- It enables interviewers to include participants from almost any geographic region, and is a more efficient and cost-effective way to depict the experiences of non-local participants.
- It allows participants greater anonymity because they can use a fabricated name (thereby not fully identify themselves) and thus be more inclined to respond without preparation.
- It allows interviewers to take comprehensive notes of an interview without making participants feel uncomfortable, and response bias may be diminished by the lack of facial expressions and the anonymity allowed by the telephonic approach.
- It provides interviewers with the opportunity to request clarification of vague responses immediately during the telephone call.

Babbie and Mouton (2012:257) suggest that telephone surveys not be used in developing countries, unless the particular population has telephones. Managing the selected sample for telephone interviews can be a problem especially in a country like South Africa where many do not have landlines (Struwig & Stead, 2013:91).

Furthermore, ownership of telephones in South Africa differs between income groups and many individuals have telephone numbers that are not listed. In addition, online cell phone directories do not include all cellphone users in a region. People without a phone are omitted (Bryman & Bell, 2014:218). All these factors may result in a final sample that is not representative of the population. Struwig and Stead (2013:91) further contend that the response rate of telephone surveys is comparatively low.

(ii) Face-to-face interviews

In face-to-face interviews, the interviewer questions the interviewee face-to-face (Crotti, 2013:41). Campbell and Stanley (2006:54) note that during face-to-face interviews communication regarding time and place occur simultaneously. Potential interviewees must be presented with a reason for the research, in order to secure their participation and time commitment (Bryman & Bell, 2014:219). According to Quinlan (2011:221), personal interviews are an expensive means of gathering data, particularly if the study is a large one. Interviewers have to be skilled to perform the interviews and the training can be time-consuming and expensive. Bryman and Bell (2014:219) underline both the importance of the interviewer building rapport with the interviewee in order to achieve maximum involvement in the interview, and the delivery of clear guidelines to the interviewer regarding how to conduct the interview. Mann (2005:45) urges the interviewer to focus on the questions to be asked as well as the answers provided, but suggests that the interviewer may have to continuously rephrase questions due to the interactive communication with the interviewee. Bryman and Bell (2014:220) furthermore advise that the order of questions through the interview should not be changed, as this can result in questions being omitted accidentally. Bryman and Bell (2014:221) also indicate that in some cases, the participants may not offer a thorough answer and may have to be probed and encouraged to provide more information.

Day (2006:91) recommends securing the consent of the interviewee to utilise a voice recorder when conducting face-to-face interviews since more precise information can be obtained this way when compared to handwritten notes. However, Cresswell (2008:59) warns that recording the interview may lead to the danger of not taking notes during it. Patton (2006:76) and Warren (2006:87) argue that taking notes during interviews is vital for the interviewer even if he or she is using a recorder as it

guarantees that all questions have been answered, and can act as a substitute should the recorder be faulty, or should the interviewer not perform the interview optimally.

Features such as voice, intonation and body language of the interviewee supply the researcher with additional information (Campbell & Stanley, 2006:54). Nachmais and Nachmais (2008:222) posit that the implication of social signals is subject to the kind of information the interviewer wants to secure. Harding (2013:51) mentions that the physical presence of both the interviewer and interviewee can distract an interviewer when endeavouring to lead the interviewee in a particular direction. This can, however, be mitigated by using an interview etiquette and being aware of this specific problem.

Selecting who should be included in the sample, and where the interviews take place, can be challenging (Struwig & Stead, 2013:90). Crotty (1998:41) cautions by noting that every location and geographic area has its own features. These features may differ from the target population and generate a non-representative sample. Personal interviews typically take a long time from the start of fieldwork to the completion of the project. If urgent data is required, this method is not suggested (Struwig & Stead, 2013:90).

Nachmais and Nachmais (2008:225) state that face-to-face interviews are essential in data collection since answers are unconstrained due to there being no substantial time delay between questions and answers. Personal interviews offer good response rates, as the interviewer is often able to encourage individuals to take part in the research. Crotty (1998:41) further notes that lengthier interviews may be tolerated due to interviewees being more willing to talk longer face-to-face, than on the phone. Researchers believe that personal interviews are a more accurate source of information than mail questionnaires and telephone interviews. The physical presence of the interviewer is likely to have a positive influence on the accuracy of the data gained (Struwig & Stead, 2013:90).

(c) Observations

According to Quinlan (2011:221), observation is a data collection method that can be used to record the observations of an incidence. Sekaran (2006:34) views observations as the view and outlook of the researcher on the current scenario of the

research setting. Observations can be performed in a structured, semi-structured or unstructured manner. Bryman and Bell (2014:258) refer to structured observation as a means for methodically noting the behaviour of individuals according to a schedule of categories and perceive it as a quantitative method since it follows an organised layout. Quinlan (2011:262) affirms that quantitative data is generated when highly-organised observation schedules are utilised. Crotty (1998:20) refers to two general kinds of observation:

- direct observations, where people are conscious that the researcher is observing them; and
- unobtrusive observations, which involve any means of studying behaviours where individuals are not conscious that they are being observed.

Quinlan (2011:262) notes that qualitative data is created when semi-structured or unstructured observation schedules are utilised. Struwig and Stead (2013:104) state that observation in qualitative research takes place in a real life setting. Cooper and Schindler (2008:82) affirm that with observation, data is gathered at the location of the individual, providing further insight into the problem investigated. Observation can include one researcher, or a team of researchers. The qualitative researcher does not construct the setting in any way and looks for minute characteristics of behaviour (Struwig & Stead, 2013:104). Bryman and Bell (2014:260) raise concern over observation as a data gathering method, suggesting that it lacks objectivity because it depends on the opinion of the researcher or observer. Struwig and Stead (2013:104) confirm that some of the challenges presented by observational techniques include trustworthiness, reliability and ethics. Trustworthiness is a specific issue for a single observer as there is no one else to verify and confirm his or her perception of what transpires, which lead to bias (Struwig & Stead, 2013:104). Reliability concerns occur when people in a specific setting are observed, as it is not clear whether or not the event was acted or staged (Struwig & Stead, 2013:104). In addition, there are ethical issues regarding the observation of people. Kothari (2004:118) argues that the observation method is exposed to consistency and legitimacy checks. Other disadvantages noted are the following: (Struwig & Stead, 2013:100):

- It is very challenging to observe characteristics such as attitude, motivating factors and intention.

- Personal and intimate activities cannot be witnessed.
- If people are conscious that their actions are being observed, they frequently behave differently.
- Observation is very time-consuming and costly.
- Some people feel that the observation method is an invasion of privacy.

A major benefit of this method, however, is that the researcher need not rely on the readiness and capability of respondents to report data accurately (Struwig & Stead, 2013:100).

(d) Focus groups

In the case of focus groups, which are typically used in qualitative research, interviews are conducted with a group of participants at the same time. The researcher will attempt to provide a relatively informal setting in which to extract the participants' opinions and perspectives on the research subjects (Bryman & Bell, 2014:215). Quinlan (2011:224) refers to the fact that the group typically meets around a table as the focus group setting aids with securing equal involvement from all members. Struwig and Stead (2013:102) mention that a focus group study is an organised conversation to obtain probable information on a subject in a non-judgemental, secure and accepting environment, and that these discussions allow the participants to debate issues considered to be important. Focus groups are often used in management science to obtain a specific group's attitudes or opinions toward an advertised product. Crotty (1998:37) suggests that focus groups be used to:

- investigate new research areas and sensitive topics;
- explore a subject that does not allow observational methods, for example attitudes and decision-making;
- collect a concentrated set of observations in a short space of time; and
- establish viewpoints and experiences from groups of people who might otherwise be marginalised.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2008:69), a focus group is a qualitative research tool whereby a collection of individuals is interrogated on their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes with regard to a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea,

or packaging. In support of this view, Bryman and Bell (2014:233) concede that focus group interview questions are asked in a cooperative group setting where participants debate the responses to questions openly with other members of the group. Lindlof and Taylor (2008:71) suggest that a group discussion yields rich data and insights that would otherwise be less likely to be found without the collaboration found in a group setting. It seems that a focus group discussion stimulates memories, ideas, and experiences which aid in collecting rich data, but Bryman and Bell (2014:238) warn that they can also cause uneasiness among participants particularly when details of private lives need to be exposed. Bryman and Bell (2014:233) furthermore indicate that focus groups may necessitate a large extent of resources to arrange, are difficult to organise, and the sessions need to be recorded and probably transcribed.

(e) Experiments

Quinlan (2011:228) explains that experiments implicate the manipulation of independent variables to establish their effect on a dependent variable. It is an empirical investigation under controlled conditions, designed to examine the properties and relationships between specific factors. The point of conducting an experiment is to isolate individual factors and observe their effect in detail. Bryman and Bell (2014:101) identify two types of experiments – laboratory experiments and field experiments. A laboratory experiment takes place in a laboratory or artificial setting, whereas a field experiment occurs in a real life setting. Denscombe (2008:49) observes that experiments necessitate the identification of causal factors, manipulation of significant variables through controls, and empirical observation and measurement. Struwig and Stead (2013:8) affirm the use of experiments to report on research questions relating to causality, and the extent to which a group of variables (independent variables) impact on other variables (dependent variables). The employment of experiments depends on the research question and the degree to which the researcher can regulate the variables. According to Babbie and Mouton (2012:208), experiments can be utilised for hypothesis testing, and in the study of small group communication.

(f) Action research

Action research is a method in which the researcher is a participant, and collaborates with the participant's business to establish a problem and develop a resolution based on the analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2014:256). According to Quinlan (2011:183), action

research is utilised to provide change, improvement and development in the quality of a business. Action research is understood to be experiments based on real problems within a business environment and which are designed to assist in their solution (Bryman & Bell, 2014:256). According to Crotty (1998:11), this method follows a sequence whereby the comprehension of a problem is developed and some plans are created as an intervention strategy. The intervention strategy is carried out, during which time observations are noted for improvement. New intervention strategies are carried out again and the process repeats itself, continuing until an adequate understanding of the problem is achieved. It is intended to create a deeper understanding of a particular situation. Struwig and Stead (2013:14) note that since participants and the researcher are involved in choices regarding the research process and progress, this research is often used to empower underprivileged communities. Public fairness is an important guiding principle.

(g) Case studies

When a case study method is utilised the researcher studies one, or a few cases and engages in an in-depth examination of the case(s) (Quinlan, 2011:225). According to Bryman and Bell (2014:117) a case can be a single business, a single location, a single event or an individual. Struwig and Stead (2013:7) state that case studies are not habitually employed in quantitative research, due to the fact that they necessitate a concentrated examination of a relatively small number of cases. Quinlan (2011:182), however, contends that a case study methodology can pull from quantitative or qualitative data, or a combination of both. Bryman and Bell (2014:110) note that proponents of a case study design often prefer qualitative methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviewing, because they help to generate a rigorous and comprehensive examination of the case. Bryman and Bell (2014:113) furthermore assert that case studies can be related to both theory creation and theory testing, which assists in making generalisations from the case study.

The preceding sections discussed different primary data collection methods and it is evident that there are a wide number of them available to the researcher. Primary data collection methods include surveys, interviews, observations, focus groups, experiments, action research and case studies. The techniques that provide the most useful and appropriate data to the research questions are the methods that should be

used. The measurement instruments that can be used for data collection are presented next.

2.4.2.2 Measuring instruments for data collection

The use of interview schedules and questionnaires will be discussed next.

(a) Interview schedules

According to Quinlan (2011:303), an interview schedule is the list of questions to be asked regarding the points or issues needing to be discussed through an interview or a series of interviews. Interview schedules provide interviewees the chance to express themselves with regard to the specific aspect being explored, and deliver an open approach to the interview (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008:1). Unlike an unstructured interview schedule, a semi-structured interview schedule is primed in advance, and provides a construct for the interview (McIntosh & Morse, 2015:4). The significance, for the interviewees, of the issue being investigated – and their personal experience and understanding of it – are permitted to develop in the interviews through the semi-structured interview schedule design (Harrel & Bradley, 2009:27). Since a semi-interview guide provides a clear set of instructions for interviewers, and clear, reliable, comparable qualitative data is provided, many researchers like to use it because questions can be prepared ahead of time. This allows the interviewer to be equipped and appear competent during the interview (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008:1).

(b) Questionnaire

Primary data can be gathered by employing a survey questionnaire, which is an established key research data collection strategy used to gather, analyse and interpret the views of a collection of people from a target population (Sincero, 2012:1). Probably the most noticeable means of survey is a questionnaire sent via post to the respondent, or via the internet as an email (Bryman & Bell, 2014:191). The design of a questionnaire is critical to ensure that the correct research questions are asked, and that accurate and appropriate data for statistical analysis is collected. The essential aspects focused on when building the questionnaire, are the question content and terminology, sequence of questions, and appearance and layout of the questionnaire (Struwig & Stead, 2013:93). The unique qualities of self-administered questionnaires are that,

because of its layout, data can be gathered more efficiently in terms of research time, energy and costs, and can be responded to without assistance (Sekaran, 2006:222). Mugenda and Mugenda (2010:32) outline some significant problems associated with the use of questionnaires. These include the following:

- Subject to the manner in which they are administered, there is a chance of low response rate, which impacts on the legitimacy of the findings.
- The questionnaires cannot be directed at illiterate people.
- The questionnaire does not capture information outside the bounds of the structured items.

Non-response from certain members of a sample who refuse to take part or cannot be contacted can also impact on the results, especially those relating to demographics (Bryman & Bell, 2014:171). Struwig and Stead (2013:125) caution against non-response in terms of questionnaires not being completed satisfactorily by respondents. According to Popper (2004:88), the main drawback of self-administered means of data collection is the lack of control over the response rate. Creswell (2008:84) argues that once the questionnaire has been sent to the respondent, not much can be done to ensure the return thereof. Several authors (Creswell, 2008:45,49; Day, 2006:77; Struwig & Stead, 2013:106) suggest ways of increasing the response rate of self-administered questionnaires, such as:

- compilation of a professional questionnaire with clear instructions and providing sufficient writing space;
- provision of a monetary incentive, small gift, or charitable donation;
- undertaking to provide a copy of the results of the study; and
- assurance that the survey is easy to complete by making it relatively short, with simple questions (for example, not taking more than fifteen minutes to complete).

As previously alluded to, conducting survey research via the internet has the benefit of extensive access to a variety of people in a cost-effective way, but it is beset by low response rates. Struwig and Stead (2013:106) suggest that, in the case of an online questionnaire, it must be explicitly constructed for online management and safeguards must be put in place to guarantee that the instrument cannot be changed in any way.

The data collection methods and measuring instruments selected for the study are discussed next.

2.4.2.3 Data collection methods and measuring instruments chosen for the study

This study incorporated two different data collection research approaches: qualitative – in the form of a semi-structured interview schedules during phases one and two – and quantitative – in the form of a structured self-administered online questionnaire during phase three.

(a) Phase one

The first phase of the research focused on a group of six female employees and/or small business entrepreneurs (mentees) who had been recently (2016) engaged in online mentoring in Africa. Five SA mentors (two males) who had recently (2016) been involved in online mentoring were also interviewed during this phase. The semi-structured interview schedule (see Annexure 1) for the first phase explored: the purpose of online mentoring involvement for both mentee and mentor; how the online mentoring process evolved, its challenges; and what contributes towards effective online mentoring.

Female employee mentees provided information relating to their experience of online mentoring as a transformative tool for their career development, while female small business entrepreneurs provided information on their experience of online mentoring as a transformative tool for small business development. In-depth conversational interviews were conducted with the individuals who had all recently (2016) engaged in online mentoring relationships, giving an authentic account of the experiences with online mentoring in Africa. The approach followed in the study during the first phase consisted of making initial contact telephonically with the prospective participants to obtain permission for inclusion in the study and to obtain and/or confirm contact details. A covering letter explaining the purpose of the research study and confirmation of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the interview schedule, was then sent to the participants by email and was followed up with a telephone call to confirm receipt. An appointment was arranged for either face-to-face or telephonic interviews to take place. Sending interview schedules by email made the interview process quite easy,

as all participants had a copy of the interview schedule prior to the interviews. During this phase only four personal interviews were conducted and the remaining seven participants returned the completed interview schedules via email. Follow-up interviews were conducted telephonically as some interviewees highlighted issues in their responses which resulted in the need to obtain responses from the other participants on specific issues. If clarity on some issues was needed, participants were telephoned to obtain the necessary information.

(b) Phase two

During the second qualitative phase the same semi-structured interview schedule (see Annexure 1) was used for the three online mentoring field specialists to explore: the reasons for utilising online mentoring; the online mentoring process; challenges associated with online mentoring; and the enabling conditions for effective online mentoring in South Africa. This information served as confirmation of the information received from the mentors and mentees as the challenges might have been perceived challenges or not practical for online mentoring implementation.

The approach followed in the study during the second phase consisted of making initial contact telephonically with the online mentoring field specialists to identify the relevant participants, and permission was obtained to include them in the study. Contact details were confirmed and recorded. A covering letter explaining the purpose of the research study and confirmation of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the interview schedule, was then sent to the participants by email and was followed up with a telephone call to confirm receipt. An appointment was arranged for either face-to-face or telephonic interviews to take place. Sending interview schedules by email made the interview process quite easy, as all participants had a copy of the interview schedule prior to the interviews. During this phase, one of the two SA participants completed the interview schedule and returned it by email; the other interview was conducted in a face-to-face manner. The USA participant was also interviewed in a face-to-face manner. If clarity was needed on some issues, or information was deemed incomplete, the participants were telephoned to complete any outstanding information.

After completion of the interview schedules and the acquiring of supporting documents (such as background information on the businesses and companies where the

interviewees' are employed, as well as their respective curriculum vitae) during phases one and two of the study, the researcher re-typed the data using the exact words and language recorded by the participants. Each transcript was assigned a letter of the alphabet to ensure that the participants could not be identified, and all mentors and mentees were subsequently referred to using the assigned letter, for example, Mentor A, Mentee A or online mentoring field specialist A.

(c) Phase three

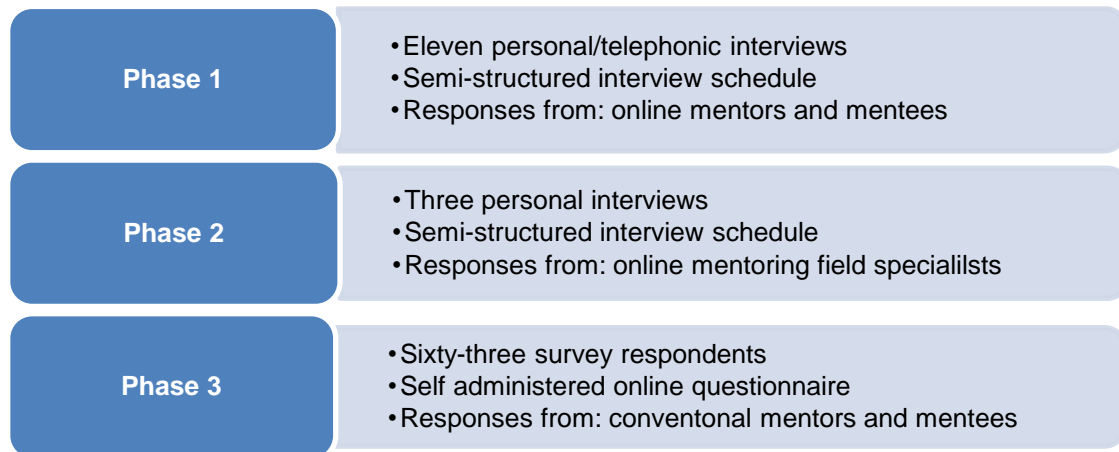
The data collection methods used in the first and second phase of the study allowed for the specification of construct domains and the generation of sample items for new constructs during the questionnaire development in the quantitative (third) phase of the research. A structured, self-administered questionnaire (see Annexure 2) was compiled for the data-gathering in line with modern research literature since most questionnaire surveys tend to be self-administered. Data collection was achieved through email distribution of a covering letter containing a link to the online web-based questionnaire. The Information and Communication Technology (ITC) Department at the Nelson Mandela University assisted with the creation of the online survey by means of Lime Survey. Lime Survey facilitates the creation and administering of online surveys as well as the automatic collection and collation of survey responses. This type of survey is easy, cheap and fast to conduct as the researcher is able to send surveys to multiple users at the same time. The online survey allowed the respondent to click buttons and boxes, fill in text boxes, and eventually submit the information with the click of a button.

The self-administered questionnaire consisted of a cover letter and five sections. The covering letter provided details regarding the purpose of the study and the type of information sought. Aspects such as confidentiality and anonymity were addressed. Likert scale questions were designed for Section B to examine how strongly respondents agree or disagree with statements on a five-point scale; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) in Section B of the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the following five sections:

- Section A canvassed information on the role of the respondent in the mentoring process, which online method(s) of communication respondents preferred to use and the type of support respondents believe online mentoring should provide.
- Section B contained 78 Likert-style statements designed to establish what respondents would regard as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring and what the mentee achievements would be as a result of the online mentoring process.
- Section C solicited the generic demographic information from all the respondents relating to gender, age, highest education level, home language spoken, management qualifications, ethnic affiliation and years working experience.
- Section D requested specific demographic information from the employee respondents such as the position in the business, function employed in, number of employees in the business and the employment sector.
- Section E sought specific demographic information of business-owner respondents such as whether or not it was a family business, number of years business has been in existence, number of employees, business activity engaged in, business sector, area that business premises are situated in and the target market of the business.

The online survey was opened on 25 May 2016 and respondents were invited to participate. Numerous reminder emails were sent to respondents to complete the online survey, which resulted in a total of 63 completed questionnaires. The online survey closed on 30 October. Figure 2.6 provides a summary of the data collection procedures followed and the measuring instruments used in the current study.

Figure 2.6: Summary of the data collection procedure and measuring instruments



Source: Researcher's own compilation

It is evident from Figure 2.6 that the current study was conducted in three phases and that a mixed method research approach was followed, since both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were employed. Phases one and two of the research employed the same semi-structured interview schedule and a self-administered online questionnaire was employed for phase three. The following section reviews data analysis for quantitative and qualitative research approaches that can be followed.

2.4.3 Data analysis

With data analysis it is vital to note that the analysis and interpretation of data differs for qualitative and quantitative research methods (Struwig & Stead, 2013:155). Data analysis for qualitative studies as pertaining to this study will be discussed first, after which data analysis for quantitative studies will be discussed to fit the research design utilised in this study.

2.4.3.1 Qualitative data analysis

It is acknowledged that a number of forms of phenomenological research data analysis approaches can be seen in literature and include, amongst others, case studies, content analysis, the constant comparative method, and grounded theory (Quinlan, 2011:182-185; Bryman & Bell, 2014:344-354) – all of which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

(a) Case studies

Case studies can be regarded as a data collection method as well as a data analysis method. Case studies are widely used in business research and when a qualitative research design is preferred. A case study is a thorough and rigorous analysis of a solitary case and can be extended to include the study of more cases for comparative purposes (Bryman & Bell, 2014:374). Crotty (1998:12) mentions that a case study is an in-depth examination of a certain research problem rather than a comprehensive statistical survey. According to Denscombe (2008:35), case studies concentrate on one (or just a few) instances of a specific issue to provide a complete account of events, relationships, experiences or processes taking place in that particular instance. According to Crotty (1998:12), a case study is a valuable method to use when not much is known about an issue and investigation is required.

Bryman and Bell (2014:357) note that since researchers utilising this method make use of a broad variety of sources of evidence, including various types of written and visual documents, archival records, interviews, filed notes and recordings of direct observations and participant observations, it necessitates – according to Yin (2011:118) – creating a well-organised database, which should comprise all the data gathered including other quantitative summaries and narratives completed by the researcher after the conclusion of each case.

In this study the biographical profiles of the mentors and mentees were recorded as case studies so as to provide a detailed background of the participant, the reason for undergoing online mentoring and the intended outcome. The case studies made it easier to understand the significance of the mentees' and mentors' experiences and why they were selected as participants, and regarded as sources to provide valuable input. The case studies furthermore assisted in placing the information received from participants within the specific context of each mentor/mentee in terms of: why mentees have undergone online mentoring (purpose), or why mentors are engaging in online mentoring; how the online mentoring process evolved; what its challenges are; and what the participants perceive to contribute towards effective online mentoring.

(b) Content analysis

Bryman and Bell (2014:354) explain that content analysis within qualitative research concentrates on the content, underlying themes and significance of text. Quinlan (2011:226) mentions that content analysis refers to the examination of some feature of a specific type of communication. Bryman and Bell (2014:305) contend that in the use of content analysis, caution must be taken that it does not result in a disintegration of data so that the account and flow of what people say is absent. Babbie and Mouton (2012:388) assert that content analysis is essentially a coding application: they furthermore point to the benefit of using content analysis in terms of its economy of both time and money. As long as the researcher has access to the information to be coded, a content analysis can be performed. In the analysis of content, two of the most widely used models to plan the data analysis process is Creswell's (2014:196–200) six-step model and Tesch's (1992:142-145) eight-step model. Creswell's (2014:196) model consists of interrelated steps and do not necessarily follow in the order they are given, namely:

- Organise and formulate the data for analysis by recording interviews, and sort and arrange data if different sources of information are utilised.
- Read through all data to get an overall sense of the information and, possibly, its overall importance, and write down general ideas about the data.
- Code the data by organising it into themes of information, and write a word that embodies a theme in the margin.
- Give detailed accounts of the setting or the people involved, as well as descriptions of the themes for analysis.
- Present the outcomes of the analysis in a narrative passage to deliver the findings of the analysis, possibly including a chronology of events, a comprehensive discussion of several themes or a discussion of connecting themes.
- Interpret the results of the analysis.

Tesch (1992:142), on the other hand, outlines an eight-step analysis process:

- Read carefully through all records to gain a sense of all the information and compose ideas as they come to mind.

- Select one interview schedule and read through it methodically to comprehend the interview and the underlying significance in the information, making notes as thoughts come to mind.
- Complete the same process for all interview schedules and compare all themes and similar, group themes together in three columns with headings indicating major themes, unique themes and unrelated themes.
- Allocate codes to the themes and code the appropriate sections in the interview schedules, and check data for new, developing themes or codes.
- Identify the most expressive words for themes while endeavouring to reduce the sub themes by combining those related to each other.
- Finalise the coding abbreviations for each theme/s and alphabetise the codes.
- Combine sub themes belonging to each primary theme and perform an initial analysis on each sub theme to discard extraneous data.
- Recode existing data where needed and refine the structure of the examined data.

Tesch's eight-step process was followed in this study to analyse the content of the semi-structured interviews in phases one and two. The interviews in phase one and two – with the selected online mentors and mentees and online mentoring field specialists – were examined using content analysis to develop a better understanding of the online mentoring environment. It also assisted in identification of the themes and sub themes and the issues covered in each. The data analysis of these two phases, as well as the literature review, informed the content of the close-ended structured Likert scale statements in the self-administered questionnaire for phase three.

(c) Constant comparative method

According to Struwig and Stead (2013:179) constant comparative analysis, as a qualitative data analysis technique, is used when data is inductively examined and theories are not set at the start of the research. The constant comparative method is utilised to develop concepts from the data by coding and analysing it simultaneously (Kolb, 2012:83). The method involves exploring likenesses and differences in the data gathered (Quinlan, 2011:428). Every time a passage is chosen it is texted and coded, and allows for comparison with all the passages previously coded. This guarantees

that coding is consistent (Crotty, 1998:54). This process is repeated until core themes are identified, and these core themes become the foundation for emerging theory. Struwig and Stead (2013:180) note that after this procedure has been followed, an audit can be generated, which will allow other researchers to check the process followed and conclude if reliable and valid interpretations have been made.

In this present study, the constant comparative data analysis technique was used. The findings of the online mentors, mentees and online mentoring field specialists were compared to determine differences and similarities amongst institutions offering online mentoring, as well as global versus SA online mentoring challenges.

(d) Grounded theory

Bryman and Bell (2014:378) describe grounded theory as the examination of qualitative data that attempts to create or ascertain a theory from the collected data, or to adapt or extend the existing theory. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:176), grounded theory analysis necessitates that the interview questions are revised based on the results of the findings of the previous interviews. Quinlan (2011:427) describes grounded theory as a systematic inductive approach to developing theory, with the main aim to determine what is happening in relation to the research issue and to build theory about that, using the data gathered on or about the issue. Quinlan (2011:428) further notes that it is vital to be theoretically sensitive and capable of conceptualising the patterns that materialise from data as it is important to move from description to conceptualisation to development of theory. The analysis of results takes place concurrently with the research data gathering process (Henning *et al.*, 2004:115). Struwig and Stead (2013:345) agree and state that data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and regularly refer back to one another.

The grounded theory technique was also used for the first two qualitative phases of the study. Findings from the interviews with five mentors, six mentees and three online mentoring field specialists, were compared as each interview took place. For phase one, as new information became available the researcher went back to the mentors and the mentees to probe them on the issue. The same process was followed for phase two with the online mentoring field specialists, whereby the institutions' websites were used to verify information provided and, if not found, went back to participants to probe

for further information. The data collection and analysis processes informed one another, and the analysis became a higher-level synthesis of the data gathered. All observations were recorded during the interview process and detailed memos were compiled based on these observations. Where participants tended to provide more information than required, the researcher attempted to put the information in context to ensure that data collected was relevant to the topic under investigation, probing further to establish if it was applicable to other participants.

From the above it can be observed that several data analysis methods (case study, content analysis, constant comparative method and grounded theory) were utilised for the first two phases of the research, which followed a qualitative research approach to ensure a deeper analysis of the collected data. Data analysis for studies, following a quantitative research approach, will be presented next.

2.4.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

Various quantitative data analysis methods exist such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Aaker *et al.*, 2007:444; Wiid & Diggins, 2009:240), which will be briefly referred to next.

(a) Descriptive statistics

According to Struwig and Stead (2013:165) descriptive statistics offer summaries of data and the purpose of these summaries is to supply a complete picture of a large amount of data. Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2014:318) view descriptive statistics as related with percentages and the measurement of fundamental tendencies such as mode, median and mean, and standard deviations from the mean. Percentages within research show the significance of variables within the study and indicate the relative relationships between variables (Wiid & Diggins, 2009:242). The mode is the most frequently occurring score; the median is the score that has an equal number of scores above and below it; and the mean is the average score (Quinlan, 2011:400). The standard deviation measures the deviation of each score from the mean and then averages the deviations (Struwig & Stead, 2013:165).

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse and describe the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring and intended mentee benefits are

summarised, described and presented in the form of percentages, means and standard deviations in Chapter 7 for phase three.

(b) Inferential statistics

With inferential statistics the researcher endeavours to arrive at conclusions that spread beyond the data (Quinlan, 2011:399). Inferential statistics can be applied to deduce what the total population might think or do, based on the study of a sample of the population. Several inferential statistical methods exist, namely (Quinlan, 2011:401):

- correlation tests which measure the strength of association between two variables;
- regression analysis which approximates the relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables;
- analysis of variance (ANOVA) which studies significant differences among means; and
- T-tests, which are utilised to decide whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other.

Inferential statistics were conducted to analyse the data. Pearson product moment correlations were conducted to determine whether correlations exist between variables and a Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if there are relationships between the online mentoring enablers and mentee achievements. How trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the research findings were ensured, is described in the following section.

2.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS, VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The issues of validity and reliability are engaged differently in qualitative and quantitative research. Generally, qualitative researchers are concerned with the trustworthiness of the data and research findings whereas quantitative researchers are concerned with the soundness and reliability of the research findings (Quinlan, 2011:306). How this research study ensured qualitative research trustworthiness of the findings for phases one and two, is next presented.

2.5.1 Trustworthiness of the qualitative research findings

In qualitative research, quality is established by ensuring trustworthiness of the research, which relates to the impartiality of its findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:277). Trustworthiness relates to the extent to which the research can be depended upon and believed (Struwig & Stead, 2013:136). Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2012:277), state that qualitative researchers can use the subsequent four suppositions to precisely reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm: credibility, dependability conformability and transferability. These suppositions are discussed next.

2.5.1.1 Credibility

Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility in qualitative research can be defined as the degree to which the data and the data analysis can be considered believable and trustworthy (Struwig & Stead, 2014:137). According to Yin (2011:19), the objective of building credibility is that qualitative research is performed in a publicly accessible manner and that the research processes are transparent. All qualitative research procedures must be described and documented so that other people can review and try to understand them. All data needs to be available for inspection too. The general idea is that others should be able to scrutinise the work and the evidence used to support the findings and conclusions. A meticulous credibility process can be established in the quantitative inquiry by implementing the following strategies (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:277; Anney, 2014:276):

- prolonging the engagement in the participants' world while performing the research;
- using co-worker questioning to assist in providing analysis guidance;
- triangulation of various data sources, or obtaining data from several participants to verify the evidence obtained;
- allowing participants to check and appraise the data and interpretation thereof, and suggest changes; and
- adequate documenting and recording of the findings.

In this study, the mentors supplied the names of possible mentees. The mentors' details could be checked on the institutions website or via LinkedIn to ensure that they

were indeed engaged in online mentoring. The information obtained from the mentee could be compared to those obtained from mentors as the same questions were asked of both groups to ensure data triangulation. The information provided by the online mentoring field specialists was corroborated through the websites of the institutions. Regular discussions were held with the research supervisor to provide analysis guidance. Follow-up meetings were arranged, emails were sent and telephone calls made to discuss the interpretation of the data with the participants. By keeping all audio records, notes, interview schedules, transcripts and memos to create an audit trail, credibility of the research findings was further ensured.

2.5.1.2 Dependability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2012:276), dependability is equivalent to the idea of reliability in quantitative research. It refers to the fact that the research procedure should be systematic, rigorous and well documented (Quinlan, 2011:307). Struwig and Stead (2013:137) mention that the findings of the qualitative research should be constant and reliable. Dependability is the degree to which research findings can be repeated with similar subjects in similar settings and it is argued by Babbie and Mouton (2012:276) that a demonstration of credibility in research is adequate to establish the presence of dependability. In qualitative research it is challenging to confirm dependability, since human behaviour is not static and is contextual, changing and reliant on various influencing factors. According to Guba (1998), as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2012:278), dependability can be accomplished by generating an audit trail and reporting the research process in detail. Quinlan (2011:307) advises the qualitative researcher to document, explain and justify every choice made in the research project. Anney (2014:278) affirms that dependability is proven by using an audit trail and furthermore recommends a code-re-code strategy where the researcher codes the same data twice to see if the results remain the same.

The data in phase one of this study was coded based on the field in which the mentees are employed or operate their businesses; and the purpose for which the mentee has engaged in online mentoring, for example, career or business development. The same approach was followed for the mentors and online mentoring field specialists. The researcher placed the findings in the context of these mentioned issues as it was recognised that this may have influenced the participants' responses. For this reason,

the data was coded twice to see if the results were the same. Care was taken to ensure that the steps followed in the two qualitative phases of the study were logical, traceable, and clearly documented by giving a detailed account of the research process and creation of an audit trail.

2.5.1.3 Confirmability

According to Struwig and Stead (2013:137), confirmability relates to whether the research is affirmed by other data sources. Yin (2011:295) notes that confirmability refers to the notion of objectivity and whether the research can be affirmed or verified by others, and that steps must be taken to guarantee that the findings are the consequence of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. To achieve confirmability, Anney (2014:279) suggests the use of a reflexive journal where the researcher documents personal thoughts in relation to the study to offer evidence that the researcher did not merely find out what he or she set out to find.

During this study the researcher thus continuously asked whether the data helped to confirm the general findings by providing detailed information and background on the theory behind the study (literature review confirmation). The intention during the interpretation process was not to generalise findings to a population, but to identify accepted principles and trends related to online mentoring. It also required the researcher to remain aware of individual subjectivity or bias which may have been present. Here too, the researcher archived all collected data (voice recordings, transcriptions, written notes, themes that were developed, covering letters and interview schedules used) so that it could be made available should the findings be challenged.

2.5.1.4 Transferability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2012:276) transferability is analogous to the concept of external reliability in quantitative research. Struwig and Stead (2013:137) state that it should be probed about whether the findings of the study would be advantageous in similar environments to that of the study and thus refer to generalisability. According to Guba (1984), as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2012:277), transferability of qualitative studies can be guaranteed if the researcher gathers rich descriptive data, permitting

comparison of the context to other possible contexts to which transfer might be contemplated, and produces an in-depth account of the context in order to make a judgment about it fitting in with other possible contexts.

A researcher can ensure transferability through sufficient discussion of the sample and context (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:277). Anney (2014:278) recommends the use of purposive sampling as it helps to focus on participants who are educated about the issues under examination and it provides greater in-depth findings than other sampling methods, which is in line with the qualitative paradigm. The researcher is able to refer back to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis has been guided by concepts and previous research. By doing this the theoretical parameters of the research can be indicated. Quinlan (2011:307) affirms that transferability can be achieved by supplying a comprehensive and rich description of the setting in order to provide adequate information for assessing the applicability of the findings in other settings.

In this study a detailed description of the research was provided and participants in phases one and two of the research were selected purposefully, which facilitated the transferability of the inquiry in this study. The compilation of case studies for each of the mentors, mentees and online mentoring field specialists provided a good summary of the setting and thus made transferability possible, for instance, judging whether the findings from one mentoring programme were similar to another, or whether the findings from one mentee were similar to other mentees from the same programme. The fact that the results of the qualitative findings were used to compile a structured questionnaire to be tested quantitatively, further made transferability of the findings possible.

From the preceding sections it transpired that the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings can be established by using the following four qualitative suppositions: credibility (analogues to internal validity), dependability (analogues to reliability), conformability (analogues to objectivity), and transferability (analogues to external validity). The trustworthiness of the research findings of phases one and two of this qualitative inquiry was strengthened by addressing these matters. The validity

and reliability of the quantitative research instrument used in phase three of the research study will be presented in the following section.

2.5.2 Validity and reliability of the quantitative research instrument

Validity and reliability tests are generally associated with the theoretical paradigm of positivism, and the reason for testing for validity and reliability is to assess the internal consistency of the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2014:39). The computer programme Statistica 12 was used to conduct validity and reliability testing. How validity of the quantitative research instrument was ensured, is referred to next.

2.5.2.1 Validity

A research instrument is perceived to be valid if it measures what it is meant to measure (Quinlan, 2011:335). An instrument must have a satisfactory reliability coefficient before its scores can be valid (Struwig & Stead, 2013:145). Means of establishing validity are face validity, content validity and construct validity.

(a) Face validity

Face validity relates to a situation where questions are scrutinised to determine their association with the subject under discussion, and to guarantee the appropriateness of questions (Struwig & Stead, 2013:146). According to Nachmais and Nachmais (2008:67), face validity is the degree to which a test is subjectively perceived as embracing the concept it intends to measure. Babbie and Mouton (2012:642) mention that face validity refers to the quality of an indicator that makes it seem to be a satisfactory measure of some variable. Bryman and Bell (2014:38) concede that establishing face validity is a fundamentally intuitive practice. Quinlan (2011:336) suggests that the face validity of a data-measuring instrument can be enhanced by asking knowledgeable individuals to assess whether or not the instrument is valid. It refers to the transparency or relevance of a test as it appears to pilot respondents.

Five academic global experts in the field, identified as being able to provide valuable input in reviewing the structured questionnaire, were asked to provide input to ensure face validity. These experts attended the Australian Centre for Entrepreneurship Exchange (ACERE) conference in Australia during February 2016. The five experts commented on the way the survey questions (statements) were phrased and on the

relevance of the questions to the study. Based on their suggestions the questionnaire was reviewed.

(b) Content validity

Content validity is associated with face validity and measures the degree to which measurement scales supply acceptable coverage of the investigative questions (Struwig & Stead, 2013:146). Content validity refers to the degree to which a measure reflects the theoretical content of the construct being measured (Quinlan, 2011:335;). Content validity has been ensured as, in addition to the statements in the questionnaire being informed by the results of the qualitative findings, it was also in some information obtained in the literature review on online mentoring.

(c) Construct validity

According to Struwig and Stead (2013:149) construct validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure. In addition, Bryman and Bell (2014:39) describe construct validity as the suitability of inferences made on the foundation of observations or measurements (often test scores), specifically whether a test measures the intended construct. Similar views are expressed by Quinlan (2011:336), who argues that researchers endeavour to establish construct validity by demonstrating how all the indicators are consistent with each other and with the issue being examined.

Construct validity was ensured by utilising an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to extract and test the validity of the constructs and items in the structured questionnaire. An EFA allows the researcher to choose a smaller number of standard items, which have been selected from a larger group of items from the research study (Burns & Burns, 2008:444). The items are selected when they load onto the underlying factor, which is commonly known as factor loadings – hence indicating the relationship between the factor and the item. Ochara-Muganda and Van Belle (2010:165) stipulate that a factor loading greater than 0.71 can be classified as excellent, 0.63 as very good, 0.55 as good, 0.45 as fair and 0.32 as poor. When factor loadings are high it is a suggestion that there is a robust relationship between the items and the factors (Burns & Burns, 2008:444). For the purpose of this study, factor loadings of greater than 0.5 were viewed as significant for establishing an indication of validity. According to

Stommel and Dontje (2014:290), it is vital that a minimum of three items should load per factor, but four or five items per factor are suggested. If an item with a factor loading of 0.5 or higher cross-loads onto another item, that item should be ignored (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:594).

Construct validity in this study ensured that the intended, rather than irrelevant, construct was measured, as items with a factor loading of less than 0.5 were deleted in the EFA. Furthermore, only constructs with at least three valid items (factor loadings above 0.5) were retained. In addition, items that loaded onto more than one construct (cross-loadings) were also disregarded. As the main aim of this study was merely quantifying the qualitative findings, no pilot testing was deemed necessary. The fact that it was an online questionnaire also made it more complicated to conduct a pilot study.

2.5.2.2 Reliability

Validity and reliability are closely related because validity presumes reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2014:39). If the measure is not reliable, it cannot be valid. Reliability is concerned with accuracy and consistency (Bryman & Bell, 2014:36). It is the degree to which, on recurrent measures, an indicator produces similar results (Struwig & Stead, 2013:135). Mugenda and Mugenda (2010:46) explain that reliability is a measure the extent to which a research instrument produces consistent outcomes or data after accepted trials. Cronbach's coefficient is a sensible indicator of the internal reliability of instruments using scales such as rating or Likert scales (George & Mallery, 2003:231). Cronbach's alpha is deemed a more accurate and careful means of establishing the reliability of a measuring instrument than other methods such as test-re-test or even Spearman-Brown and Kuder-Richardson reliability measures (George & Mallery, 2003:211), as it can yield a reliability estimate with a single administration. According to George and Mallery (2003:231), the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with alpha values close to 1 indicating greater internal consistency of the items in the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to measure the internal consistency (reliability) of the measuring scales (Gliem & Gliem, 2003:83). A Cronbach's alpha cut-off point of 0.7 was used in the study.

From the preceding section it transpired that the validity of the research instrument used in the study was established by face validity, content validity and construct validity. The reliability of the self-administered questionnaire was established by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients. It is furthermore acknowledged that the main aim of this study was not to conduct a quantitative study, but to merely quantify the qualitative findings. The following section presents the ethical considerations of the study.

2.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics clearance and approval is an important process to perform in order for the researcher to protect the rights of the participants and respondents. For this reason, a pro forma ethics clearance form was completed and submitted to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Business and Economic Sciences' Faculty Research Technology and Innovation Committee (See Annexure 3) to obtain permission to use the same semi-structured interview schedule in phases one and two of the study and the online self-administered questionnaire in phase three of the study. A deliberate effort was made to ensure that all ethical standards were adhered to. The following aspects were addressed:

- Prior to participation in the study the researcher explained the purpose and objectives of the study, as well as why the study was being conducted, to the participants and respondents in covering letters. Participants in phases one and two were also telephoned prior to requesting their participation, to inform them about the study and to outline the potential benefits of their participation in the study.
- The participants and respondents were not subjected to any statements relating to a private or personal matter.
- No specific participants or respondents could be identified or linked to responses. Participants in the semi-structured interviews in phases one and two were assured that obtained information would be treated in the strictest confidence and that results would be reported anonymously, for example, as Mentor A, Mentee A or Online mentoring specialist A. The respondents of the quantitative survey were assured that the majority of the data would be reported in statistical format and no individual respondents would be identified.

- The participants and respondents were informed that participation in the interviews, and the completion of the questionnaires, was voluntary and that the participants and respondents could withdraw from participation at any point.

In conclusion, all the information discussed in this chapter will be summarised in the following section.

2.7 SUMMARY

Chapter 2 presented a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology, which was followed. A discussion was provided on the main research paradigms available in modern-day research. With the primary and secondary objectives of the study in mind, the qualitative paradigm was deemed to be the most suitable for phases one and two, due to the exploratory nature of this inquiry. To establish what respondents would regard as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring, as well as the mentee achievements when engaging in online mentoring, the third phase of the inquiry employed a positivistic research paradigm whereby a structured questionnaire was distributed.

The chapter also outlined the population, sample size and sample selection for each of the three phases of the study followed by the data collection methods where reference was made to the secondary and primary research that was undertaken. Non-probability sampling was employed to purposefully draw a sample based on convenience for phase one of the study, whereas phases two and three of the study made use of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. The first qualitative research phase selected six female mentees employed or owning small businesses in Africa who had recently (2016) engaged in online mentoring, as well as five SA mentors both male and female. For the second qualitative research phase, three online mentoring field specialists that actively engage in online mentoring were selected. The third quantitative research phase concerned 100 females employed or owning small businesses in SA that had been involved in conventional mentoring. The primary data for phases one and two was collected through a semi-structured interview schedule and in phase three in the form of an online structured self-administered questionnaire. Secondary data was sourced from the traditional data sources including the internet.

The analysis and interpretation of data differ for the qualitative and quantitative phases of the inquiry. Several data analysis methods (case study, content analysis, constant comparative method and grounded theory) were utilised for the first two phases of the research, which followed a qualitative research approach to ensure a deeper analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse and describe the results of the third phase of the research and an EFA was performed to extract the valid and reliable constructs. Inferential statistics was conducted to establish correlations between the variables, and hypothetical relationships were tested on the online mentoring enablers and mentee achievements.

From the literature it transpired that the issues of validity and reliability are attended to differently in qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the trustworthiness of the data and research findings, whereas quantitative researchers are concerned with the validity and reliability of the research findings. The trustworthiness of qualitative research findings can be established by using the following four qualitative suppositions: credibility (analogues to internal validity), dependability (analogues to reliability), conformability (analogues to objectivity), and transferability (analogues to external validity). The trustworthiness of the research findings of phases one and two of this qualitative inquiry was strengthened by addressing these matters. The validity of the self-administered questionnaire used in the study was established by face validity, content validity and construct validity, with a cut-off point of 0.5 for factor loadings. The reliability of the self-administered questionnaire was established by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients and accepting only factors with a coefficient value of 0.7 and higher. The main aim of this study was not to conduct a large quantitative study, but to merely quantify the qualitative findings. The ethical considerations that guided the researcher through the three phases of the research process study were also highlighted.

The following chapter will provide a literature review of conventional mentoring by addressing various issues pertaining to it, from its development to the numerous benefits associated with it.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF CONVENTIONAL MENTORING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided a discussion of the research design and methodology used in this study. The research paradigms were discussed and the reasons for the selection of a mixed methods approach were provided. Chapter 2 also discussed the data collection procedures with regard to secondary and primary data as well as the validity and reliability of the quantitative phase of the study and the trustworthiness of the qualitative phase of the study.

An understanding of conventional mentoring is required to fully comprehend online mentoring and to contextualise the many issues relating to conventional mentoring, which also apply to the online mentoring environment. In this chapter, a literature overview of conventional mentoring is provided, which is a growing interest in the business and educational spheres. Mentoring has been shown to be crucial with regard to females's success in the fields of both business and entrepreneurship (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:549). The influence of conventional mentoring has been thoroughly researched and widely acknowledged in the context of career fulfilment and success (Petridou, 2009; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013).

Before this chapter commences with a discussion on the development of mentoring, the difference between consulting, mentoring and coaching is presented as there is often confusion regarding the difference between these concepts. After that reference is made to the degree of formality of the mentoring relationship where a discussion of informal and formal mentoring programmes is presented. Following this is a discussion on the different conventional mentoring development approaches such as the psychosocial and career development approach; integrated approach; and relational approach. A discussion ensues regarding non-conventional mentoring approaches that can be utilised, such as peer mentoring, group mentoring, adult learner mentoring, reciprocal mentoring and online mentoring. The challenges related to conventional mentoring and how to overcome it are discussed, and the numerous benefits associated with mentoring for various groups are indicated.

3.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS CONSULTING, MENTORING AND COACHING

Business advice is the provision of independent, impartial and confidential information and guidance to potential and established businesses, based on substantial business experience and current knowledge of related factors, so that clients may learn and benefit from that advice in their subsequent actions (Under 30 CEO, 2016).

Though mentoring and coaching are distinct, they do share common elements. It is often a difference in emphasis and outcomes that creates the distinction. Also, there are some coaches who have the ability to act as mentors. Likewise, there are mentors who, in some instances, act more like coaches (Clutterbuck, 2008:9; Management Mentors, 2015a). Some differences between mentoring and coaching is summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Differences between mentoring and coaching

Mentoring	Coaching
Relationship orientated	Task orientated
Usually longer term sometimes for life	Usually short term
Balance both business and personal	Focus on business issues
Develops capabilities	Develops skills
Driven by mentee	Driven by coach
Manager indirectly involved	Manager directly involved
Compensation not involved	Paid for services

Adapted from: Clutterbuck & Sweeney (1997); Harrington (1999:2); Management Mentors (2015a); Coaching and Mentors of South Africa (2015a); Coaching and Mentors of South Africa (2015b)

It is evident from Table 3.1 that mentoring is relationship orientated with a mentee sharing whatever issues (may also be personal at times) affect his or her professional and personal success and thus require a longer time period for building a trusting relationship (Harrington, 1999:2; Clutterbuck, 2008:9; Management mentors, 2015a; Coaching and Mentors of South Africa, 2015a). On the other hand, coaching is task oriented with the coach only involved with a coachee for a short period of time and

coaching being performance driven with a focus on business skills development (Harrington, 1999:2; Clutterbuck, 2008:9; Management Mentors, 2015a).

In mentoring, the immediate manager is indirectly involved and the process is mostly mentee driven whereas the coachee's direct manager is a critical partner in coaching as he/she often direct the coach to the areas in which the employee requires coaching. (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 1997; Management Mentors, 2015a). The mentor's reward is altruistic and they seldom receive compensation for their services while the coaches are paid for their services (Holmes, 2016:1).

To conclude, a business consultant use his expertise to direct and provide answers to a business manager, with the mentor imparting his/her relevant experience and acting as a guide for development (career or business) and the coach merely asking questions to raise awareness with a specific goal in mind which may influence the future of the individual (Marris, 2015). With this in mind, it is therefore clear that mentoring is transformational and involves much more than simply acquiring a specific skill or knowledge as is the case in coaching or a business consultant who merely find solutions to a business problem.

A discussion on the development of mentoring will be provided in the following section.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF MENTORING

Mentoring is not a new concept and has received a great deal of attention in both the academic and general media, including the internet, with an increase in the number of articles published concerning the topic in the social sciences and education literature (Allen & Eby, 2010:3; DiRenzo, Linnehan, Shao & Rosenberg, 2010:292). What follows is a brief discussion on the origin of mentoring, the development of mentoring as it is known today (modern mentoring), and the expansion of mentoring to the business world.

3.3.1 Origin of mentoring

Mentoring originates in the primary stages of human civilisation (St Jean & Audet, 2012:122) and is perhaps first evident in Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*, composed almost ten thousand years ago. Homer writes of a wise old sea captain named 'Mentor'

(the goddess Athena in disguise), who guides Odysseus's son, Telemachus, on how to manage his father's long absence since the Trojan War (Colomo-Palacios, Casado-Lumbrera, Soto-Acostac & Misra, 2014:222; Wood, 2014:2). 'Mentor' was responsible for Telemachus's education and the development of his identity in the adult world. In 1699, Fenelon, a tutor to a grandson of Louis XIV, published *Les Aventures de Te'le'maque*, in which 'Mentor' becomes Telemachus's emotional and intellectual role model. It is, of course, the Greek goddess Athena who takes the form of 'Mentor' and is guiding Telemachus (Mueller, 2004:54). As a result of this, some mentoring programmes for females have been called 'Athena' (Mueller, 2004:55).

In the eighteenth century there existed five primary publications on mentoring, all based on Fenelon's work (Garvey, 2011:9). A 'mentor' is described as half-human, half-God, half-man, half-woman, believable yet unreachable and is the personification of wisdom (Mueller, 2004:55). It is through *Les Aventures de Te'le'maque* that the name 'Mentor' became the term and concept of 'mentor'. The era of feudalism in Europe was distinguished by medieval patriarchs providing knowledge and guidance to their first-born sons (Pinho, Coetzee & Schreuder, 2005:20). However, as population growth began to rise in the industrial era, mentoring provided a way in which senior people could connect with their juniors as more than boss or supervisor, to give personalised guidance in their career advancement to the next generation (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:20).

3.3.2 Move to a more modern view of mentoring

The more modern view of mentoring is found in the work of Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) as described by Gibson (2004:260). Their description of mentoring is often regarded as foundational in the development of contemporary views on the subject. Levinson *et al.* (1978) managed a broad study of forty men and described the concept of a mentor as teacher, adviser, sponsor, host, guide, model and counsellor. It was stressed that mentoring was not so much linked to a formal role, but could be described in terms of the character of the relationship and the functions that the relationship served. The mentor was conceptualised as an intermediary who assists in the development of the young man in his move from childhood to becoming an adult and who functions in relations with other adults (Levinson *et al.*, 1978:99; Gibson, 2004:260). Mentoring, in terms of Levinson's description, was seen as

essential to the holistic growth of the young individual (Levinson *et al.*, 1978:99; Gibson, 2004:260). Most importantly, a mentor's role was to support and facilitate the kind of adult life each individual envisions for him or herself. The image of a mentor as a wise person, guide, and stand-in parent who aids the mentee's growth and development emerged from earliest classical literature (Levinson *et al.*, 1978; Bierema & Merriam, 2002:212; Gibson, 2004:260).

A few years after the work of Levinson *et al.* (1978), Kathy Kram (1985) published her seminal report *Mentoring at work*, which offered a theoretical foundation for understanding developmental relationships at work. The publication defined the construct of mentoring and created a theoretical foundation for the study of mentoring. A mentor assists in the development of people which was derived from the principle that a mentor needs to guide others so that they are able to lead, once the leader is no longer available (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:1). The shape of the mentoring journey evident in the modern day thus emerged from initial conventional literature (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:212).

3.3.3 Expansion of mentoring to the professional business arena

Since the mid 1980s, the concept of mentoring has moved beyond industry and business to serve a wide variety of professionals. As was noted by Mueller (2004:54), the formalisation of the mentoring process led to mentoring programmes becoming part of career and human resource development in business, industry and government. The goal was to ensure that ambitious employees always had a more senior figure to guide them and oversee their career. At the start of the twenty first century mentoring was deemed necessary to achieve personal and professional success and mentoring programmes were started in schools, corporations, and professional associations (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:212).

Mentoring programmes were increasingly prevalent in education – all the way from primary school to university (Blunt & Conolly, 2006:195). After mentoring programmes proved successful in education, and in recruiting employees for senior and executive management positions, mentoring was extended to support females and minorities to break through the so-called 'glass ceiling' into leadership positions (Mueller, 2004:54; Leck *et al.*, 2014:7). According to Ayer (2010:6) mentoring can help with the

advancement of business owners and the growth of their ventures. With the revolution in technology, online mentoring has appeared as a new form of mentoring (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445). Online mentoring will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the origin of mentoring dates back to the time of the ancient Greeks and the concept developed through the years on the basis that a mentor guides others so that they are able to lead, once the leader is no longer available. It was noted that mentoring has moved beyond industry and business to serve a wide variety of professionals and has become part of career and human resource development in business, industry and government businesses. Mentoring has also, amongst others, been extended to support females and other disadvantaged groups to break through the so-called 'glass ceiling' into leadership positions. Online mentoring has emerged as a new form of mentoring. Conventional mentoring, as it is currently known, will be contextualised in the following section.

3.4 MENTORING IN CONTEXT

Defining mentoring has become an increasingly contentious and complex issue. Very little agreement can be found in the literature as to what does and does not constitute mentoring (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:211; Stokes, Garrett-Harris & Hunt, 2003:2; Mueller, 2004:53; Ragins & Kram, 2007:4). Conventional mentoring has been described as a dual relationship in which a mentor, a senior person in age or experience, provides guidance and support to the less experienced person, for the mentee to grow personally and professionally (Kram, 1985; Bierema & Merriam, 2002:212). However, the definition of mentoring has changed as researchers have explored different contexts of mentoring relationships (Mueller, 2004:55; St Jean & Audet, 2012:122; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). Since mentoring is a complex idea, and its implementation depends on the business context, goals and participants involved (Mueller, 2004:55), differences in the basis and length of the mentoring relationship, purpose and goal, and who is going to receive mentoring (for example, female entrepreneurs or high school learners) must be taken into consideration when attempting to contextualise mentoring.

Mentoring relationships differ from other types of personal relationships as they are developmental associations embedded in a career context and thus the foundation of the relationship differs according to circumstances. It is a developing, dynamic relationship between two people – one that can be mutually beneficial (Potgieter, 2011:54). The one-on-one relationship of conventional mentoring has been described by Shrestha, May, Edirisingha, Burke & Linsey (2009:116) as an arrangement where one individual receives advice, mentoring and/or counselling from a second, usually senior, individual. The one-on-one aspect of this portrayal has also been described as the face-to-face aspect of mentoring (Williams, Sunderman & Kim, 2012:110). The more experienced person takes on the role of mentor, while the junior – or less experienced person – assumes the role of mentee (Yaw, 2007:1).

Mentoring is a process of transferring and exchanging information between a mentor and a mentee as they develop a long-term relationship (Meyer & Fourie, 2004:3). The mentoring relationship needs time to develop and typically progresses through at least three stages (Mueller, 2004:54):

- getting acquainted;
- maintenance; and
- closure.

This indicates that as both a mentee's needs, and the nature of the relationship tend to change, a mentor must stay aware and flexible in order to adjust the degree and type of attention, help, advice, information and encouragement provided to the mentee (Mueller, 2004:54). Niehoff's definition (2006:322), as referred to by Ayer (2010:14), indicates that mentoring is an activity in which an individual – with advanced knowledge or experience – actively provides assistance and support to improve the career development of an individual with less knowledge and experience. Ragins and Kram (2007:5) confirm that the primary focus of the mentoring relationship is career development and growth and that it is unique in that it connects a person with knowledge and skills to a mentee – providing for the sharing of expertise and support. In this sense mentoring is regarded as the most effective way to transfer skills and knowledge quickly resulting in – amongst other things – loyalty between new employees within a business (Potgieter, 2011:54). Reference is further made to a

developmental union, both career and psychological support, and an intimate learning alliance that occurs naturally (Bourke, Waite & Wright, 2014:3). A common goal of mentoring is thus to advance the personal and professional growth of the mentee; something that varies according to a mentee's level and a mentor's experience.

Depending on the mentee's specific needs, a mentor usually takes on a variety of roles and functions in a mentoring relationship (Mueller, 2004:54; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107). According to St Jean and Audet (2012:122) the definition of mentoring can be extended to include a supportive relationship between an experienced entrepreneur (the mentor), and a novice entrepreneur (the mentee), in order to foster the mentee's personal development. Mentoring for entrepreneurs and small businesses refers to guidance and support through difficult situations, but also assists in building self-confidence. Mentoring involves personal and professional development as the benefits for the entrepreneur are of both a personal and a business nature (Van der Sijde & Weijman, 2013:194).

In summary, it is clear that conventional mentoring is a one-on-one, face-to-face, extended, confidential and protected relationship between a more experienced and skilled person (mentor) and a less experienced and/or skilled one (mentee), focusing on the growth and development of the individual, whether for career development or for an entrepreneur receiving business advice. However, a mentoring relationship can be of an informal or formal nature as discussed in the following section.

3.5 DEGREE OF FORMALITY OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Mentoring can be categorised into either informal, unstructured pairings of mentor and mentee or formal, structured pairings (Ayer, 2010:30). The degree of formality a mentoring relationship takes influences the dynamics and outcome of the relationship (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006:411). In earlier years most mentorships were established informally after both parties desired and agreed to establish a mentoring relationship. However, since the early 2000s, businesses have shown interest in designing and implementing formal mentoring programmes for employees in an attempt to reap the potential benefits of mentoring programmes more broadly across businesses (Gibson, 2004:259; Wanberg *et al.*, 2006:411). The question remains as to whether the nature of informal and formal mentorships and the

resulting benefits are comparable, or if they differ based on how these relationships are established. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the basis of formal and informal mentoring as well as the primary benefits and challenges associated with each.

Table 3.2: Formal and informal mentoring

	PRIMARY BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
INFORMAL MENTORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Address current needs and desires ➤ More likely to involve career-, psychosocial- and role-modelling aspects ➤ Greater levels of commitment ➤ More valuable and effective as it is more flexible ➤ Focus on knowledge sharing ➤ Applicable to the entrepreneurial setting ➤ Lengthy relationships ➤ Driven by participants and not processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Difficulty in finding a mentor to relate to limits probability of everybody finding a mentor ➤ Mostly white male mentors available ➤ Relationship takes time to develop
	<p>Sources: Lankau (2011:1528); Bourke <i>et al.</i> (2014:3); Grima, Paille, Mejia & Prod'homme (2014:476); Colomo-Palacios <i>et al.</i> (2014:222, 224); Department of Labour (2014); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:5); Hu, Wang, Wang, Chen & Jiang (2016:104); Menges (2016:99)</p>	
FORMAL MENTORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote learning of both mentees and mentors ➤ Learn to understand different elements of the business ➤ Mentee does not have to find a mentor ➤ Diminish stereotypes and discrimination biases ➤ Predetermined mentoring period ➤ Specific objectives are set and agreed upon ➤ Planned structural mechanism to develop employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Intensity of mentoring is less ➤ Lower formal mentee compensation levels ➤ Involve considerable time, effort and cost on part of business ➤ Forced pairing ➤ Predetermined mentoring time period can limit effectiveness for mentee and also satisfaction for mentor ➤ Unrealistically high expectations on part of mentees ➤ Incompetence and lack of trained mentors ➤ Feelings of intimidation ➤ Assessment measures often hinder the dynamics of the relationship
	<p>Sources: Eby & Lockwood (2005:447); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:20); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:5,14,15, 28); Niehoff (2006:323); Ayer (2010:30); Potgieter (2011:3,64); Poulsen (2013:257); Colomo-Palacios <i>et al.</i> (2014:222); Grima <i>et al.</i> (2014:476); Carrol & Barnes (2015:60); Kent, Green & Feldman (2015:127); Pritchard & Grant (2015:66); Menges (2016:101)</p>	

Informal and formal mentoring programmes will be discussed in greater detail in the sections to follow.

3.5.1 Informal mentoring programmes

Informal mentoring describes a process whereupon mentees and mentors enter into a relationship voluntarily in the absence of structured guidelines for directing the

relationship (Ayer, 2010:30). The mentor and mentee make an agreement to work together instead of being matched by a third party (Weinberg & Lankau, 2011:1528). An informal mentoring relationship is entered into when two people are attracted to one another based on a perceived similarity in terms of outcome (Leck *et al.*, 2014:14). Mentees and mentors decide for themselves which goals they wish to pursue and in what time frame (Menges, 2016:99). Relationships formed through informal mentorship can, and often do, last years, averaging around three to six years and set end dates are not predetermined (Siegel, Schultz & Landy, 2011:8; Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:224). Informal mentoring provides a rich mentoring experience (Leck *et al.*, 2014:5). A discussion on the benefits and challenges of informal mentoring relationships follows.

3.5.1.1 Benefits of informal mentoring relationships

Whilst benefits accumulate in informal relationships, they generally hold no explicit rewards for, or penalties against, the mentor and mentee for participation (Leck *et al.*, 2014:15). Informal mentoring relationships tend to address current needs and desires and suggest greater levels of commitment to the relationship by both parties because of mutual interest (Niehoff, 2006:323; Ayer, 2010:30; Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:222). Informal relationships are also more likely to cover the career, psychosocial and role-modelling aspects of mentoring (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21) with the goals and expectations developing over time to adapt to the specific needs of the mentee (Niehoff, 2006:323).

Research suggests that informal relationships may be more valuable than formal relationships (Bourke *et al.*, 2014:3), since informal mentoring relationships tend to be more natural and spontaneous, hence occurring more on an ad hoc basis. Mutual attraction may result in higher trust and psychological safety – both critical to nurturing relationships (Hu *et al.*, 2016:104). Informal mentorship is argued to be more effective than other approaches to mentoring, as mentees receive more career-related support (for example, protection, challenging assignments, exposure and visibility, and direct forms of sponsorship) and psychosocial support (Allen & Eby, 2010:84, 225). It has also been suggested that mentors experience great satisfaction from informal mentoring relationships where a degree of personal appreciation is experienced (Grima *et al.*, 2014:476). Informal mentoring relationships have been found to be

positively associated with knowledge-sharing and the transfer of expertise at a personal level (Niehoff, 2006:323; Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:224). It has further been noted that informal mentoring relationships, which tend to include frequent contact sessions, are regarded as more effective than formal mentoring relationships (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:267).

Grima *et al.* (2014:476) found that greater benefits are experienced with informal mentoring when mentee and mentor are of the same gender. Gender homogeneity guarantees both parties a certain psychological comfort conducive to trust and complexity. Grima *et al.* (2014:476) warn, however, that further research needs to be done to explore the differences between homogenous and heterogeneous mentoring pairs. Weinberg and Lankau (2011:1535) found that the negative effects of cross-gender relationships disappeared over time in a formal programme.

Entrepreneurial mentoring, specifically, is often distinguished by mentoring relationships that develop informally, where mentees choose their own mentors (Niehoff, 2006:323) and all the benefits associated with informal mentoring can be experienced. Informal entrepreneurial mentoring is spontaneous in nature and does not arise from formally-constructed programmes where mentor and learner are deliberately paired (Ayer, 2010:31).

3.5.1.2 Challenges of informal mentoring relationships

Although informal mentoring has its merits, it also has its drawbacks. Relying on a relationship built on mutual attraction limits the probability that all aspiring young workers will find a mentor, especially within the corporate environment (Hu *et al.*, 2016:104). Mentors tend to choose mentees who are similar to themselves and, since the majority of mentors are currently white men, informal mentoring results in a disproportional mentoring of junior white men (Leck *et al.*, 2014). In South Africa the similarity-attraction paradigm would suggest that white men would be more likely to find mentors, given the predominance of white men in senior roles in this country (Department of Labour, 2014). This could lead to an excessive number of unmentored females, black people and disabled persons. In addition, informal mentoring relationships take more time to develop (Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:224). Given

these drawbacks, businesses have been motivated to design formalised programmes to ensure that mentoring opportunities are more inclusive, as discussed next.

3.5.2 Formal mentoring programmes

Research suggests that many businesses are implementing formal mentoring programmes, while at the same time trying to incorporate the positive benefits associated with informal mentoring relationships (Leck *et al.*, 2014:14). Formal mentoring programmes are usually more structured (providing terms of the relationship, an extensive alignment programme, projected goals, anticipation of frequency of meetings, a reporting instrument, etc.) when compared to informal programmes – the latter typically being more flexible and driven by participants rather than procedures (Niehoff, 2006:323; Ayer, 2010:30; Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:222). In formal mentoring, mentees and mentors are paired with each other and the goals of the relationship are specified at the start of the relationship (Ayer, 2010:30; Leck *et al.*, 2014:14).

In the formal mentoring environment, both mentees and mentors tend to be matched in terms of criteria such as expertise, personality, location, etcetera (Leck *et al.* 2014:5). Other measures that influence the matching process of mentors and mentees are based on demographic and contextual factors including personal profiles, learning and progress goals, experience, educational experiences, professional knowledge, maturity and geographical setting (Poulsen, 2013:257). Menges (2016:101) states that racial and gender similarities result in more fertile mentoring relationships. The matching process in establishing mentor-mentee relationships is critical and often determines the outcome and success of the programme. Relationships are often business orientated due to being artificially established by the business (Kent *et al.*, 2015:127). Greater satisfaction with the mentoring relationship is reported when a mentor and mentee are well-matched (Poulsen, 2013:256).

Formal mentoring programmes can play a crucial role in the development of businesses as well as in society in general – they can be used to support graduates, new staff, females and aspiring leaders, and their value in the empowerment of people from historically disadvantaged groups cannot be underestimated (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:20). These programmes have, in addition, become an instrument through which

growth and development of junior employees can be influenced (Potgieter, 2011:3) and are also put in place to develop high-potential managers to fast-track their careers in preparation for key managerial positions (Potgieter, 2011:64). Formal mentoring has become a popular strategy to support females through some of the difficulties they experience in a male-dominated environment (Potgieter, 2011:3). It has been noted that females might be more likely to seek formal versus informal mentoring programmes since they face greater barriers than men in their efforts to establish informal relationships with mentors (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21). Unfortunately, all these efforts and programmes have had limited success in the advancement of traditionally disadvantaged groups such as females (Leck *et al.*, 2014:5). A discussion on the benefits and challenges of formal mentoring relationships follows.

3.5.2.1 Benefits of formal mentoring relationships

Many benefits arise from formal mentoring relationships (Leck *et al.*, 2014:15). Formal mentoring is effective in promoting the learning of both mentees and mentors, including their understanding of different aspects of the business, and in developing fresh insights into situations that arise in the context of work (Eby & Lockwood, 2005:447). Mentees are fortunate to learn from, be mentored by, and receive psychosocial development, as well as career advice from their mentors (Pritchard & Grant, 2015:66). A formal mentor-mentee relationship also includes an official and measurable reward programme linked to the input and output performance levels of the mentor (Niehoff, 2006:323; Ayer, 2010:30).

Mentoring partnerships are created and so take the obligation of finding a mentor out of the hands of the prospective mentee (Menges, 2016:100). Disadvantaged group members who have difficulties finding a mentor because of their group status are simply assigned one. Research found that satisfaction with a formal mentoring programme does not relate to race or gender, suggesting that formalising the mentoring process may diminish biases such as stereotyping and discrimination (Leck *et al.*, 2014:28; Kent *et al.*, 2015:127). The matching process also serves to reduce the perceptions of misinterpreted relationships between men and females as their relationship is created by the mentoring programme administrator, and not themselves. While stereotypes may be diminished and the perceptions of misconstrued

relationships reduced, they are not altogether eliminated, due to the face-to-face nature of the mentor/mentee interactions (Carrol & Barnes, 2015:60).

The mentoring process is structured to last a predetermined period of time and specific objectives are set and agreed upon from the onset. Allen and Eby (2010:360) suggest that no best practice is evident in the literature regarding the exact duration of the relationship (whether six months or three years). A business should consider the goals of the programme when determining both how long a mentoring relationship should last and how often participants should meet. This results in a planned structural mechanism to develop employees. As a consequence, skill development which may take several years to develop in an informal mentoring setting, can take as little as one to three years (Wanberg *et al.*, 2006:411). However, businesses that wish to establish a formal mentoring programme can improve their successes by providing aspects of informal mentoring programmes, such as allowing mentors and mentees to be involved in the selection of each other in the formal programme (Underhill, 2006:303).

3.5.2.2 Challenges of formal mentoring programmes

Empirical research indicates some negative aspects that arise from formal mentor relationships. A form of marginal mentoring may occur in that the scope and degree of the mentoring functions appear to be less intense than those encountered in the informal mentoring relationship (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:24; Allen & Eby, 2010:225; Hu *et al.*, 2016:104). In addition, mentees who have received formal mentoring have been found to receive lower levels of compensation (Allen & Eby, 2010:225). The development of formal, facilitated mentoring programmes may require considerable time, effort and cost for the business (Pinho *et al.*, 2005; Colomo-Palacios *et al.*, 2014:222) which can influence compensation levels.

The matching process, often perceived as a forced pairing, may be an additional barrier to effective mentoring in a formal relationship (Eby & Lockwood, 2005:450; Hu *et al.*, 2016:104). The naturally-occurring attraction that is typical of informal relationships is often lacking (Menges, 2016:101). The potential for stereotyping, discrimination and misconstrued relationships due to face-to-face interactions still remains (Leck *et al.*, 2014:28). Formal mentoring interactions may lead to negative interpretations of the other party, such as an unwillingness to put sufficient effort into the relationship (Grima

et al. 2014:476). A precise time frame for the implementation of the relationship can contribute to reducing the effectiveness for the mentee and satisfaction for the mentor (Grima *et al.*, 2014:476).

Further identified issues include unrealistically high expectations on the part of mentees (Eby & Lockwood, 2005:451), the immoderate amount of time spent on the relationship, and the incompetence and lack of training of mentors (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21). Formal mentoring may also lead to feelings of intimidation, and predetermined assessment measures may put individuals in the programme on the defensive (Allen & Eby, 2010:84). Grima *et al.* (2014:476) note that business involvement can lead to a relationship that is strictly professional, which questions the richness of the mentoring experience.

3.5.3 Comparison of informal and formal mentoring

It is still unclear whether or not a formal mentoring process is more beneficial than an informal one as both have their challenges (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:20). While research shows benefits for both formal and informally initiated mentoring relationships, there is increasing recognition that formal mentoring relationships have the potential to result in dysfunctional relationships (Scandura & Williams, 2001:346; Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21).

It appears that the type of relationships that are provided may vary with respect to whether the mentorship is formal or informal. The relationship may be more affected by other features such as perceived satisfaction and the quality of the mentors (Gibson, 2004:266). Hu *et al.* (2016:110) argue that mentees' satisfaction and ease with the mentoring relationship accounted for more of their variance in work and career attitudes, than whether the mentorship relationship was formal or informal.

When effectively implemented, participants of formal mentoring programmes experience greater career satisfaction, commitment and mobility, and it is these results that appear to motivate businesses to continue pursuing formal mentoring programmes, despite the negative aspects associated with them (Hu *et al.*, 2016:104). Eby and Allen (2010:225) suggest that although mentees reap fewer benefits from formal mentoring relationships, the full potential of the formal mentoring programme can be realised by ensuring that mentees are satisfied with their mentors.

Entrepreneurial incubator projects, that include a formal mentoring element, have emerged in recent years (Ayer, 2010:31, Dames, 2012:3). Formal mentoring programmes for entrepreneurs in South Africa exist, such as those offered by the Small Business Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), Business Mentors and Business Partners. However, Clutterbuck (2006:28) believes that those mentoring programmes that combine formal and informal mentoring offer the best results.

From the above it is clear that the degree of formality of a mentoring relationship influences the dynamics and outcomes of the relationship. It appears that the types of relationships that are provided may vary with respect to whether the mentorship is formal or informal, and determine specific outcomes. Since informal mentoring relationships tend to be more natural and spontaneous, hence occurring more on an ad hoc basis, it was argued that they may be more valuable than formal relationships, but they also have their drawbacks. Relying on the formation of a mutual attraction limits the probability that all aspiring young workers will find a mentor, especially within the corporate environment. Given these drawbacks, businesses have been motivated to design formalised programmes instead, to ensure that mentoring opportunities are more inclusive. It was also found that a combination of informal and formal mentoring renders best results.

Another lens through which to delineate mentoring is by describing the different conventional mentoring development approaches as elaborated on in the following section.

3.6 CONVENTIONAL MENTORING DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Over time, conventional mentoring development approaches have been fostered by researchers to include the:

- psychosocial and career development approach (Kram, 1983; 1985);
- integrated approach (Clutterbuck, 1998); and
- relational approach (Ragins, 2012).

Kram (1983, 1985) proposed a conceptual model of mentoring that identified psychosocial and career development as primary approaches of the mentoring

relationship, as well as nine developmental roles affirmed by several other authors (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Van der Sijde & Weijman, 2013:194). Although Kram's input contributed to an understanding of the key mentoring approaches, mentoring does not appear to have stayed within these limits (Gibson, 2004:260). Clutterbuck (1998) expanded on Kram's model and proposed an integrated approach to mentoring in which the mentor assumed four different developmental support roles: coach, guardian, networker/facilitator and counsellor. Watson (2004:74) summarised Clutterbuck's (1998) matrix to illustrate four basic roles and associated activities of a mentor.

In recent years a set of relational approaches to mentoring has been identified (Ragins, 2012:521). These go beyond the basic psychosocial and career approaches first defined by Kram (1985), to include a number of functions that enhance the quality and closeness of developmental relationships. Ragins (2012:527) developed a Relational Mentoring Index (RMI) that includes the following six attributes: personal learning and growth, inspiration, self-affirmation, reliance on communal norms, shared influence and respect, and trust and commitment. For the purpose of this discussion, the six attributes of a relational approach as discussed by Ragins (2012:527-531) have been adapted to include three approaches, namely: personal learning and growth; mutual respect, influence and inspiration; and shared norms, trust and commitment.

All the preceding development approaches of conventional mentoring are summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Development approaches of mentoring

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT	CAREER SUPPORT	INTEGRATED APPROACH	RELATIONAL APPROACH
Kram (1983;1985)	Kram (1983;1985)	Clutterbuck (1998); Watson (2004)	Ragins (2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rolemodelling ➤ Confirmation and acceptance ➤ Counselling ➤ Friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sponsorship ➤ Coaching ➤ Protection ➤ Challenging assignments ➤ Exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coach ➤ Guardian ➤ Networker/facilitator ➤ Counsellor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal learning and growth ➤ Mutual respect, influence and inspiration ➤ Shared norms, trust and commitment

A discussion of each of these development approaches to mentoring is presented in the following sections.

3.6.1 Psychosocial support approach

The mentee is affected on a personal level by psychosocial support through the enhancement of his or her sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role (Kram, 1985:32). A mentor is one of a network of mentors providing instrumental, psychosocial and/or role-modelling support to a mentee on an ongoing basis (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:267). Mentors can offer psychosocial support which includes the following (Kram, 1985; Ayer 2010; Potgieter, 2011:60; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107):

- role modelling;
- acceptance;
- confirmation;
- counselling; and
- friendship.

Each of these psychosocial support functions has a different purpose as indicated in the following sections.

3.6.1.1 Role modelling

Role-modelling enhances the mentee's psychosocial development and occurs when a mentor's attitude, values and behaviour provide a model for the mentee to learn from and imitate (Watson, 2004:69). Ghosh and Reio (2013:107) confirm that as role models, a mentor represents someone the mentee might wish to emulate; exhibits appropriate attitudes, values, skills, and behaviours; and demonstrates ethical integrity as professionals.

The mentee identifies with the example set by the mentor, as the mentee aspires to achieve the same in the business (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107). Within the South African context cautionary steps must be taken if white mentors are used to mentor black mentees due to role-modelling being influenced by the country's political dispensation. If the white mentor negotiates, he will be negotiating his 'white world' to the black mentee, thus moulding the black mentee to fit into a 'white world' (Potgieter, 2011:60).

3.6.1.2 Acceptance and confirmation

Mentors provide mentees with psychosocial support such as acceptance and confirmation (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). Acceptance and confirmation provide encouragement to the mentee to develop competence in the world of business. They allow the mentee to experiment with new behaviours by taking risks, safe in the knowledge that mistakes made through the process will not result in rejection (Potgieter, 2011:60). Mentors convey feelings of respect and signal approval even in times of failure, communicate unconditionally positive regard, and accept their mentees as competent professionals (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

3.6.1.3 Counselling

When counselling, the mentor discusses any internal conflicts the mentee may have. This enables the mentee to voice any anxieties or fears that cause distraction at work. The mentor acts as a sounding board, offering advice from experience and trying to help the mentee resolve a sense of self - this is aided through the mentor's confirmation and acceptance of problems via feedback and active listening (Potgieter, 2011:60). Ayer (2010:14,15) confirms that the role of counsellor as a passive party includes being a listener and sounding board. It can also help a junior manager solve personal problems, thus improving his or her self-image (Watson, 2004:69). Ghosh and Reio (2013:107) confirm that as counsellors, mentors show empathy for mentees' concerns, encourage them to talk openly about their anxieties, and act as sounding boards to help the mentee understand herself or himself better.

3.6.1.4 Friendship

Mentoring includes social interaction that results in mutual liking and understanding. This allows for a peer-like relationship to develop – one that is not as distant as it may be with a relationship of authority (Potgieter, 2011:60) and mentors provide mentees with psychosocial support such as friendship (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). As friends, mentors are those in whom mentees can confide, and with whom they can both interact socially and spend leisure time, while discussing many non-work related interests (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

As indicated in the preceding sections a mentor is one of a network of individuals providing instrumental, psychosocial, and/or role-modelling support on a continuing

basis to a mentee. The mentor gains recognition and respect, as well as confirmation and support from the mentee, and internal satisfaction as a result of performing these functions. Researchers (Potgieter, 2011:60; Koyunco, Burke, Alayoglu & Wolpin, 2014:5) suggest that the stated psychosocial support functions of mentor-mentee relationships (role modelling, confirmation and acceptance, counselling and friendship) are especially important for the career development of females in the workforce, as discussed in greater detail next.

3.6.2 Career support approach

Mentors may include different functions in the programme, through which the mentee learns about the business and prepares for career advancement; they also provide job-related and influential support that directly improves the career of the mentee (Kram, 1985; Ayer 2010:14; Potgieter, 2011:61). It focuses on the identity and competence of an individual, but – for an entrepreneur – this occurs within the context of his or her own business (Van der Sijde & Weijman, 2013:195). Career support functions enhance advancement in a business. These functions include (Kram, 1985; Ayer 2010:14; Potgieter, 2011:61):

- sponsoring;
- coaching;
- protecting;
- providing challenging assignments; and
- exposure.

These career support functions, within the context of mentoring, are discussed next.

3.6.2.1 Sponsorship

Sponsorship is the most frequently observed career function. Sponsorship assists with building the mentee's reputation, becoming known to others, and obtaining certain job opportunities that will prepare him or her for higher level positions (Kram, 1985; Potgieter, 2011:58; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). As sponsors, mentors actively nominate mentees for projects and promotions, publicly recommend their abilities, and support their behaviours (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

3.6.2.2 Coaching

Coaching, as one of the functions of mentoring, suggests particular strategies for realising certain work objectives and achieving recognition and career aspirations (Potgieter, 2011:58). The mentor sets the agenda based on the needs of the mentee (Watson, 2004:71). The coaching relationship is short-term in nature, but is an active role that incorporates activities such as goal-setting, challenges, offering advice, collaborating and being a critical friend (Watson, 2004:69; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193). As coaches, mentors contribute access to information that would typically only be available to higher-level members of the business, share career histories, suggest specific strategies to achieve career goals, and provide assistance with job-related skills and knowledge (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

3.6.2.3 Protection

Protection occurs when the mentor shields the mentee from prematurely or potentially harmful contact with senior members of the business (Watson, 2004:69; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Potgieter, 2011:58). Rockwell *et al.* (2013:1) suggest that career development support also includes protecting the mentee from adverse forces. Mentors furthermore reduce unnecessary risks that might threaten mentees' reputations and screen them from controversial topics (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

3.6.2.4 Challenging assignments

The mentor also plays a function in organising challenging assignments (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107) which enable the mentee to develop specific competencies and skills. Mentors push mentees into situations that are beyond their comfort zones to help them experience a sense of accomplishment in a professional role. The mentee learns important technical and managerial skills through work that encourages learning (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193). The mentor should supply continuing feedback on the mentee's performance (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193) and provide appropriate support as, otherwise, there is a risk that the mentee may feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the tasks (Potgieter, 2011:58).

3.6.2.5 Exposure

Exposure involves the mentor assigning responsibilities that allow a mentee to develop relationships with other key figures in the business, who may judge his or her potential for future career advancement (Potgieter, 2011:58; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). The mentor generally has an extensive network of people who are able to assist mentees achieve their goals, as well as helping them to connect with others and enhance their visibility (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107). Rockwell *et al.* (2013:1) confirm that this function assists the mentee in developing positive workplace visibility.

In summary, all of the abovementioned activities seem to advance mentees' careers by enhancing their suitability for promotion. Certain work objectives are achieved as mentors suggest mentees for projects and promotions, visibly advocate their abilities and support their behaviours. Mentees are protected from adverse forces and shielded from negative forces that may inhibit their growth in the business. Mentors furthermore challenge mentees to build skills by pushing them to accept difficult assignments; questioning their notions and helping them attain higher levels of performance. Mentees are exposed to senior decision-makers and are assisted in developing their own internal and external networks, which can assist in increasing their visibility in the business.

It is important to note that although career-related support functions are directly related to the mentee's career advancement, in the case of an entrepreneur it is difficult to separate the entrepreneur from the business and so, supporting the career advancement of the entrepreneur also means the development of the business. The mentoring activities are focused on the entrepreneur to assist him or her in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish success in their business (Sullivan, 2000; Van der Sijde & Weijman, 2013:195).

3.6.3 Integrated approach to mentoring

Although Kram's (1985) research enhanced the understanding of the key mentoring functions, mentoring does not seem to have remained within the limits suggested (Gibson, 2004:260). Clutterbuck (1998) expanded on Kram's model and proposed an integrated approach where the mentor assumed four different developmental support

roles: coach, guardian, networker/facilitator and counsellor. Watson (2004:74) summarised Clutterbuck's (1998) matrix to describe the four basic roles and the associated behaviours of a mentor as all-embracing to include:

- The *coach* role is an active one that incorporates goal-setting, challenging and being a colleague and critical friend.
- The *guardian* role is an active one that includes protector, guide and role model.
- The *network contact* role is a passive one that covers building bridges and being a promoter.
- The *counsellor* role is a passive one that consists of active listening and being a sounding board.

Mentoring that combines both career development and psychosocial support is distinguished by a greater intimacy and strength of interpersonal bond (Kram 1985:24). Follow-up research has confirmed that the psychosocial and career support provided by mentors tends to include both an active and passive role (Ensher & Murphy, 1997), thereby offering a logical framework for understanding who they are and what they do (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:107).

3.6.4 Relational approach

A relational approach to mentoring has been recognised in recent years (Yip & Kram, 2015:2). Relational mentoring considers the processes and functions provided by both parties of the relationship (Ragins, 2012:527). Relational functions go beyond the basic career and psychosocial support first defined by Kram (1985) to include a number of attributes that enhance the quality and closeness of developmental relationships (Fullick-Jagiela, Verbos & Wiese, 2015:494). The six attributes of a relational approach, as proposed by Ragins (2012:527-531), namely: personal learning and growth; inspiration; self affirmation; dependence on communal norms; shared influence and respect and trust and commitment has been adapted – for the purpose of this discussion – to include three approaches as indicated below:

3.6.4.1 Personal learning and growth

Conventional mentoring approaches view the mentor as teacher and the mentee as learner, but in a relational approach both parties may learn and grow from the

experience (Seepersad, 2012:41). Greater levels of mutual learning should occur in high-quality relationships, because learning is based on the individual's task expertise, rather than on his or her status or role in the relationship (McKimm, Jollie & Hatter, 2007:20). High-quality relationships are more likely to produce personal learning, involving the individual's insights into his or her values, strengths, weaknesses, developmental needs, reactions, and patterns of behaviour (Ragins, 2012:527). By providing personal learning functions, each party helps the other learn more about themselves and others (Fullick-Jagiela *et al.*, 2015:494). Unlike other relationships in which the personality of the mentee is often inhibited or hidden, high-quality relationships offer the freedom, affirmation, and acceptance needed for mentees to be themselves, which may lead to positive outcomes for them and their work relationships (Ragins, 2012:529).

3.6.4.2 Mutual respect, influence and inspiration

Respect involves elements of admiration, appreciation, and encouragement, and incorporates a perception that the mentor/mentee has desirable ethical traits. Mutual respect is a necessity for shared influence in mentoring relationships (Holland, 2009:3). Shared influence involves the means by which members influence and are influenced by each other (Amelink 2008:4). Influence is based on the individual's expertise in a given mentoring episode, rather than on her or his rank in the business. Although by definition mentors have more experience in work or career domains, mentees bring their own insights, life experiences and talents to the relationship, and mentors in high-quality relationships value and are influenced by their mentees' perspectives (Fullick-Jagiela *et al.*, 2015:497).

Mentors and mentees have the ability to motivate and inspire one another in their mentoring relationships (Fullick-Jagiela *et al.*, 2015:494). Conventional perspectives on mentoring believe that mentors may serve as role models for their mentees. Role-modeling does not fully capture the possibilities for inspiration in high-quality mentoring relationships. In relational mentoring, there is the possibility of mutual inspiration in which the mentor both inspires and is inspired by his or her mentee, allowing both parties to consider a different perspective (Ragins, 2012:529).

3.6.4.3 Shared norms, trust and commitment

A key factor that separates relational mentoring from others is the dependence on shared community customs and norms (Amelink 2008:4). The focus is on the mentor's/mentee's well-being and benefits are given in response to the mentor's/mentee's needs without expecting repayment. In comparison, benefits are given in exchange relationships with the expectation that a comparable gain will be provided in return (Ragins, 2012:530).

Relational trust perceives the parties as being committed and that their involvement is founded on need rather than self-interest, and that the relationship also incorporates elements of respect (Holland, 2009:14). Relational trust develops through repeated mentoring sessions. Trust is influenced both by the length of the relationship and by the frequency and depth of interactions, as well as the diversity of challenges that are successfully faced in the relationship (Holland, 2009:14; Ragins, 2012:531).

It is evident that a relational approach to mentoring goes beyond basic career and psychosocial support and that it can enhance individual outcomes related to personal and professional development because of its reciprocal nature. Conventional mentoring approaches view the mentor as the teacher or guide and the mentee as the learner, but in a relational approach both members of the mentoring pair may learn and grow from the relationship. In relational mentoring, there is the possibility of mutual respect, influence and inspiration which allows both members of the relationship to think about things differently. Shared norms, trust and commitment are evident in relational mentoring.

Thus far, conventional mentoring has been discussed and referred to as a one-on-one, face-to face relationship that occurs between a more experienced and skilled person (mentor) and a less experienced and/or skilled one (mentee). Non-conventional mentoring methods will be discussed next.

3.7 NON-CONVENTIONAL MENTORING

Different types of mentoring relationships are important for individuals in the dynamic career environment (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:267; Kent *et al.*, 2015:117). In addition to conventional mentoring, as discussed in the preceding section, some non-conventional

mentoring approaches are available, namely: peer mentoring, group mentoring (one senior person meets with a number of less experienced mentees), adult learner mentoring, reciprocal mentoring and online mentoring (Gibson, 2004:261; Gabriel & Kaulfield, 2008:313; Leck *et al.*, 2014:13). Online mentoring will be discussed in great detail in the following chapter. A discussion of peer, group, adult learner and reciprocal mentoring follows next.

3.7.1 Peer mentoring

Mentoring has been defined thus far as a relationship between an experienced senior individual (the mentor) and a more junior individual (the mentee) where the mentor occupies a position higher up in the hierarchy than the mentee. Peer mentoring involves pairing a mentee with an experienced and knowledgeable mentor, working at the same (rather than a higher) level in the business (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:194). Since individuals are often more comfortable communicating with someone at the same level, this type of relationship can create a richer and different kind of knowledge exchange than one between individuals from different business levels (Leck *et al.*, 2014:5).

Formal peer-mentors who are selected, assigned, and sanctioned by a business are often used as formal role-models to reinforce mentees' confidence in their ability to perform new roles (Smith- Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:194). Role-modelling from mentors who are closer to mentees in business status seems to be more valued (Allen & Eby, 2010:143). Consequently, this may be a promising option for females (Leck *et al.*, 2014:5) as it broadens the pool of potential participants and offers the possibility of a relationship that provides both psychosocial support and possible career advantages (through increased access to information and personal network development). Peer-to-peer mentorships facilitate both interpersonal comfort and knowledge-sharing as peer-mentors often assist with orientating new employees to the business by providing positive encouragement and socialisation. This facilitates faster adaptation to the business by newcomers resulting in more effective job performance (Bryant, 2005:323). The primary goal of peer mentorship is to provide job-related knowledge that enhances the integration of an individual into a workplace (Leck *et al.*, 2014:16).

While peer-to-peer mentoring is becoming more popular in business, there is insufficient research investigating the nature of the relationship (Leck *et al.*, 2014:16). Peer mentoring has had some success, for instance, in the government sector, increasing the commitment of rural municipal councillors and leading to the implementation of various programmes and activities (Atterton, Thompson & Carroll, 2009:52). In the high technology sector, peer mentoring has resulted in both increased knowledge-sharing and knowledge creation (Bryant, 2005:332). Academic peer mentoring, has been linked to a number of issues that are important for student success such as socialisation (Burnham, Schiro & Fleming, 2013:139), satisfaction with one's university, and intention to graduate (Smith Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:194). In academia, peer mentoring has resulted in greater research productivity, a higher number of promotions, better skill acquisition, and increased enthusiasm and job motivation (Smith Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:194).

From the preceding literature it is evident that peer-to-peer mentorships are primarily used for business orientation and socialisation – they can facilitate interpersonal comfort and knowledge-sharing, and peers can often relate better to one another than to their more senior colleagues. Recognising that one mentor may not have all the answers and expertise to guide a mentee has led to the concept and development of group mentoring.

3.7.2 Group mentoring

Group mentorship is often misunderstood and is referred to as tutorial room learning. This is not accurate as participants of group mentoring reap the same benefits as those associated with traditional one-on-one mentoring. Group mentoring involves matching a number of experts, considered mentors, with various learners, considered mentees (Alleyne, Horner, Walter, Fleisher, Arzubi & Martin, 2009:381).

Mentors can be peers or individuals at any level of the business who are experts with respect to the topic of discussion. Participants choose issues of importance, then group to discuss these issues with the respective mentors, often with the assistance of a group organiser (Leck *et al.*, 2014:17).

As with formal mentoring, groups benefit from both career-related and psychosocial support (Alleyne *et al.*, 2009: 382). As stated by Carvin, (2011:50), mentees have:

- their own personal learning objectives;
- group discussions are held in safe and confidential environments;
- mentors act as guides rather than teachers or trainers;
- topics of discussion fall outside of regular tutorial training; and
- both mentors and mentees benefit from participating in group mentoring.

Group mentoring presents three unique advantages. Firstly, these programmes are easy to set up as no careful matching of mentor to mentee is required and so, as a result, it is less expensive to administer (Emelo, 2011:143). Secondly, group mentoring provides mentees with various mentors offering multiple viewpoints and a considerable range of knowledge and expertise (Emelo, 2011:144; Kroll, 2016:6). Multiple mentors reduce the likelihood that the mentoring relationship will become dysfunctional, which can occur in conventional one-on-one mentoring. Multiple mentors also minimise the effects of negative prejudices such as negative stereotypes and discrimination (Kroll, 2016:9). Finally, the communal nature of group mentoring may be better suited than more conventional mentoring approaches for members of groups from inclusive cultures. Since traditional cultures tend to be more collective, group mentoring may be a more advantageous means of developing leadership skills (Leck *et al.*, 2014:17). Leck *et al.* (2014:5) posit that more research on the benefits of group mentoring is needed as it holds the promise of delivering a relatively quick, inexpensive and effective mentoring experience to members of different backgrounds, genders, ethnicities, and collective cultures and enhances participants' personal networks.

A change in the demographic landscape and a global ageing workforce has led to the development of adult learner and reciprocal mentoring (Leck *et al.*, 2014:5) which will be discussed in the following sections.

3.7.3 Adult learner mentoring

Adult learner mentoring is a collaborative learning relationship between two individuals who share common responsibility and accountability in helping to work toward achieving clear and mutually-defined learning goals (Gabriel & Kaulfield, 2008:313).

This type of mentoring is particularly appropriate when a younger, or more junior member of a business, mentors a more experienced colleague (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012:56). New insights about various topics such as the marketplace, younger generational attitudes, values and technology can be gained by the senior-level employee (Gabriel & Kaulfield, 2008:313; Leck *et al.*, 2014:17).

3.7.4 Reciprocal mentoring

According to Paris (2013:3), reciprocal mentoring pairs two equal, though diversely-skilled, experts who act in the role of mentor and mentee to each other for their mutual benefit. Gabriel and Kaulfield (2008:313) note that reciprocal mentoring assists both parties in building co-operative learning relationships, with benefits flowing to mentor and mentee. Gabriel and Kaulfield (2008:325) further note that reciprocal mentoring, in this context, can provide effective professional development for mentors teaching online. A focus on two-way learning, consistent contact, and flexible support results in mentoring relationships that are significantly helpful for instructors and mentors.

From the preceding text it is evident that the conventional concept of mentoring has expanded to include peer mentoring, group mentoring, adult learner mentoring and reciprocal mentoring. Peer mentoring involves pairing an individual with another experienced and knowledgeable individual who is working at the same business level. Recognising that one mentor may not have all the answers and expertise to guide a mentee has led to the concept and development of group mentoring, which holds promise to deliver a relatively quick, inexpensive and effective mentoring experience to collective cultures. Adult learner mentoring is particularly appropriate when a younger or more junior member of a business mentors a more experienced colleague. A reciprocal mentoring approach helps both mentors and mentees build collaborative learning relationships, with benefits accruing to both partners.

Although the positive outcome of mentoring is acknowledged, the process is not without hurdles. Different challenges influencing mentoring programmes as well as how to overcome these challenges, will be discussed in the following section.

3.8 CHALLENGES PERTAINING TO MENTORING PROGRAMMES AND HOW THEY CAN BE OVERCOME

The question can be raised as to why mentoring is failing to achieve desired results. In order to answer this question and to design better, more inclusive mentoring programmes, it is important to understand the specific challenges faced by mentees. Table 3.4 provides a summary from global literature of the general issues posing as challenges to mentoring programmes.

Table 3.4: Challenges influencing mentoring programmes

GENERIC CHALLENGES	
<p>MISMATCH WITHIN MENTORING PAIR Differences in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talents and skills ➤ Personality and attitude ➤ Purpose, needs and goals ➤ Power relations and business level ➤ Demographics 	<p>Kogler, Hill & Gant (2000); Clutterbuck & Ragins (2002:5); Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:268); Hall (2003:21); Headlam-Wells (2004:212); Allen, Day & Lentz (2005:156); Stanley & Lincoln (2005:44); Eby & Lockwood (2005:450); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:20); Blunt & Conolly (2006:206); Underhill (2006:303); Allan (2010:606); Allen & Eby (2010:352); Ayer (2010:6); Blickle, Schneider, Meurs, & Perrewé (2010:1902); Catalyst Census (2010); Godwin (2011:1); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:464); Kyrgidou & Petridou (2013:549); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:3); Kent <i>et al.</i> (2015:118); Clutterbuck & Lane (2016:14); Menges (2016:100)</p>
<p>MENTOR-SPECIFIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of experience ➤ Disruptive behaviour ➤ Lack of available and qualified mentors 	<p>Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:268); Baugh & Sullivan (2005:426); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:445); Lankau, Riordan, & Thomas (2005); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:21); Barrett (2007:119); Cull (2006:10); Elkin & Elkin (2008:4); St Jean & Audet (2012:12); Allen & Eby (2010:609); Sarri (2011:722); Godwin (2011:1); Potgieter (2011:3); Kumar, Irudayaraj, Jomon & Singhal (2013:359); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:464); Rankhumisi (2013:375); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:1); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:11)</p>
<p>MENTEE-SPECIFIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Role of mentee not clear ➤ Cross gender perceptions and expectations 	<p>Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:24); Morgan & Davidson (2008:121); Bamford (2011:152); Orser (2013:421); Rankhumise (2013:377); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> 2013:1; Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:26)</p>
<p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mistrust ➤ Time-related issues ➤ Lack of planning and direction ➤ Locational differences 	<p>Samier (2000:92); Bierema & Merriam (2002:214); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:445); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:23); Blunt & Conolly (2006:199); Cull (2006:10); Elkin & Elkin (2008:3); Petridou (2009:526); Allen & Eby (2010:339); Sarri (2011:722); Godwin (2011:1); St Jean & Audet (2012:137); Brondyk & Searby (2013:193); Leck & Wood (2013:105); Ntim & Soobaroyen (2013:123); Orser (2013:413); Rankhumise (2013:371); Weiler, Haddock, Zimmerman, Henry, Krafchick & Youngblade (2015:197); Mehta & Ward (2016:1)</p>
BUSINESS-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of commitment by management ➤ Lack of policies and plans on mentoring process 	<p>Headlam-Wells (2004:212); Bilimoria & Piderit (2007:30); Allen & Eby (2010:358); Lewis & Kourdi (2012:30); Panopoulos & Sarri (2013:223); Rankhumise (2013:377); Polikoff, Desimone, Hochberg & Porter (2015:77)</p>

GENERIC CHALLENGES	
SMALL BUSINESS-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Lack of understanding of the benefits of mentoring➤ Lack of awareness of mentoring opportunities and the process➤ Perceptions of cost of mentoring➤ Management style of small business owners➤ Restricted resources	Matlay (2000:205); Peel (2008:3); Leppisaari & Tenhunen (2009:190); Sarri (2011:736); Galli (2013:38;40;41;43); Nyakio (2013:25)

A discussion of why each is regarded as a challenge and how these challenges can be overcome is provided in the following sections.

3.8.1 Generic challenges

The generic challenges that can influence mentoring programmes have been identified from extant literature and will be discussed next.

3.8.1.1 Mismatch within the mentoring pair

The pairing of mentor and mentee in formal mentoring programmes is vital to the development of mentoring relationships (Hall, 2003:21) and has been a common criticism of formal mentoring. An essential element of successful mentorships is a natural attraction and desire to work together and this aspect cannot be forced (Allen & Eby, 2010:352). A mismatch occurs when one, or both, parties report that there is a disparity in values, work styles and/or personality (Sphigelman & Gill 2012:464). Factors that must be considered when matching relate to the talent and skill levels of the mentee; the personality of the mentee; the purpose, needs and goals of the mentee; power relations and level in the business of the mentor relative to the mentee; and demographic variables, as covered in the following sections (Godwin, 2011:1).

(a) Considering talent and skill needs

In order to avoid influencing the mentoring relationship negatively, the selection of mentees should be based on their talent, eagerness to learn and willingness to participate in the mentoring programme (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:20). To manage this issue, the mentee's development needs must be taken into consideration (Allen & Eby, 2010:353). The mentoring administrator should be able to anticipate and understand

the needs of mentees who do not fit well into the business and who might need reassurance and time to adjust. According to Blunt and Conolly (2006:200, 203), this is one of the arguments for matching mentors and mentees who share similar backgrounds.

(b) Ensuring similarity in personality and attitude

A negative mentoring experience may occur through a lack of similarity in attitude and personality (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:268). Mentees who lack confidence and direction require understanding mentors, while those with a strong sense of self might blossom under relatively unsympathetic, but technically able mentors (Blunt & Conolly, 2006:206). If mentees are selected on the basis of a rich number of differences, this could result in a dysfunctional relationship due to a mutual inability to empathise. Allen and Eby (2010:353) note, however, that there are as many programmes that match mentees and mentors based on criteria similarity as those matched on dissimilarity. According to Menges (2016:100), the most beneficial method of pairing may be by facilitating interaction and familiarity that allows mentors and mentees to select one another. Mentoring may be more effective if mentors are involved in selecting mentees, than if mentees alone initiate the relationship (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:24).

(c) Determining the purpose, needs and goals

According to Pinho *et al.* (2005:24), the reason for the relationship plays a critical role in the matching process of mentor and mentee. Blunt and Conolly (2006:206) mention that, despite the preoccupation with the characteristics that mentors ought to demonstrate, it is the needs and goals of the mentee that should indicate the characteristics required in a mentor. For example, while some mentees might need help with securing resources others, such as females, may just need personal affirmation. If the goal is career advancement, for example, it may be best to pair the mentee with a white man; if the goal is building self-esteem and self-worth, a homogeneous pairing of those from similar race and/or cultural backgrounds might be preferable. Rarely will all mentees need help with everything. Similarly, mentee goals will vary and this can influence the matching process for their businesses (Blunt & Conolly, 2006:206).

(d) Power relations and business level

Blunt and Conolly (2006:206) suggest that when matching a mentoring pair the power relations of the mentor relative to the mentee seem decisive for the success of the relationship. This distinguishes formal from informal mentoring. With formal relationships the choice of a mentor would usually be made for the mentee, and this can disturb the power relations. The mentee needs to feel convinced that there is a need for the relationship. In informal mentoring relationships the mentee and mentor's mutual acceptance provides the balance of power.

Another aspect relating to power relations, which should be considered when matching participants, is the level of the business hierarchy in which the mentor finds himself or herself. Certain programmes use mentors who are two or more levels higher in the business and who are outside the formal lines of report from the mentee (Allen & Eby, 2010:353). Clutterbuck and Lane (2016:14) caution, though, that the greater the hierarchical distance between mentor and mentee, the greater the communication gap and the less the interaction, challenging both mutual trust and obligation. Allen and Eby (2010:354) note that mentees may be able to relate to, and emulate, mentors closer to them in rank. This may be because it seems a more realistic model for their immediate aspirations.

(e) Changing attitude towards demographic variables

A review of the existing literature shows that females, visible minorities, disabled persons and people of colour face considerable hurdles with respect to mentoring (Leck *et al.*, 2014:3). Mentoring programmes that pair mentors and mentees solely on the basis of gender or race may find that parties connect on the basis of these group memberships, but they may or may not connect on other, deeper levels of diversity that define their inner values and sense of self (Clutterbuck & Ragins, 2002:5). Special caution should be taken with regard to females and people of colour, as they report much lower instances of being mentored (Blunt & Conolly, 2006:20). Females mentored by other females report greater interpersonal security than do females with men as their mentors (Allen, Day & Lentz, 2005:156). In addition, females mentored by females receive more psychosocial support and career-development support than those mentored by men (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). Mentoring is arguably indispensable for females for the purposes of developing their leadership skills and mentoring

programmes are the most frequently cited business practice offered to address gender differences in career advancement (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Ayer, 2010:6; Catalyst Census, 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:549).

Factors such as age, social class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation must be considered when pairing mentors and mentees (Blunt & Conolly, 2006:206; Allen & Eby, 2010:353). For minority groups, being of the same gender and race as their mentor was found to be important for increased psychosocial support and satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (Kogler, Hill & Gant, 2000; Underhill, 2006:303). Later research by Kent *et al.* (2015:118) mentions that the lack of diversity with regard to both ethnicity and culture amongst mentors has resulted in the creation of cross-cultural mentor/mentee relationships. Allan (2010:606) found that the primary barrier to effective and non-discriminatory mentoring for nurses, was the lack of preparation within businesses around how cultural differences affect mentoring and learning. Stanley and Lincoln (2005:44) found cross-cultural pairing in higher education settings allowed both individuals to explore their cultural differences and enhance knowledge and social development. Culturally aware and sensitive mentors and mentees are imperative for successful mentoring relationships to develop in this context (Kent *et al.*, 2015:118).

Many authors (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Kent *et al.*, 2015:118) found that if individuals have positive attitudes towards diversity, coupled with previous experiences in racially heterogeneous interactions, cross-cultural mentoring is more likely to be successful. It seems that the quality and actions of mentors matter more than their culture, race or gender. Racial differences appear to become less significant as long as mentors are able to encourage mentees to feel secure within their own cultural identity and engage in activities that enhance mentees' knowledge, while remaining aware of the cultural baggage they bring to the relationship (Blickle *et al.*, 2010:1902).

3.8.1.2 Mentor specific challenges

Overcoming challenges related to the mentor, such as a lack of experience, personal problems, insufficient screening, relationship difficulties and lack of qualified mentors, is important in the development of successful mentoring relationships as discussed next.

(a) Ensuring mentors have experience

Incompetent or untrained mentors can negatively affect the outcome of the mentoring programme (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21; Cull, 2006:10) such as when the mentee perceives the mentor as deficient in interpersonal or technical skills (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:464). It is imperative that, when selecting mentors, consideration be given to both the expertise and the respective skills that the mentors possess. Since the effectiveness of mentorship depends on knowledge, attitude and competence, lack of expertise could lead to mentors failing to provide focus and guidance to mentees (Rankhumisi, 2013:375).

It is beneficial to use mentors who have had previous experience in business mentoring (St Jean & Audet, 2012:12). For career advancement, mentoring assists females with some of the difficulties they experience in a male-dominated corporate environment and the mentor needs the necessary knowledge and experience to guide females in this regard (Potgieter, 2011:3). In the entrepreneurial context, the purpose of mentoring is to learn from the experience of other entrepreneurs and, as a means of providing training, it can accommodate entrepreneurs' preference for applied and experiential learning (St Jean & Audet, 2012:4).

(b) Favourable mentor behaviour

When the mentor is dysfunctional in general and has personal problems that might interfere with her or his ability to guide the mentored individual effectively, the mentoring relationship might not achieve the desired results (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012: 464). If there is a social distance between the mentoring pair, it can also result in a negative mentoring experience (Cull, 2006:10; Sarri, 2011:722). Relationship issues such as manipulative behaviour, broken promises and lack of commitment by a mentor can hinder effective mentoring (Sphigelman & Gill 2012:464). Bullying and discriminatory practices by mentors in the workplace as well as constantly questioning mentees can lead to negative mentoring experiences (Allen & Eby, 2010:609). Distancing behaviour by a male mentor from a female mentee could be because of the perception that the relationship could be damaged by sexual misinterpretations (Kumar *et al.*, 2012:362). This, in turn, could lead to a possible failure to identify talented females as potential leaders, which could reduce business effectiveness.

The outcome of the mentoring experience is influenced by disruptive behaviour and arises when the mentor misuses his/her position of power through, for example, dictatorial mentor behaviour; inappropriate delegation; deceit; and credit taking (Kumar *et al.*, 2013:362). In addition, mentors should not overwork mentees or take credit for their accomplishments, or attempt to impress mentees and practice self-promotion (Kumar *et al.*, 2013:359) - behavior that would clearly be detrimental to the mentoring relationship. Formal mentors must guard against becoming overly dominant as this causes the mentees to lose their sense of self-sufficiency. Mentees must be cautious not to increase demands on prospective mentors as this can further prohibit successful mentoring from occurring, or lead to a mentor neglecting or intentionally excluding the mentee from important meetings or events (Sarri, 2011:722; Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:464). Care must be taken in instances where one, or both, parties engage in behaviour that sabotages the work or career success of the other (Kumar *et al.*, 2013:360).

Research has found that gender role stereotypes can either consciously or unconsciously cause male mentors to assume that female mentees lack the skills to grasp complex problems; further, when females do succeed, it is frequently attributed more to luck rather than competency (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1; Leck *et al.* 2014:4). Gender role stereotypes may also prevent male mentors from getting too acquainted with female mentees (Lankau *et al.*, 2005:252; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1).

(c) Finding available and qualified mentors

Poor recruitment and the inadequate screening of prospective mentors can lead to the mentoring relationship failing to achieve the desired results (Cull, 2006:11; Sarri, 2011:723). Poor recruitment could be as a result of a lack of available mentors in an industry or profession (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:268) and for mentoring to succeed, it is vital to have a selection of mentors available to aid in effective implementation of the intervention (Rankhumisi, 2013:375). It is often difficult to find a mentor who is totally suitable for the mentee, within a certain business (Godwin 2011:1); to overcome this, businesses may seek a mentor external to the business (Baugh & Sullivan, 2005:426). However, effective mentors are often not only lacking within a specific business, but also within the vicinity of the business (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445). Someone with the experience and potential to mentor may exist in another location within the

business or may be elsewhere within that industry (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:4). Negative biases towards females exacerbate the difficulty in them finding a mentor (Leck *et al.*, 2014:4). Online mentoring, as a new approach, overcomes the geographical distance between mentor and mentee, and provides mentees with a much larger pool of potential mentors, which can assist females in finding a suitable mentor (Leck *et al.*, 2014:22).

3.8.1.3 Mentee-specific challenges

Different challenges related to the mentee, and how they may be avoided, are discussed in the following section.

(a) Clarification of the role of the mentee

Research by Pinho *et al.* (2005:24) indicates that mentors felt that there was a lack of understanding on the part of mentees regarding how to reciprocate, and that the relationship began as a one-sided, 'giving' one. It was further indicated that the challenge to ensuring that the relationship became interdependent, rather than dependent, was often addressed through a process of guidance and challenge to the mentees to reflect on their own knowledge and solutions. Although the professionalism of mentors ensures that mentoring is delivered as effectively as possible, the role of the mentee is becoming increasingly important for successful mentoring to occur (Bamford, 2011:152). In a study by Rankhumise (2013:377) a group of mentors surveyed posited that for successful mentoring to take place, the role of the mentee should be explicit. The mentees in the context of the intervention are encouraged to plan, record and give feedback to their mentors, while the mentors should provide advice and indicate whether the mentoring experience has developed in terms of leadership skills and self-confidence.

A mentoring relationship can become dysfunctional in terms of overdependence, resentment, deception or harassment. Pinho *et al.* (2005:24) further indicated that some mentors found it particularly difficult to avoid taking a leading role, especially when mentees were very junior. The preferred mentoring role should be that of guiding, counselling and allowing for the development of insight. Importantly, for the experience to work, both mentor and mentee need to take equal responsibility since the intervention is not individualistic (Rankhumise, 2013:377).

(b) Female perceptions and expectations

Cross-gender mentoring can present serious challenges to female mentees (Orser, 2013:412). In the absence of administrators, where mentors and mentees are matched in an informal relationship, females are faced with the challenge of initiating a relationship with a member of the opposite gender. Females may be disinclined to initiate a relationship in case it is perceived as a sexual advance (Orser, 2013:412). In both informal and formal mentoring settings, male mentors and female mentees may be reluctant to enter cross-gender mentoring relationships to avoid office gossip, perceived sexual involvement, accusations of sexual harassment, discrediting innuendoes, jealous spouses and resentful co-workers (Morgan & Davidson, 2008:123; Orser, 2013:412; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). Morgan and Davidson (2008:123) argue that, since what represents a good mentoring relationship comes dangerously close to what represents a romantic relationship, cross-gender mentorships should be avoided so as to limit the number of opportunities for the mentoring relationship to fail. Even when females elect to be mentored by men, researchers argue that finding a male mentor may be problematic because females have fewer informal and formal opportunities to access and interact with male mentors (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1; Leck *et al.*, 2014:4).

Pinho *et al.* (2005:23) found that men tend to be looking for career development and advancement opportunities, whilst female mentees are more focused on the relationship for providing guidance, direction and psychosocial support (for example, balancing work and family life and gaining confidence in career decision-making). Different socialisation practices can also cause dysfunction in the mentoring relationship: female mentees have often been conditioned to use relationship practices (for example, dependency, nurturing, accommodation), while male mentors are frequently over-protective and paternalistic (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1). Research has consistently demonstrated that mentoring is most effective for females when they are mentored by females, however, the scarcity of females in senior roles makes this difficult to accomplish (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:1; Leck *et al.*, 2014:11). As a consequence, many aspiring young females must establish successful mentoring relationships with male mentors (Orser, 2013:412). Piterman (2008:29) notes that enterprising females may have to concede that a strategic relationship with a key senior male is necessary if they are to realise success. To address this challenge,

online mentoring can be utilised. By reducing the reliance on face-to-face communication, there is greater social distance and less chance of perceptual biases and stereotypes, discrimination and misinterpreted relationships and also access to a bigger selection of possible mentors (Leck *et al.*, 2014:22).

General challenges that pose a barrier to the development of successful mentoring programmes are discussed next.

3.8.2 General challenges

What follows is a discussion of general challenges that may hinder the development of successful mentoring relationships. Ways on how to overcome these challenges are suggested.

3.8.2.1 Overcoming mistrust

A great challenge to both mentors and mentees is one of establishing trust in the formal mentoring relationship (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:23; Godwin 2011:1) and Leck and Wood (2013:105) suggest that mentoring is only effective when trust is formed between the parties. The establishment of trust appears to be influenced by cross-gender and cross-racial issues as well as black economic empowerment in South Africa, as explained below.

(a) Gender and race

Orser (2013:413) notes that trust between male mentors and female mentees may be a challenge, causing difficulties in the mentoring relationship. It was found that mentors would rather choose their male mentees over their equally qualified female mentees, indicating that they do not trust their female mentees as much as their male mentees. It is therefore not surprising that men favour males over females for important projects or promotions and, consequently, it is not surprising that females are limited in their access to positions of power (Orser, 2013:421). Blunt and Conolly, (2006:199) found it was more likely that corporate white men, rather than females and black mentees, would be allocated a senior mentor.

In research by Pinho *et al.* (2005:23), a black male mentee found it difficult to develop trust with a white female mentor. The mentee indicated that he did not trust his female

mentor sufficiently to discuss any issues other than those necessary for the completion of his learnership programme. In another case, a coloured female mentee with a white male mentor had not established a relationship based on trust even after being in the relationship with the mentor for just under two years. In contrast, three white female mentees mentored by three white male mentors had established careers and viewed the mentoring relationship as being between equals and as a form of friendship.

Trust in the mentoring pair's relationship could be facilitated by spending more time together in a formal relationship, as this allows the parties to jointly complete work-related assignments (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:24; Leck & Wood, 2013:105). Mentors need to be open to, and aware of, the way they communicate with their mentees and encourage mentees to take responsibility to make decisions. Open and honest dialogue on the part of both mentee and mentor is necessary to build a relationship based on trust and respect (Ehrich, 2008:478).

(b) Black Economic Empowerment

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is an initiative launched by the South African government to address past restrictions in the country for black individuals, in order for them to participate fairly in the economy (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013:123). After the transition from apartheid in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) government decided that direct intervention in the redistribution of assets and opportunities was required to resolve the economic disparities created by apartheid policies, which had favoured white business owners. BEE was intended to transform the economy so that it was representative of the country's racial demographics (Mehta & Ward, 2016:1). The BEE programme was implemented in 2003 but was criticised for benefiting only a narrow group of people from previously disadvantaged groups, and this led to the introduction, in 2007, of a modified programme called Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment or B-BBEE (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013:123).

This aspect is a particularly sensitive one in cross-gender and cross-race relationships, where mentoring programmes are seen as being remedial for females and blacks (Brondyk & Searby, 2013:193). Rankhumise (2013:371) claims that some of the perceived fears associated with mentoring relationships in South Africa are that the mentees could – in future – take their mentors' jobs. This could mean that mentors are

less willing to assist mentees, since the increasing skills development of black people could result in white people being retrenched and having fewer opportunities. The mentoring relationship could also be viewed as unfair because colleagues and peers may see it as a means of getting ahead (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21).

Mentoring in this context requires a change in the style of management to a more open, supportive, flexible and approachable leadership style. Openness to diversity is a vital aspect of successful mentoring programmes (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012:186; Meyer & Mabasa, 2013). The mentor must know how his or her own background impacts on the mentor-mentee relationship. In addition, the mentor should be sensitive towards the background of the mentee. Mentors must be careful not to suggest suppression of the mentees' cultural heritages. The mentoring pair should confront attitudes, behaviours and fears that work to the disadvantage of either party (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012:86). The mentor and mentee must both adopt more self-awareness and proactive behavior in communication and speak openly about their fears. The opportunity should be used by each party to engage with those who are different in order to fully 'discover' themselves (Meyer & Mabasa, 2013).

3.8.2.2 Time-related issues

Time-related issues that accompany a mentoring programme can place pressure on the mentor/mentee relationship (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:23); these issues deal with potential limitations that may result from the mentor or mentee's work and life demands, and scheduling problems. It is often difficult to access mentors who are busy (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:3). Godwin (2011:1) emphasises that the frequency of meetings and the duration of contact time have a great influence on the success or failure of a mentoring relationship. Meetings should be scheduled at regular intervals as this provides structure, predictability and support (Allen & Eby, 2010:339).

Another challenge to success is when the period assigned to mentoring is insufficient (Weiler *et al.*, 2015:197). Mentees exposed to shorter mentoring periods may not learn all that they should (Rankhumisi, 2013:376). Samier (2000:92) found that optimal duration is a critical aspect to develop and, for effective mentoring to take place, deem two to five years as reasonable. Based on this, it could be argued that mentees should be allowed to stay in a mentoring programme for a longer period so that they learn all

aspects of the work and gain confidence in performing work-related tasks (Rankhumise 2013:376; Weiler *et al.*, 2015:197).

The time-related issues faced by females, due to work responsibilities and family commitments, often diminish, if not stop, successful mentoring, suggest Bierema and Merriam (2002:214). Petridou (2009:526) confirms that female entrepreneurs are exposed to considerable stress when balancing their professional and domestic environments which can influence their availability for mentoring sessions.

Headlam-Wells *et al.* (2005:445) and Petridou (2009:526) suggest the use of online mentoring as the opportunities offered through this medium can facilitate female entrepreneurs in enhancing their learning capacity and improving their competences. Time is saved as the need for a face-to-face relationship is eliminated. Online mentoring allows for flexibility with time and space since mentees and mentors do not need to be in the same place at the same time, which holds great promise for female entrepreneurs.

3.8.2.3 Clear planning and direction

Godwin (2011:11) suggests that a lack of planning and direction in the mentoring programme can lead to a poor mentoring experience. Defining roles and ground-rules in the programme can positively influence the mentoring relationship by providing the necessary structure (Cull, 2006:10; Allen & Eby, 2010:357). Blunt and Conolly (2006:198) note that critical factors for successful mentoring include setting clear objectives; clarifying expected outcomes; thorough planning of mentoring activities; and defining the mentor and mentee roles. Mentoring may be jeopardised because of inadequate definition of roles and ground-rules (Sarri, 2011:722). It is important to clearly define roles in the relationship – Pinho *et al.* (2005:23) found that male and female mentees differ in terms of their expectations and the way they perceive challenges experienced.

3.8.2.4 Negating locational differences

Where the mentoring parties are located (Godwin 2011:1) and whether or not there is a geographical distance, can hinder mentoring effectiveness (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:3). Conventional mentoring, at least for the majority, occurs through face-to-face meetings and communication and being in another location makes conventional mentoring approaches problematic (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:3). This means that conventional mentoring is essentially limited to the local vicinity. Geographical distance between the potential mentee and mentor is therefore a significant barrier in developing a successful mentoring relationship (Allen & Eby, 2010:354). This implies that effective mentoring may not be a possibility for those living in remote and rural areas such as in parts of South Africa (Petridou, 2009:536).

If the only available mentor is not close to the potential mentee, the distance between the mentor and mentee may make meetings between them unviable. When a mentor and mentee are in close vicinity, costs of travel remain minimal or non-applicable. However, when one or both parties have to travel, it incurs a cost (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445). In many cases the time required for conventional face-to-face mentoring is a major obstacle to its use and the costs involved essentially limit conventional mentoring to the local vicinity (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:3). When the relative lack of suitable female role-models in management positions is considered, it is evident that these constraints are intensified for females aiming to progress (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:446). Online mentoring can solve these problems since one of its major advantages is its cost-effectiveness, as discussed in the following chapter (Headlam - Wells *et al.*, 2005:445; Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117).

Specific challenges to mentoring in large businesses are highlighted in the following section.

3.8.3 Business-specific challenges

Below are some mentoring challenges specific to the business setting that could possibly influence the development of successful mentoring relationships as well as ways of overcoming these challenges.

3.8.3.1 Obtaining management commitment

Commitment to mentorship by management plays a pivotal role in the success of the mentoring relationship (Rankhumise, 2013:376). Senior management should create a business climate that is conducive to mentoring, but if they are not committed to the process, the programme may not succeed (Lewis & Kourdi, 2012:30). The challenge for females to progress beyond the 'glass ceiling' has led to an increase in mentoring as a tool for females's career and management development (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212). Research on business support and, inter alia, the commitment of management to the mentoring process, may be a critical step in understanding why females are under-represented in top management positions worldwide (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:30).

3.8.3.2 Setting policies and plans

There should be plans not just for general training, but also specifically for mentoring within the business. Policies and procedures must be developed that allow commitment from both mentor and mentee (Polikoff *et al.*, 2015:77). Rankhumise (2013:377) suggests that a needs analysis for training plans for mentees is vital. A proper needs assessment in the business should be done to ensure that mentorship is based on identified areas in which mentees require intensive intervention. Guiding policies regarding the implementation of mentoring should be communicated to employees (Allen & Eby, 2010:358). Policies should be established to eliminate the gender impact in mentoring and to change the behaviour towards mentoring of females (Panopoulos & Sarri 2013:223). Although mentoring might be taking place in a business, there are often no statistics or other evidence to show how many, and which, employees have been mentored. In addition, the evaluation process should be clarified (Allen & Eby, 2010:358; Rankhumise, 2013:376).

3.8.4 Small business-specific challenges

Specific mentoring challenges in the small business context, as well as how these can be overcome, are discussed in this section.

3.8.4.1 Increasing the understanding of the benefits of mentoring

Galli (2013:40) has posited that one of the reasons small businesses tend not to use mentoring is because of a lack of understanding of its benefits and, in addition, it is

difficult to persuade them of these benefits (Peel, 2008:3). In recent years, in the United Kingdom, the use of mentors in small businesses has become more prevalent especially during business start-up, finds Galli (2013:38). Small businesses that use mentors are also more likely to use other forms of advice and guidance and are generally more proactive, which might explain why they achieve better growth than those that do not use mentors. Nyakio (2013:25) reported a failure in research to find consistent links between mentoring and a range of performance-related variables such as survival, sales growth and profitability of small businesses. Matlay (2000:205) mentioned that in the early twenty-first century small businesses had little interest in any formal mentoring scheme on offer. This was perhaps because of a lack of evidence showing how business development can be influenced by profitability. Nyako (2013:25) found that the challenge in establishing this link is as a result of the sheer number of variables that could influence overall profitability of the small business, making the task an impossible one. Galli (2013:47) suggests that small businesses should be made aware of the benefits of mentoring through provision of evidence of small businesses that had successfully used mentoring and seen positive benefits - it is assumed that entrepreneurs will be interested if they are made aware of mentoring, and if they understand the benefits it can bring.

3.8.4.2 Creating awareness of mentoring and its opportunities

In the study by Galli (2013) small businesses believed that mentors were largely used by struggling businesses, which other evidence negates. They believed it might be difficult to find a suitable mentor and did not think mentors were available in their area with knowledge of their sector. Moreover, there is evidence that the majority of small businesses are uncertain about how to find a suitable mentor. The main reason given in the study was that there was no need for a mentor at the present time. Some had not given the subject any previous thought and others perceived that they did not have the time for it (Galli, 2013:40). Other reasons given were: small businesses were not aware of mentoring schemes being available; a view that the appropriate type of assistance was not available; a lack of understanding regarding what mentors do; and previous unsatisfactory experiences. Peel (2008:10) notes that affordability was also given as a reason for not pursuing a mentor.

Galli (2013:48) advises that Chambers of Commerce and other business networks, sector trade associations, local business enterprises and networking businesses get involved in promoting mentoring as a means of assisting entrepreneurs, and state that these businesses could likely match small business entrepreneurs with appropriate mentors. Galli (2013:42) also suggests that more priority should be given to mentoring within the context of entrepreneurship education at school and university. Sarri (2011:736) posits that mentors should be properly trained to provide entrepreneurial assistance, which can lead to successful mentoring relationships in this context.

3.8.4.3 Restricted resources

Another potential barrier is the small business's own restricted resources (Peel, 2008:10) with regard to time, finances, and employees. Small business owners/managers recognise that, because of their size, they have insufficient finances to spend on mentoring (Peel 2008:10). Small businesses also lose time when in mentoring meetings, which impacts on the income that could have been generated (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:190). Small business owner/managers are reluctant to make any investment in mentoring, due to a lack of immediate return on the finances invested: they tend to be more focussed on short-term gains (Peel, 2008:10).

Galli (2013:43) found that small businesses assume that mentors would not be of assistance without being given something in return, which is contrary to the fact that many mentors are volunteers and work without charge. Further to this, some small businesses were uncertain about the motives of mentors in providing this support, particularly if they were not being paid. This appears to point to mistrust of mentors and their motives (Galli, 2013:43). Another related financial aspect, which serves to clarify the owner/ managers' viewpoints about investing in mentoring, is the fact that within the small business context there is a real fear of employees being poached (Peel, 2008:11). Galli (2013:40) suggests that, since the perceived cost of mentoring is a barrier to entrepreneurs, it should be provided free of charge for the first few sessions, so that – later in time – entrepreneurs might be willing to pay for the service. Many mentoring businesses use this approach already (Management Mentors, 2015a).

From the previous sections it is clear that various challenges relating to the mentor, mentee, large businesses and small businesses can inhibit successful mentoring relationships in developing. Challenges relating to the mentoring pair can be overcome if those matching this pair take into consideration the talent and skill levels of the mentee; the personality of the mentee; the purpose needs and goals of the mentee; the power relations and level of the mentor relative to the mentee; and certain demographic variables. Mentor-related challenges can be overcome if mentors are screened and selected based on their expertise and skills, and are warned against disruptive behavior in the mentoring relationship. The mentee-related challenges can be overcome if the mentee's role in the relationship is clearly outlined and gender-related issues in the mentoring pair's relationship are addressed. General mentoring challenges can be overcome by both establishing trust in the relationship and if time, cost and location-related issues are dealt with effectively. Small business-specific challenges can be negated if small business owners are informed of the benefits of mentoring so as to facilitate a positive attitude towards mentoring and a willingness to invest scarce resources for the use and implementation of mentoring practices. The benefits of mentoring for mentees, mentors, the corporate business and entrepreneurs will be discussed in the following section.

3.9 BENEFITS OF MENTORING

The benefits of modern mentoring relationships on mentee and mentor level, as well as on a business (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:2) and entrepreneurial level (Van der Sijde & Weijman, 2013:194) are recorded and have been well documented (Hamilton & Scandura, 2003; Bierema & Hill, 2005). The benefits experienced by mentees and mentors will be discussed next.

3.9.1 Benefits of mentoring for mentees and mentors

Table 3.5 provides a summary of the benefits of mentoring to the mentee and the mentor.

Table 3.5: Benefits of mentoring for mentees and mentors

BENEFITS FOR THE MENTEE	SOURCES
➤ Skills development	Clutterbuck (2006:6); Amelink (2008:3); Ayer (2010:19-20); Ghosh & Reio (2013:108); Leck & Wood (2013:1010); Koyuncu, Burke, Alayoglu & Wolpin (2014:4)
➤ Improved career outcomes	Eby & Lockwood (2005:448); Underhill (2006:294); Potgieter (2011:13); Ghosh & Reio (2013:106,108); Leck & Wood (2013:101, 102); Koyuncu <i>et al.</i> (2014:4); Management Mentors (2015b); Menges (2016:99)
➤ Emotional development	Elkin & Elkin (2008:2); Eby & Lockwood (2005:449); Underhill (2006:300); Ayer (2010:19); Kumar & Blake-Beard (2012:79); Leck & Wood (2013:101,102)
BENEFITS FOR THE MENTOR	SOURCES
➤ Sense of fulfilment and satisfaction	Elkin & Elkin (2008:2); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:21); Amelink (2008:3); Rowland (2012:2)
➤ Deeper sense of purpose and belonging	Chun, Sosik & Yun (2012:1077); Ghosh & Reio (2013:108)
➤ Gain visibility and respect	Amelink (2008:3)
➤ Develop business and communication skills	Shrestha <i>et al.</i> (2009:119); Ghosh & Reio (2013:108)
➤ Improve reflection on work	Shrestha <i>et al.</i> (2009:117)
➤ Improve work performance	Shrestha <i>et al.</i> (2009:117)
➤ Increase career growth aspects	Ghosh & Reio (2013:113)

Source: Researcher’s own compilation

The benefits of mentoring depicted in Table 3.5 as experienced by mentees are discussed next.

3.9.1.1 Benefits of mentoring for mentees

With the guidance, encouragement and support of a trusted and experienced mentor a mentee can be provided with a broad range of personal and professional benefits, ultimately leading to improved performance in the workplace (Leck *et al.*, 2014:3; Page, 2014). Ayer (2010:19-20) summarised the mentee benefits in outcome-based categories such as skills development, and career and emotional outcomes. These outcomes will be discussed in the section to follow.

(a) Skills development

Mentees benefit by increasing knowledge and technical ability (Clutterbuck, 2006:6). Mentoring can further the mentees' career advancement as the mentees learn the technical aspects of a profession, thereby increasing their professional competence (Amelink, 2008:3). Mentees also benefit from enhanced new skills development (Leck & Wood, 2013:101; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:108), particularly leadership skills (Koyuncu *et al.*, 2014:4).

(b) Career outcomes

Mentees can benefit by being in a mentoring relationship that provides them with a career plan and a wider network of influencers and learning resources (Underhill, 2006:294; Menges, 2016:99). In addition, mentees may achieve some or all of their career goals (Potgieter 2011:13) while they learn from their mentors and are provided with feedback, encouragement, advice and guidance (Leck & Wood, 2013:101). Due to mentees' career development promotions, higher salaries, increased preparedness to handle new career roles, and greater career mobility due to improved work performance can be achieved (Leck & Wood, 2013:101; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:108). Mentoring also results in improved business commitment and job satisfaction (Potgieter, 2011:13) and helps the mentee to better understand the business's culture and unspoken rules, both of which can be critical for career success (Management Mentors, 2015b).

All these benefits are experienced through mentors providing guidance and support in a variety of ways to their mentees – acting as advisors, teachers and sounding boards, among other things (Koyuncu *et al.*, 2014:4). Increased networking opportunities are also provided for mentees (Eby & Lockwood, 2005:448) and Leck and Wood (2013:102) note that mentoring furthermore assists with improving positive visibility for the mentees. Ghosh and Reio (2013:106) and Koyuncu *et al.* (2014:4) note that a great advantage to mentees is the early career socialisation that they experience.

(c) Emotional development

A less tangible, but more powerful outcome of mentoring for mentees is the change in emotional state, including increased confidence, satisfaction, reflective space, status and the pleasure of a different kind of intellectual challenge (Leck & Wood, 2013:101).

Kumar and Blake-Beard (2012:79) note that mentoring may induce a feeling of having more power. All of the above result in increased levels of confidence for mentees and the achievement of personal and professional success (Ayer 2010:19). As a result, mentees often experience less work stress, lower work–family conflict and less desire to leave a business, than those who are not in mentoring relationships (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:2; Underhill, 2006:300). Mentoring aids mentees in evolving a work identity and an increase in self-esteem, as mentioned by Leck and Wood (2013:102). Other benefits noted were work role clarification and a sense of pride for being selected to participate in the programme (Eby & Lockwood, 2005:449).

The benefits of mentoring, as experienced by mentors, are discussed next.

3.9.1.2 Benefits of mentoring for mentors

Mentors report numerous tangible benefits from being involved in a mentoring relationship. The relationship offers mutual benefits for mentors willing to invest their time in developing another professional (Page, 2014). According to Ghosh and Reio (2013:114), if mentees knew from the start of a mentoring programme that they were joining a partnership where both parties were likely to accrue benefits, they would be more disposed to develop a reciprocal relationship than a hierarchical one-way connection primarily geared towards their career needs and without any consideration to the mentor.

Mentors gain a sense of fulfillment through helping and sharing their experiences (Amelink, 2008:3) and perceive a sense of personal satisfaction from assisting the mentee (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21; Elkin & Elkin, 2008:2). Participation in mentoring also seems to provide mentors with enhanced self-esteem and improved confidence (Rowland, 2012:2). The fresh energy and perspectives provided by mentees, can lead to personal satisfaction and exhilaration, creating a deeper sense of purpose and belonging to businesses by mentors (Chun *et al.*, 2012:1077; Ghosh & Reio, 2013:108). Mentors may also gain visibility and respect as they are associated with the successes of their mentee. Mentoring gives mentors a sense of accomplishment and continuity in their professional lives. A sense of personal validation is afforded mentors through seeing others benefit from their experience (Amelink, 2008:3).

Mentors indicate that mentoring helped them develop better business and communication skills (Shreshta *et al.*, 2009:119). Mentoring can promote relational skills and competencies that pave the way for enhanced career outcomes, such as advancement and satisfaction for mentors (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:108) and has also been found to improve mentors' skills in providing constructive feedback to others, and to develop their understanding of mentoring activities (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117).

Mentoring appears to help improve mentors' reflection on, and improvement in, their own work (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117). In addition, mentors can increase their own career growth prospects by delegating to mentees, relying on them for information and support, and increasing their reputations through their mentees' accomplishments (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:108). The mentor may also benefit in the sense that he or she may be more likely to be promoted for identifying a capable success in the mentee, thus accruing more long-term career success (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:113).

3.9.2 Benefits of mentoring for the business

In order for the mentoring relationship to be considered a worthwhile investment, the business must benefit in addition to the mentoring pair (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:2-3). Providing mentoring in order to develop promising employees, benefits the business (Ghosh & Reio, 2013:113) by creating a pool of talented staff, for succession purposes, who are less likely to leave the business. Clutterbuck (2006:43) as cited in Ayer (2010:20), divided the business rewards of mentoring into primary and secondary benefits as outlined in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Benefits of mentoring for the business

PRIMARY BENEFITS	SECONDARY BENEFITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Easier recruitment and induction for staff➤ Facilitate succession planning➤ Cost savings➤ Improved strategic planning➤ Improved business environment➤ Improved employee morale, performance and motivation➤ Improved communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Improved efficiency and productivity of employee➤ Greater career satisfaction➤ Improved and faster integration into the business➤ Greater dedication and loyalty to business

Source: Adapted from Clutterbuck (2006:43); Ayer (2010:20)

The primary benefits for the business will be discussed next.

3.9.2.1 Primary benefits

Clutterbuck (2006:343) notes that one of the core benefits of mentoring is an improved recruiting ability and induction for staff. Investing in business mentoring is a useful and cost-effective way to both develop emerging talent and keep the most knowledgeable and experienced performers in the business engaged and energised. Mentoring aids in developing a steady flow of future leaders who understand the skills and attitudes required to succeed within the business (Page, 2014) and assists with succession planning in the business (Ayer, 2010:20). Leck and Wood (2013:102) contend that mentoring provides businesses with cost savings and enhancement of their strategic planning ability.

A positive business environment can be developed through mentoring by enhancing a clearer understanding of career commitments and expectations, resulting in enhanced employee performance, accelerated training opportunities and production of better trained employees (Leck & Wood, 2013:102). Mentoring subsequently leads to improved staff morale, performance and motivation (Page, 2014). Internal communication can be improved and, subsequently, a stronger business culture can be created (Ensher & Murphy, 2011:254; Management Mentors, 2015b).

3.9.2.2 Secondary benefits

Clutterbuck (2006:343) and Ayer (2010:20) list increased efficiency and productivity of the mentored individual in the business, greater career satisfaction experienced by mentored staff, and mentored managers showing an improved and quicker integration into the business when introduced to a new professional environment. Mentoring relationships can also lead to a better business commitment by the individuals involved and greater dedication and loyalty to the business, which can result in increased retention of valuable employees (Leck & Wood, 2013:102; Management Mentors, 2015b).

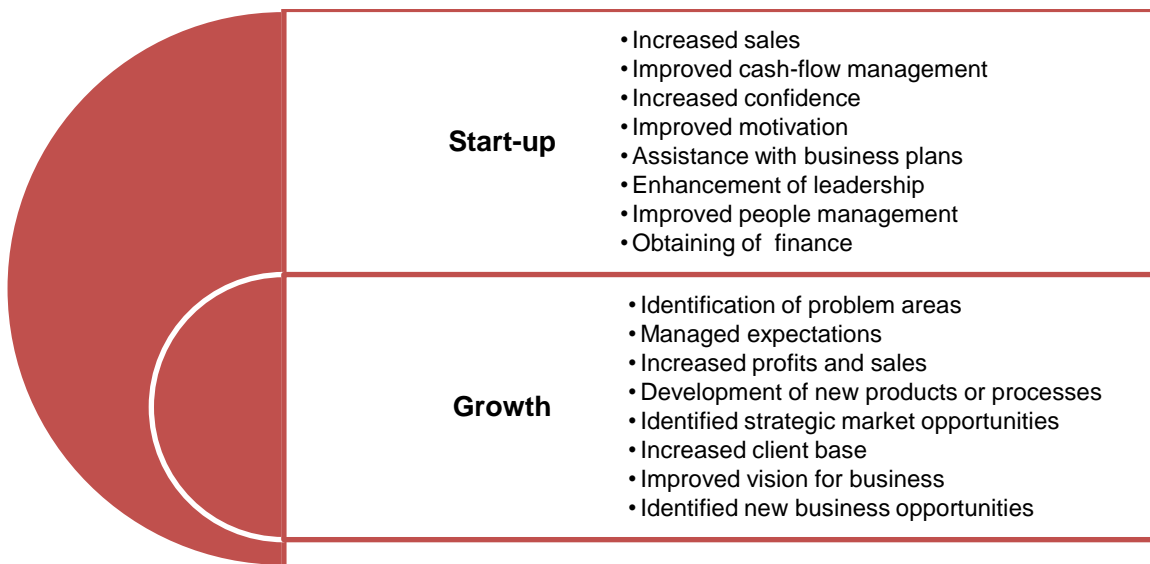
The benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs will be discussed next.

3.9.3 Benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs

The recognised benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs, reported in the literature, seem rather incongruent and the benefits of working with a mentor tend to be

underscored (Ayer, 2010: 21,104; St Jean & Mathieu, 2015:2). While most literature shows that entrepreneurs perceived that they benefited from a mentoring relationship, research was inconclusive due to a number of entrepreneurs who failed to acknowledge benefits (Cox, 2005; Ayer, 2010:21, 104; St Jean & Mathieu, 2015:2). Figure 3.1 provides a summary of the benefits experienced by entrepreneurs during the start-up and growth phase of the business.

Figure 3.1: Benefits of mentoring for entrepreneurs



Sources: Cull (2006:9); Ayer (2010:25); Sarri (2011:722); St Jean & Audet (2012:122); Galli (2013:52); Van der Sijde & Weijman (2013:196); St Jean & Mathieu (2015:3)

The benefits of a mentoring relationship for an entrepreneur during the start-up stage of the small business will be discussed next.

3.9.3.1 Benefits of mentoring during start-up

Sarri (2011:722) posited that interventions in small businesses should be focused on helping the entrepreneur to learn, rather than imposing prescribed solutions and consultancy. Support for new start-up entrepreneurs should be provided on a mentoring basis, as this is a more flexible approach, adjusted to their needs, experience, and identity, whilst at the same time dealing with the entrepreneurs' resistance to education and training. Van der Sijde and Weijman (2013:196) note that

entrepreneurial mentoring entails the support of an expert in overcoming problems a new entrepreneur encounters.

Because of the entrepreneur's lack of experience during the start-up stage, a mentor could be very involved and extremely helpful. In this phase the mentee seeks encouragement, positive support, helpful advice and useful ideas from the mentor (Ayer, 2010:25). Although the new generation of entrepreneurs has the enthusiasm and the technological awareness that is needed to survive in business, experienced mentors are required as they are experts in foreseeing pitfalls the small business may encounter. They may also assess the competition that the small business can experience, identify opportunities and threats in the environment and suggest viable solutions to overcome these. Mentors have faced similar situations in their businesses, have gone through the same type of product or service life cycle, and have learned how to assess trends and stay open to cues from the marketplace (Thulo, 2014).

Start-up requires basic advice from mentors on issues such as securing sales and creating an infrastructure for the business (Ayer, 2010:25). The support provided and the advice given about technical aspects, such as cash flow management, by capable mentors can prevent entrepreneurs from future failure (Ayer, 2010:104). Mentoring results in increased levels of confidence amongst young entrepreneurs (Cull, 2006:9). At the psychological level, reported benefits pertained to improved motivation of the young entrepreneur during this difficult phase as well as the willingness to participate and network, as opposed to isolating themselves from the rest of the world (St Jean & Mathieu, 2015:3).

According to a study by Galli (2013:52), mentors tended to assist mostly in developing business plans during start-up, as well as the enhancement of leadership or management skills, such as improving decision-making. Mentors also helped with people management and in obtaining finance, to a lesser degree. Galli (2013:47) confirms that many small businesses benefit from mentoring during their start-up phase. St Jean and Mathieu (2015:1) note that mentoring programmes were implemented to support novice entrepreneurs increase the success rate of the business.

The benefits of a mentoring relationship for an entrepreneur during the growth stage of the small business will be discussed next.

3.9.3.2 Benefits of mentoring during the growth stage

Mentors can assist mentees in maintaining momentum and energy after the start-up stage, especially as the start-up period could prove to be the most challenging time for businesses. Problem areas could be identified with a view to remedying the situation. Mentors should check the entrepreneurs' ability to work according to their business plan, and their ability to evaluate progress as well as the prospects of business growth. The mentor should also help the entrepreneur in managing the expectations of the business (Ayer, 2010:25). According to a study by Galli (2013:52), mentors tended to assist in increasing sales or profit, and developing new products or processes, during the growth stage. Mentors can assist in identifying strategic market opportunities and developing the right pitch to attract investors (Thulo, 2014).

During the growth phase, mentorship support is essential to assist with increasing the client base, exploring growth strategies and validating business sustainability (Sarri, 2011:722). An increase in the ability to manage, achieve goals, and learn, as well as transformations within the business itself – such as an increase in turnover figures, jobs, and profits – were cited by St Jean and Audet (2012:122) as some of the benefits that accrue in entrepreneurial mentoring. Moreover, it was observed that some entrepreneurs developed an improved vision for their business and that others had identified new business opportunities to pursue (Ozgen & Baron, 2007:175; St Jean & Audet, 2012:119).

From the preceding sections it can be noted that mentoring programmes have flourished due to all of the benefits offered by these programmes. The benefits of modern mentoring relationships were referred to on a mentee and mentor level, as well as on a business and entrepreneurial level. The benefits of mentoring for the mentee were divided in outcome-based categories such as skills development, and career and emotional outcomes. Mentors reported numerous tangible benefits through being involved in a mentoring relationship, such as gaining a sense of fulfilment and gaining visibility and respect as they are associated with the successes of their mentee. Providing mentoring to develop promising employees, benefits the business by

creating a pool of talented and loyal employees for succession purposes. The business rewards received from mentoring were divided into primary and secondary benefits. The benefits of a mentoring relationship for an entrepreneur during the start-up and growth stages of the small business were also noted.

The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of how online mentoring can be leveraged to maximise the benefits of mentoring programmes for females for business and career development. However, understanding conventional mentoring is paramount in order to fully understand online mentoring, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

A summary of the chapter is provided in the following section.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed and discussed conventional mentoring in detail. Mentoring is drawing great interest from business and educational sectors and is considered very important for the career, academic and psychosocial development of individuals. Since mentoring is the most frequently cited business practice offered to address gender differences in career advancement, many businesses have adopted these programmes in recognition of the fact that concerted efforts need to be made to assist females in their career development. For the purpose of the study, conventional mentoring is defined as a one-on-one, face-to-face, extended, confidential and protected relationship between a mentor (a more experienced and skilled person) and a mentee, focusing on the growth and professional development of the mentee. Mentoring can be classified into an informal, unstructured pairing of mentor and mentee or a formal, structured pairing. The degree of formality of a mentoring relationship influences the dynamics and outcome of the relationship. A discussion was provided of the basis of formal and informal mentoring, as well as the primary benefits and challenges associated with each.

A discussion of conventional mentoring development approaches, namely the psychosocial and career development approach; integrated approach; and relational approach ensued. From the literature it was clear that the psychosocial functions of mentor-mentee relationships (confirmation and acceptance, counselling, friendship

and role modelling) are particularly crucial for the career development of females and minorities in the workforce. The conventional concept of mentoring has been expanded to include peer mentoring (pairing an individual with an experienced and knowledgeable individual who is working at the same business level); group mentoring (matching several mentors, and various mentees); adult learner mentoring (appropriate when a younger, or more junior, member of a business mentors a more experienced or older colleague); and reciprocal mentoring (both mentor and mentee build a collaborative learning relationship, with benefits accruing to both partners).

Although the positive outcome of mentoring was acknowledged, the process is not without challenges. The various hurdles relating to the mentor, mentee, the corporate business and small businesses, which can inhibit the development of successful mentoring relationships, were discussed and ways to overcome these challenges were referred to. The benefits of mentoring for mentees, mentors, the corporate business and entrepreneurs were discussed in the final section of the chapter.

An understanding of conventional mentoring was required to fully comprehend online mentoring and to contextualise the many issues relating to conventional mentoring, specifically as it applies to the online mentoring environment, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

A REVIEW OF ONLINE MENTORING IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an overview of conventional mentoring was provided. Reference was made to the origin of mentoring and mentoring was contextualised for the study. A discussion was provided on formal and informal mentoring as well as the primary benefits and challenges associated with each. A discussion of conventional mentoring development approaches, namely, the psychosocial and career development approach; the integrated approach; and the relational approach, ensued. The conventional concept of mentoring was expanded to include peer mentoring; group mentoring; adult learner mentoring; and reciprocal mentoring. Although the positive outcomes of mentoring were acknowledged, it was conceded that the process is not without challenges. The various challenges relating to the mentor, mentee, corporate organisation and small business, which can inhibit successful mentoring relationships, were discussed and ways in which to overcome these challenges were referred to. Finally, the benefits of mentoring for mentees, mentors, the corporate organisation and entrepreneurs were outlined.

The challenges posed by conventional mentoring led to the emergence of online mentoring which can be used to complement, or as an alternative to, face-to-face mentoring (Murphy, 2011:606). This chapter commences with a discussion of online mentoring versus conventional mentoring. Different communication tools used in online mentoring are identified and briefly discussed. The key challenges associated with online mentoring are deliberated on, after which the benefits that online mentoring programmes offer in comparison to face-to-face mentoring programmes are expanded upon. A discussion on the guidelines and pre-requisites for the implementation of effective online mentoring programmes follows.

4.2 CONVENTIONAL VERSUS ONLINE MENTORING

Improved online communication due to the advancement of technology has enabled this manner of mentoring to develop without the face-to-face element (Single & Single, 2005; Williams & Kim, 2011:82). Online mentoring involves the sharing of knowledge and skills between mentor and mentee while they are not in physical proximity, through

using online means as the primary channel of communication (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:3; Williams & Kim, 2011:82). Ensher and Murphy (2007:300) define online mentoring as an ongoing, mutually-beneficial relationship in which a more experienced partner offers mentoring to a less experienced partner via online means. Many terms are used to describe online mentoring, such as computer-mediated mentoring (Cascio & Gasker, 2001); tele-mentoring (Stokes, 2001); email mentoring (Wood, 1999); internet mentoring (Sullivan, 2000); virtual mentoring (Knouse, 2001); and non-face to-face mentoring (Wood, 1999; Stokes, 2001). Hunt (2005:7) suggests that despite the fact that online mentoring uses technology, it remains a process in which people assist one another to develop and learn in a safe and supportive relationship. Table 4.1 summarises some of the major differences between conventional and online mentoring, which will be briefly discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Table 4.1: Conventional mentoring versus online mentoring

BASIS	MENTORING	
	CONVENTIONAL	ONLINE
Method of interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One-on-one ➤ Face-to-face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multiple mentoring relationships simultaneously ➤ Far less face time, if any
Geographical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local ➤ Pool of mentors limited to geographic area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Global ➤ Pool of mentors unlimited
Meeting time	Scheduled meetings	Conversations occur any time mentee has question or mentor has advice to share
Frequency	Scheduled times	As often or as rarely as necessary
Feedback	Only during meetings	Instant feedback any time necessary
Dialogue context	Unrehearsed conversation	Written discourse
Scope	General in scope	Narrow scope More intense, focused mentoring
Length of relationship	Typically long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ May be long-term ➤ Project-length collaboration ➤ Brief mini-mentorships
Resource needs	Significant staff time and money	Software eases administrative burden
Target group	Limited use	Rural and marginalised groups

BASIS	MENTORING	
	CONVENTIONAL	ONLINE
Support functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Career development ➤ Psychosocial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Career development ➤ Psychosocial support ➤ Business development growth ➤ Modern method of staff training

Source: Adapted from Mueller (2004:56); Smith-Jentsch *et al.* (2008:204); Leppisaari & Tenhunen (2009:195); Allen & Eby (2010:78); An & Lipscomb (2013:S33); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:744); Leck & Wood (2013:104)

From Table 4.1 it is clear that conventional mentoring is limited to a one-on-one meeting, and relationship with one mentor, whereas online mentoring allows mentees to expand their professional networks by participating in multiple mentor relationships (Leck & Wood, 2013:104). When compared to conventional mentoring, online mentoring involves far less face-time between mentor and mentee (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:744) since the mentoring pair may participate in multiple mentoring relationships simultaneously while online. In conventional mentoring, there are geographical restrictions that require a more localised approach regarding mentors available; online mentoring provides access to a global pool of unlimited mentors (Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

As depicted in Table 4.1, conventional mentoring requires that mentees and mentors meet at regular intervals and schedule meetings to carry out their exchange of information. Online mentoring allows for mentor and mentee to have a conversation at any time, often with instant feedback, regardless of time differences and geographical boundaries (Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Conventional mentoring tends to engage primarily in unrehearsed conversation, whereas online mentoring makes provision for written discourse (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:2). Although conventional mentoring is more general in scope, the opportunity to experience multiple online mentors allows both for a narrow scope of issues to be discussed with each mentee, and for more intense, focused mentoring to take place (Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

Table 4.1 also indicates that conventional mentor–mentee relationships tend to be steady, including a long-term leader and learner. Online mentoring allows for flexible long-term relationships, project-length collaborations, or brief mini-mentorships that

can be made available to many mentees at the same time (Leck & Wood, 2013:104). The changing nature of technology has transformed mentoring into a process that extends beyond a single individual who represents a single function, business or country. Mentoring pairs working online need to consider relying not just on individual but, rather, on multiple and diverse individuals (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:191). Conventional mentoring programmes offered organisation-wide require significant staff time and money and so many businesses can no longer afford the cost of these programmes (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S33). Online mentoring software, however, reduces the administrative burden and costs of a large mentoring programme (Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

It has been suggested that online mentoring should be primarily used when face-to-face mentoring is not an option (Single & Single, 2005:7), such as to augment pre-existing face-to-face relationships, for example, workers on assignment abroad, military personnel on deployment, or females in small business and corporate business settings (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204; Williams *et al.*, 2012:111), or when online mentoring may be the primary or sole means by which mentors and mentees are acquainted. This would be applicable, for example, for mentees that are online university students, or females in rural business settings. In these types of situations, mentees are likely to be dissimilar from their mentors on a number of demographic variables (for example, race and socio-economic class) which could influence a face-to-face exchange of ideas (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204).

From Table 4.1 it appears that the support functions received in online mentoring relationships correspond with those found in conventional relationships and include career development, psychosocial support and role-modeling. Online mentoring can offer an alternative means of training corporate staff and is also viewed as a tool to assist entrepreneurs in developing their businesses (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:191).

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that online mentoring refers to mentoring mediated through technology and that certain distinct differences are evident when online mentoring is compared with conventional mentoring. Online mentoring addresses many of the challenges inherent in conventional face-to-face mentoring by

providing unlimited access to a greater number of mentors, offering greater flexibility in establishing and sustaining relationships and removing geographical barriers.

The exponential growth of the internet and the advent of Web 2.0 applications have greatly influenced mentoring and have changed the manner in which individuals communicate (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:744). The different forms of online mentoring tools that can be used in a mentoring programme will be discussed in the following section.

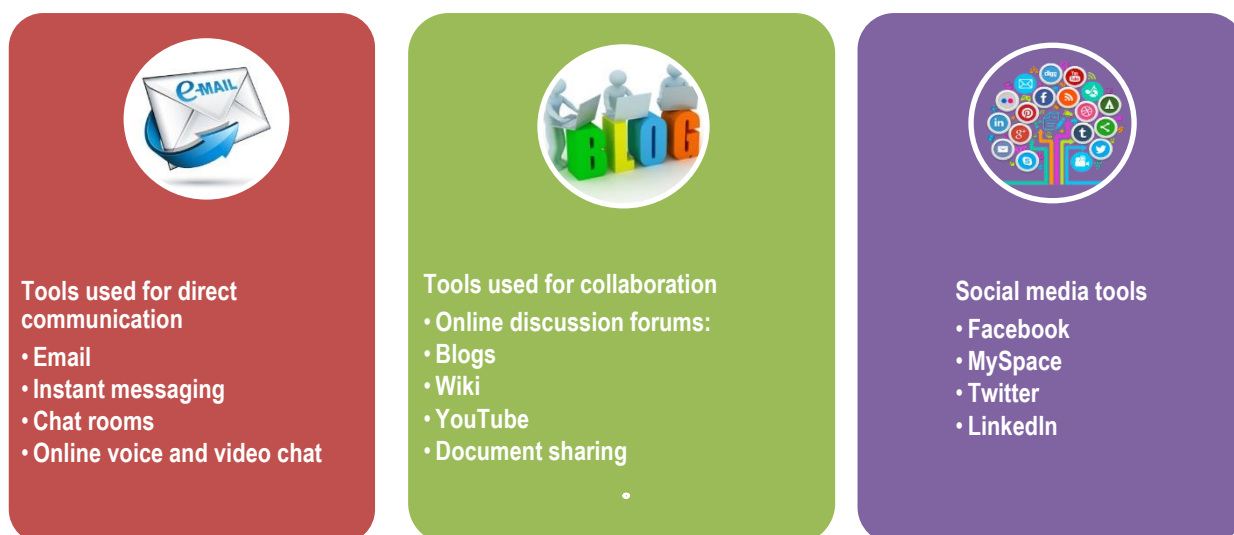
4.3 ONLINE MENTORING TOOLS

According to Internet World Stats (2014), world-wide internet users exceed two billion (665 per cent growth since 2000) and among 348.3 million North Americans, more than 78 per cent communicate online and over 49 per cent are Facebook users. In 2012, there were 26 841 126 internet users in South Africa, out of a total population of 1 815 889 (Internet World Stats, 2014).

Online mentoring takes place by using one or more social software tools and means of communication. Some of these tools are computer mediated and others use mobile applications. A mobile application (app) is software created exclusively for use on small, wireless (mobile) computing devices, such as smartphones and tablets, rather than desktop or laptop computers. The design of mobile apps takes into account the demands and limits of the devices, and also takes advantage of any specialised capabilities offered by smartphones and tablets. Many experts argue that the future of computer technology rests in mobile computing with wireless networking. Mobile computing through means of tablet computers is becoming more popular (Techopedia, 2016)

The most frequently used types of communication tools in the online environment are summarised in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Types of tools used for online communication



Source: Adapted from Cothran, McCaughtry, Faust, Garn, Kulinna & Martin (2009:560); Broughton, Higgins, Hicks & Cox (2010); An & Lipscomb (2013:S35); Hwang & Vrongistinos (2012:173); Leck & Wood (2013:104); BizWiz Learning (2016); Walker (2016)

A distinction can be made between tools used for direct communication, collaboration tools and social media tools, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.3.1 Tools used for direct communication

There are a number of tools used for direct communication in the online environment, such as email, instant messaging, chat rooms and online voice and video chat. A discussion of these direct communications tools follows.

4.3.1.1 Email

The most basic online mentoring tool is email (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Short for 'electronic mail', email is defined as the transmission of messages across communications networks using a keyboard linked to a single or global computer system or network. Extensive use of email by businesses fully computerised, occurs due to it being fast, flexible, and reliable (Single & Muller, 2001).

A negative perception exists that emails are an impersonal medium unable to support relationships (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:276), but the more formal structure of the email lends itself to clearer, concise and professional discussions. Through emails, the important

division between mentee and mentor is maintained and the mentee is more willing to listen to, and respect the inputs of her or his superior. On the other hand, Pillon and Osmun, (2013:443) argue that email is appropriate for regular and brief exchanges and for simple questions and general information, but that it is not ideal for giving critical feedback or commenting on the others' knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. High quality electronic documents such as client practice contracts, resumes, and business plans – which the mentee might send to the mentor for feedback – are most effectively sent via email (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:268).

Connections formed solely via email tend to have the advantage of allowing open discussion as mentees who never met face-to-face with their mentors feel they can be more honest and have a more objective relationship (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). As indicated by research, there is an increase in email frequency as a mentoring relationship develops (Cakir & Bichelmeyer, 2005:2). Emailing also ensures that a communication line can be maintained. When replying to mentors, mentees are often asked to simply click on the 'reply' button so that a running document can be maintained. This allows for easy scrolling back to previously asked and answered questions and comments (Vision Design Group, 2016). This ensures that both parties have the liberty to pursue a previously discussed topic further or to clarify a vague issue. Rideout (2006:47) and Stewart and Carpenter (2009:200) caution, however, that the natural delay in email communication eliminates the usual give and take of verbal communication. An important aspect to note is that email is the least used method of communication (six per cent) for young people worldwide (Bottomley, 2013).

4.3.1.2 Instant messaging

Instant messaging provides a personal way of communicating with mentees and other known contacts. In order to use this service a user must download a free programme and install it on their computer. This provides for instant communication between two computers anywhere in the world (Blum, 2005:2). It allows users to send typed messages, pictures, files, and live video to a receiver based on their screen name. This exchange can be kept up for as long as both parties need to communicate (Isaacs, Walendowski, Whittaker, Schiano & Kamm, 2002:2). Because instant messaging operates using the internet network, it provides an immediate and direct conversation, without the need to meet in person (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35).

One of the world's most widely used, user-friendly mobile messaging apps is WhatsApp – a registered, cross-platform, coded instant messaging and voice call platform for use on mobile phones (Walker, 2016). Text messages, documents, PDF files, images, video, user location and audio messages are sent to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers by WhatsApp, via the internet, working across every major smartphone platform, including Android, iPhone, Windows and Nokia (Walker, 2016). WhatsApp messenger's greatest appeal is that it allows users to send text messages on a smartphone without incurring SMS costs (Walker, 2016). It is simple to use and, once downloaded, there is no need to create a special account or password to use the app; the entered phone number becomes the individual's identity on the system. WhatsApp then reads the phone contacts to identify which of the contacts are using WhatsApp – a function that has raised some concerns about privacy due to the fact that many people do not want an app to be able to read or access all their mobile contacts information (Walker, 2016). Messages are sent via the internet, using data, rather than via the cellular phone network owned by phone carriers, which means that it works only on smartphones with data plans (The Economic Times, 2016).

More than 100 million voice calls are made daily on WhatsApp and it currently (2016) has a user base of one billion, making it the most favoured messaging application (The Economic Times, 2016). WhatsApp and texting are more popular than emails when it comes to dictating information and explaining points since it allows for a direct style of writing precisely what comes to mind. Most corporate persons, managers, entrepreneurs and trainees tend to interact via message, rather than mail (BizWiz Learning, 2016).

Mentors have been using WhatsApp to mentor professionals across the world. The technology has been a key facilitator for reaching multiple groups across nations because it cuts across mindset, cultures and borders to remote and lesser-known areas (Hariharan, 2016). Networking events have been initiated, for example, in countries in South East Asia and Africa, including Kenya and Ghana, as an opportunity for members from different WhatsApp groups to meet face-to-face and interact. Subsequently, periodic network events and meetings have been set up, resulting in team working, team building and leadership development where members are empowered to expand the groups regionally, within and around their geographies

(Hariharan, 2016). Due to the fact that a recent survey of rural youth, conducted by Jordan Workforce Development Project, found that 93% had access to a mobile phone, 76% had access to a smartphone and 82% used WhatsApp on a regular basis, WhatsApp can be used as an effective tool to facilitate the mentoring of youth (Souktel, 2015).

4.3.1.3 Chat rooms

A chat room is similar to instant messaging, but instead of one-on-one communication, users log onto a theme-based virtual room and communicate with several people only known by their screen names (Business Dictionary, 2016a). By sending typed messages to the room, all connected users can read and respond as in a big online get-together. There are numerous chat topics to choose, including business interests and challenges. For the purposes of mentoring, chat rooms can be set up by a group of mentors, which promotes interaction and learning from each other, and saves on costs involved with face-to-face mentoring (Western, 2012:64).

Businesses use chat rooms to facilitate employees communicating from multiple locations (Business Dictionary, 2016a). Online mentoring meetings can be held in chat rooms with mentors providing files for mentees to download, if necessary. Cothran *et al.* (2009:560) noted the limited use of chat rooms and suggested that it might be due to a negative perception of online mentoring by mentors, especially because of the technical and human aspects of the process.

4.3.1.4 Online voice and video chat

Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services allow the user to operate an internet connection to make voice calls, similar to telephone calls. The user can download a VoIP application to their computer or mobile device in order to make calls (Federal Communications Commission, 2016). This service could, potentially, offer a cost-effective tool to a business as VoIP calls cost less and use an existing internet connection. This is particularly useful when a business makes international calls. Skype is one of the most popular VoIP applications (Beebom, 2016).

When it comes to conference calls, Skype simplifies communications for businesses. With Skype, a business can hold a conference call from the main office and anyone

with an active Wi-Fi connection can join in, eliminating the need for video-calling hardware. Businesses must register their Skype account to include a group video-calling subscription in order to use the video conference calling feature (Skype, 2016a) and users need Skype 5.0, an internet connection and a computer running Mac or Windows; once the application is up and running, anyone can initiate a video (Skype, 2016b). Skype allows a mentoring pair to communicate with little cost and facilitates mentoring via video conference from any location with an internet connection, allowing the mentee and the mentor the benefits of meeting face-to-face while being separated geographically (Hwang & Vrongistinos, 2012:173).

Video conferencing offers a rich communication medium and provides several advantages for interpreting non-verbal information between team members (Greenwald, Khan, Vazquez & Maes, 2015:20). Since there is significant social value in individuals seeing those they interact with, video conferencing fares favourably when compared to written communication (emails, instant messaging) or even telephone calls (Aldemir & Ardley, 2014:60). The integration of audio and visual clues insures a deeper communication that closely parallels that of a face-to-face mentoring meeting since video is a vehicle for detailed and continual comments and explanations by the pair in conversation. A more natural environment is created because of this, as the reactions and answers of both parties are fully represented in terms of image, sound and tone, all of which occur in actual time (Greenwald *et al.*, 2015:22).

A drawback of video conferencing and Skype sessions, however, is that mentoring sessions are difficult to document as there is no evidence (paper trail) of the conversation, as is the case with emails. Without being able to pause in a specific conversation topic it is easy to lose valuable information that could have allowed for a more focused dialogue (Aldemir & Ardley, 2014:60). Instead, the mentoring pair often feel they have to follow the dynamic flow of the person speaking, thereby potentially missing out on essential detail. Another challenge can be that the internet connection becomes slow and can cut out at times; in such cases the mentoring pair would need to sign out and then restart the connection, wasting time and interrupting the session flow (Skype, 2016b). There could also be some costs associated with implementing the programme if the users do not have a web camera, speakers, or microphone. It

may not be possible to use Skype in certain rural areas with poor Internet access (Pillon & Osmun, 2013:443).

A more recently created VoIP application is Google Hangouts, which was developed in 2013. It is an integrated communication service that allows members to initiate and participate in text, voice or video chats, either one-on-one or in a group. Hangouts are built into Google+ and Gmail, and mobile Hangouts apps are available for iOS and Android devices. Chat histories are saved online, allowing it to be synchronised between devices. Hangouts allow for free voice calls to other Hangouts users (Techtarget, 2016). Google Hangouts are a one-stop shop for communication, from one-on-one connections to huge virtual chats, and is quick and easy to use (Twelve Ways to Connect, Create, and Collaborate Using Google Hangouts, 2013). The nature of social interaction it engenders makes it an ideal online space to come together to collaborate and share knowledge. Other Google features like YouTube, browser, email, chat and drive could be easily integrated into the Hangout session (Guha, 2014).

Google has challenged Microsoft Skype's position as the lead player in the video conferencing world, due to Google Hangouts displaying features such as the ability to group chat with up to 10 participants for free -- a feature Skype offers with a cost (Social Media Camp, 2014). Google Hangouts is thus perceived to be more effective than Skype and allows the mentor to develop a more personal connection with the mentee using high level communication technology, like video chat solutions (Micromentor, 2014). Mentoring pairs are often advised to incorporate Skype, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etcetera, as well as telephone conversations, into their mentoring partnership.

Efficient communication and meaningful conversation is a natural side-effect of talking to someone in real time (Mentor Jackets, 2016). This can facilitate a better viewing experience for the mentees and a useful tool to coordinate and plan the session among the mentors. Screen sharing allows the mentors to display their screen for the mentees to view. Hangouts on Air allows for the session to be recorded, so it can be used both as a resource to track student progress and as a training manual for mentors and tutors. Because mentors can join Hangouts from remote locations efficiency can be increased by saving travel time and energy (Guha, 2014).

4.3.2 Tools used for collaboration

There are several tools that allow the user to store documents online and invite other people to view and edit them from a distance, such as online discussion forums, blogs and wikis.

4.3.2.1 Online discussion forums

Hew, Cheung, and Ng (2010:572) define asynchronous online discussion forums as a text-based computer-mediated communication environment that permits individuals to interact with one another without the hindrance of time and place. Messages in online discussion forums are different to chat room messages in that they are often longer than one line of text, and are temporarily archived (Manichander, 2016:78). An online discussion forum can therefore be seen as a space where problems can be solved together with other people, with the benefit of computer-supported collaboration. Successful forums tend to be those with participants who share a common language, a common situation and a joint activity (Cornell University for teaching excellence, 2016). Because online discussion forums are regarded as a joint problem space and messages are sent out to a group, mentorship of more than one individual can be achieved. An online group mentoring situation offers a greater possibility of mentors impacting on numerous mentees with the same message – potentially being more effective than an exclusive mentoring pair relationship (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35).

4.3.2.2 Blogs

'Blog' is an acronym for web log – a website on which users post journal-type entries that are displayed by latest post (Broughton *et al.*, 2010). Blogs can take the form of online diaries, personal accounts, travel logs, newsworthy columns and reports from special events and can include graphics, pictures, and even music and video clips. Blog postings often contain links to other blogs or websites.

Blogs can be viewed publicly, or may be kept private behind the firewall of the business, for security reasons (Waters, 2007). The nature of mentoring in this environment is friendly and uncompetitive (Hamburg, 2013:219) and allows mentoring parties to record their thoughts and share them with others as they occur; it also allows others to comment (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35). Blogs can be applied in the mentoring

context by posting links or handouts that all the mentees could use, and allows mentees to have conversations with the mentor and each other, using the blog site as a communication tool. A blog enhances learning through cooperation, and the sharing of knowledge and best practice (Wheeler & Lambert-Heggs, 2009:329).

Practically all blogs provide a vehicle for comments from readers, and the most popular ones develop into a kind of conversation. Since blogs allow for individual expression and community building, they tend to be aimed at a niche audience, although their appeal can frequently evolve beyond this target market (Papacharissi, 2009:200). Good blogs are those that are frequently updated (Waters, 2007).

4.3.2.3 Wiki

Ward Cunningham coined the word 'wiki' (Hawaiian for 'quick') to name the collaborative tool he developed for use on the internet in 1994 (Augar, Raitman & Zhou, 2004:95). A wiki is a website comprising text-based content that can be edited by users as and when they wish and are an effective means of document-sharing within an online learning environment (Godwin-Jones, 2003:15). Users can add new content and modify existing content without needing permission to do so, thus it is a shared-authorship model (Godwin-Jones, 2003:15; Augar *et al.*, 2004:95) – this is different to a blog, in which the authored posts remain unaltered (Waters, 2007). Typical wikis are based on a web server, which can be left open to public access via the Internet, or restricted on the local area network of a business. The Wikipedia free online encyclopedia is one of the largest and best-known wikis (Wikipedia, 2016).

In business, wikis are increasingly employed as a new type of collaboration tool. Users can visit, read, reorganise and update the structure and content (text and pictures) of a wiki as they see fit. This functionality is called open editing (Leuf & Cunningham, 2001:37) and it results in an excellent tool for collaboration in an online mentoring environment due to the fact that the roles can be reversed: the reader becomes the author and vice versa. Wikis thus allow mentoring parties to create a cooperative website with information about both mentor and mentee as well as their respective professions (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35).

The downside to document editing may present itself when, for example, an editor who is not experienced in a subject he or she is writing about, leading to unverified information (Educause, 2016). There are measures that can be put in place to ensure that only certain individuals (for example, the group of experienced and qualified mentors) are able to edit the documents, which will be viewed by a select group (the mentees). Since a document may be compiled by multiple mentors, mentees benefit from exposure to multiple opinions (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S35). The support tracking of wiki edits or updates also ensures that any changes made can be viewed and approved by other authors (mentors). Individual participation can be assessed and wiki updates monitored through the system of tracking by wiki administrators (Augar *et al.*, 2004:101).

4.3.2.4 YouTube

YouTube accommodates the uploading, viewing and commenting of online videos (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7) and can be successfully used as a web-based mentoring network (Hamburg, 2013:220). A conversation that a mentor has previously recorded can be uploaded and then viewed by the mentee; the mentee can respond accordingly to the teachings through commenting on the video, and the mentor can subsequently re-respond (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:310).

Since anyone can view the uploaded video, it creates an effective means for one mentor to provide mentorship to a number of mentees (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7). To use this medium within a single relationship would be ineffective as others would have access to personally targeted video messages. YouTube offers the added benefit of 24-hour accessibility to training material and communication (Hamburg, 2013:220).

4.3.3 Social media tools

There are several social media websites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn, where individuals can register, create an account and start communicating with businesses, employees, family and friends. These social media tools are discussed in the following section.

4.3.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that makes it easy for individuals to connect and share with their family and friends online. Facebook was created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg while he was enrolled at Harvard University and was originally designed for college students (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7). By 2006, anyone over the age of thirteen with a valid email address could join Facebook (Torgenson, 2006). Today (2016), Facebook is the world's largest social network, with more than 1 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2016).

Facebook messages are sent to the inbox of individuals and can be delivered, read and replied to in real time, making it an effective mentoring communication tool (Raman, Sani & Kaur, 2014:142). A Facebook group can also be created where individuals can post messages that only those in the group can see, thus creating open conversations within a private environment. Facebook, as well as other online social networks, have been used in a professional context as they allow for high levels of observation. In South Africa, recruitment businesses, for instance, use a work personality test via Facebook, and human resource companies have started a Facebook group to provide work-related information to Human Resources managers and directors. This could be beneficial in terms of ensuring a more open and personal mentoring relationship as each party is able to view the other's relevant profile, offering a greater insight into character and background (Impactstory, 2014).

When a mentor befriends a mentee on Facebook, it can have drawbacks as the act of doing so could invade the mentee's personal space and blur the lines of authority and power. Many individuals prefer to keep their work and private life separate and there is an added risk that a mentor may offer guidance on personal aspects of the mentee's life (as seen on their profile), instead of focussing on the professional activities for which the mentoring relationship was created (Bosch, 2009:196).

4.3.3.2 MySpace

MySpace, a social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music, and videos executes all of the actions of Facebook, but in a more informal context than Facebook (Business Dictionary, 2016b). Papacharissi (2009:214) highlights that the design and style of this type of network influences the language and formality used when communicating on

these sites. MySpace is a freer network than Facebook and, as such, allows users to be more relaxed during interaction. Only the most informal, non-conventional formats of mentoring should be used on this site as the chances of blurring the authority hierarchy are greater when exchanges occur on this platform (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7).

4.3.3.3 Twitter

Twitter is a free social networking micro blogging service that allows registered members to show short posts called tweets (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7). Twitter members can transmit tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Tweets and their replies can be sent via cell phone text message, desktop computer or by posting on the Twitter.com website (Visualscope, 2016). Unlike Facebook or LinkedIn, where members need to approve social connections, anyone can follow anyone on Twitter. To merge tweets into a conversation thread or connect them to a general topic, members can add hashtags to a keyword in their post. The hashtag is expressed as #keyword (Visualscope, 2016).

Because tweets can be delivered to followers in real time, they might seem like instant messages to the new user (Techtarget, 2015), but unlike instant messages that disappear when the user closes the application, tweets are also posted on the Twitter website and are permanent. Anyone can search tweets on Twitter, whether they are a member or not (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010:1).

Twitter is a user-friendly tool in forming relationships – as an example, in a mentoring relationship, the mentee could tag his or her mentor in a tweet posing a question, and the mentor can respond accordingly (Soffar, 2015). A limiting factor regarding the use of Twitter, is that a message cannot exceed 140 characters, so it may not always be realistic to ask or respond to complex issues: as a result, interaction on issues is often superficial. A tweet can, however, be linked to external information for additional reading through inclusion of the hyperlink to an article published online (Papacharissi, 2009:208). Further engagement can occur when a tweet by an expert can be re-tweeted by the mentor to appear on her or his profile, and the mentee – having followed the mentor – is able to read this relevant additional information, thus creating a synergy

of interaction. A mentor can 'like' (approve of) a post, thus providing feedback to the mentee (Soffar, 2015).

4.3.3.4 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site specific to the business community and targeted professional users (Skeels & Grundin, 2009:3), on which registered members establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7). A LinkedIn member's profile page emphasises employment history and education, and has professional network news feeds. Basic membership for LinkedIn is free and users usually affiliate with their professional network, using the site to maintain a list of contact details for people they know and trust within their line of work, termed 'connections'. LinkedIn requires connections to have a pre-existing relationship, unlike other free social networking sites (Skeels & Grundin, 2009:2).

LinkedIn focuses on professional information, encouraging users to create a summarised curriculum vitae and to establish connections through a formal application and acceptance process (Broughton *et al.*, 2010:7). The site uses a secure-access approach, in the sense that connecting with others require either a pre-existing relationship or the intervention of a mutual contact – a mechanism designed to facilitate trust among users (Papacharissi, 2009:204). Profiles are strictly professional, with little or no information included about hobbies, political or religious affiliations, favourite music, books or movies. It is a platform on which a mentee can investigate, identify and approach a suitable mentor (Skeels & Grundin, 2009:3).

From the above, it is clear that while technology is the enabling instrument in an online mentoring relationship, it nonetheless involves humans in the process of communication. The most frequently used tools in online mentoring can be divided into those used for direct communication (email, instant messaging, chat rooms and online voice and video chat); collaboration tools (online discussion groups, blogs and wikis); and social media tools (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and Twitter). Email is the most basic online mentoring medium and is often supported by other means of communication, such as instant messaging or phone calls. Instant messaging provides the immediacy of direct conversation without the need to meet in person as it utilises the internet network to operate. WhatsApp messaging is an example of instant

messaging and is increasingly used as a communication tool for mentoring. When it comes to conference calls, Skype and Google Hangouts simplify communications for businesses and video conferencing bears significant social value in seeing those with whom one interacts. Wikis are increasingly employed as a new type of collaboration tool in business and YouTube allows for the uploading, viewing and commenting of online videos and is a web-based mentoring network. Facebook can be used as a mentoring communication tool in terms of its instant messaging capability and LinkedIn is a platform on which a mentee is able to find a suitable mentor within her or his field.

The benefits experienced in a successful online mentoring programme, as opposed to conventional face-to-face mentoring, will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 BENEFITS OF ONLINE MENTORING

There is growing evidence to suggest that the benefits of online mentoring compare favourably with those experienced in conventional mentoring (e.g. De Janasz, Ensher & Heun, 2008; De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:744). Although online mentoring is, in many ways, similar to face-to-face mentoring, it offers unique possibilities due to the distinctive features of online communication. The advantages of online mentoring to all – whether employed by a large business, owning a business, or just an ordinary individual having to cope with daily demands – are discussed in subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Easy and widened access

Although online mentoring may be perceived as an impersonal approach, the medium promotes easier access to mentoring and more candid communication than a face-to-face context does (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:220; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Online mentoring requires only three things – internet access, an email account and some time (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:220; Ensher *et al.*, 2003:280; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Mobile technology used for cellular communication provides users with similar services to those available on personal computers and laptops, allowing users to hold group text chats, and enabling the user to network the mobile device to a home office or the internet while travelling – thus providing mentees access to information and international networks, and benefits from global e-learning and networking platforms (Techopedia, 2016). The method of communication that has grown the most in the first decade of the new millenium is mobile text messaging, surpassing face-to-face

communication, email and voice calling to become the preferred method for communication, especially amongst the youth (Lenhardt, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010).

Since online mentoring provides easy access, it is highly beneficial to those who would normally face barriers to being mentored because of their gender, ethnicity, disability or geographical location. In addition, online mentoring provides greater access to mentoring for those who are, for example, on sabbatical from their usual professional roles, such as individuals on maternity/paternity leave, on education leave, or temporarily out of the workplace to care for children and elderly parents (Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

Online mentoring programmes tend to be especially beneficial for female mentees. The flexibility offered by the frequently asynchronous type of communication via email or message boards, allows female mentees with other obligations to schedule the interactions with mentors around these obligations (Homitz & Berge, 2008:333). Online mentoring further encourages young people to consider becoming a mentor since more young people use internet resources with ease and may prefer to communicate online (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:4).

Large pools of mentors and mentees can be recruited, matched, mentored and trained continuously via the web and through email, which would not be possible in face-to-face programmes (Mueller, 2004:58). Following from this point, it is clear that a practical advantage of online mentoring is the provision of access to a larger and more diverse network of prospective mentors (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:195). Because of the larger pool of mentors available, hurdles such as the unobtainability of suitable mentors are decreased (Single & Single, 2005; Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007; Panapoulos & Sarri, 2013:217).

4.4.2 Transcending geographical barriers

Geographical barriers that would otherwise prove prohibitive to mentoring opportunities can be transcended by formal online mentoring programmes (Kasprisin, Single, Single & Muller, 2003:68). Bourke *et al.* (2014:4) suggest that computer-based communication interactions are paramount to face-to-face mentoring, particularly in

outlying and remote settings. WhatsApp and other mobile applications send text messages, documents, PDF files, images, video, user location and make calls to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers via the internet (Walker, 2016). Guha (2014:1091) confirm that superior mentoring opportunities are facilitated by mobile applications, which transcend geographical barriers. Wireless mobile technology can be used for formal and informal mentoring as mentees can access additional and personalised learning materials from the internet or from the host organisation. Mentoring can be made available to those in remote regions without people having to leave their geographic areas (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:117).

Martin (2012:223) highlights the advantage of pairing mentors and mentees from dissimilar provinces and cultures. The mentor and mentee do not have to live in close proximity to each other to participate in an online mentoring programme and it is this elimination of geographical barriers that adds to the success of an online mentoring relationship when compared to conventional face-to-face mentoring (Ensher *et al.*, 2003; Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007; Panapoulos & Sarri 2013:217).

Pairings are not bound by geographical constraints; as long as access to the internet and owning a mobile device is readily achievable. This is particularly relevant for mentees who would like to be mentored by somebody working in a discipline, industry or company that is not represented at their location. Professionals who frequently travel and, therefore, would not commit to face-to-face mentoring can mentor a mentee. The mobile messaging service WhatsApp has, for instance, been used to mentor procurement professionals across the world successfully (Hariharan, 2016).

4.4.3 Affordability

Leppisaari and Tenhunen (2009:195), as well as Homitz and Berge (2008:332) confirm the affordability of online mentoring as an advantage over conventional face-to-face mentoring. Headlam-Wells *et al.* (2005:445) note that start-up costs for online mentoring are high, but once established, the operational costs are relatively low. Costs related to travel or time away from the job can be reduced, which is particularly advantageous to females. Online mentoring is easily scalable and allows greater numbers of mentoring parties to be supported by a relatively small administrative staff (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117). With regard to small business entrepreneurs, online

mentoring is an affordable mode of mentoring for implementation in their businesses (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:204; Seraphim, 2010:114).

Online mentoring allows the exchanging of ideas with one or more parties at any given time, in a cost-effective way (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:280; An & Lipscomb, 2013:S33). Researchers (Headlam-Wells, 2004:215; Elkin & Elkin, 2008:19; Fielden & Hunt, 2011:350) note that because online mentoring is not restricted to any place, because travel is mostly unnecessary and management development is provided more cost-efficiently and timeously. Mueller (2004:58) confirms that further mentoring of mentees can occur with little incremental costs since the infrastructure is already in place. In addition, costs for the production of mentoring materials and maintenance costs for content updates can be reduced in an online environment (Mueller, 2004:58). Time and money spent on networking in an online setting is reduced considerably due to it being technologically mediated. Networking opportunities occur a much wider scale than participants are used to (Headlam-Wells, 2004:215).

4.4.4 Equalisation of status

Differences in status are balanced with online mentoring and hence facilitate honesty and transparency in the relationship (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:19). According to Wong and Premkumar (2007:3) online mentoring can lessen biases that may be inherent in physical relationships. Barriers that may exist in face-to-face mentoring such as nationalities, size of business, age, gender and appearances may be broken down. Because of the faceless nature of online mentoring, cross-gender mentoring relationships are not as likely to face misinterpreted signals because physical interaction is not needed in the online environment (Leck *et al.*, 2014:15). For instance, females' successes are often attributed to providence rather than hard work. Negative biases towards certain groups exacerbate the difficulty in finding a mentor (Leck *et al.*, 2014:4). Online mentoring is, therefore, especially beneficial for stereotyped individuals and those from marginalised groups (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Elkin and Elkin (2008:19) confirm that the stereotyping of a person involved in the mentoring process does not impact significantly on how they are perceived and treated during the online mentoring process.

The cultural barriers that accompany race, gender and social class are invisible in an online forum, which allows primary focus to remain on mentoring (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:211-227; Leck & Wood, 2013:104). Online mentoring reduces status differences by hiding social cues that might otherwise hinder communication between higher status and lower status individuals (Single & Muller 2001:109). Participants of a lower status express themselves more freely in online interactions, than they do in face-to-face interactions (Mueller, 2004:58). Historically, females and minority groups have had fewer opportunities for mentoring because they were viewed as high risk mentees.

Due to the brevity of text-based communication in online mentoring, participants may be compelled to focus more on the substance of the message than on the status and style of the person delivering it (Martin, 2012:223). Online mentoring may decrease initial feelings of intimidation, or of discomfort in new environments, because traditional status symbols are often unidentified, allowing for equalisation in the mentoring relationship (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:68).

The absence of non-verbal cues while communicating during online mentoring can result in relationships based on openness and trust (Mueller, 2004:58; Homitz & Berge, 2008:330; Rowland, 2012:5). Conventionally, non-verbal behaviour is regarded as being more important than verbal codes in communication (Mueller, 2004:58). Because of its lack of non-verbal cues, technology-mediated communication is low in social presence as it diminishes social cues among the communicating participants (Rowland, 2012:5). People who do not see those they communicate with are less likely to stereotype or treat those people differently, as they might do based on their impressions in face-to-face conversations (Mueller, 2004:58). The impartiality offered by the internet allows online mentoring relationships to develop with honesty and flexibility, encouraging the disclosure of experiences, which might not happen in a face-to-face physical encounter (Homitz & Berge, 2008:330; Panapoulos & Sarri 2013:217).

More reserved individuals may find that online mentoring is less intimidating than face-to-face contact (Clutterbuck & Hussain, 2010:60). With a diverse group of individuals from different age groups or cultures, individuals may assume that they have little in common when they meet in person, but in an online scenario such differences do not impact and participants may not even be conscious of them (Dewart, Drees,

Hixenbaugh & Thorn, 2005:4). When communicating by email, participants can be selective about the words and phrases they use, and the style in which they express themselves (Cakir & Bichelmeyer, 2005:4). WhatsApp and mobile texting are considered superior to emails when it applies to dictating information and explaining points, because it is a way of writing directly what comes to the mind; it was also found that most corporate individuals interact on mobile messages rather than mails (BizWiz Learning, 2016). Because participants do not feel intimidated, online communication offers better opportunities for self-disclosure (Dewart *et al.*, 2005:4; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:550).

An and Liscomb (2013:S34) contend that the quality of communication exchange increases with online mentoring in that participants become more focused in their communications and spend more time collaborating and reflecting, rather than merely exchanging information (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:2). Online mentoring communication centres on the linguistic features of the interaction and the communications become richer in context as participants become less concerned with external stimuli and more comfortable with online technology (Leck & Wood, 2013:105).

4.4.5 Written and quality interactions

Because computer-mediated communication is text-based it results in a written record of the communication between parties – records which could be used for reviewing the development of the mentoring relationship, what has been achieved by the parties, and what issues or questions remain unresolved (Mueller, 2004:58; Dewart *et al.*, 2005:4; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:2). An electronic record of discussions facilitates reflection and continuing learning (Fielden & Hunt, 2011:346). A written record can also assist in resolving possible misunderstandings between mentoring participants (Mueller, 2004:58).

In a study by Smith-Jentsch *et al.* (2008:203), when transcript length of the mentoring session was taken into account, mentors wrote proportionately more words of psychosocial support in the online context than in the face-to-face context. Given an issue in writing, mentors are able to spend more time thinking about the advice they give and the questions they will ask. Nuances that could be missed in the midst of face-to-face exchanges often become more obvious in text (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:4). Textual

dialogue is easier to review and mentors report that they often uncover patterns or repetitions that they might not otherwise have noticed (Clutterbuck, 2004:157). The quality of complex questions often improves with online mentoring: in effect mentors ask fewer, but more concise and insight-provoking, questions than in the heat of a face-to-face interchange (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:4). Equally, mentees have more time to consider their responses. Strong reflectors particularly appreciate this opportunity.

Leppisaari and Tenhunen (2009:195) confirm that online mentoring enhances the opportunity for reflection, enables continual professional development and supports more repeated contacts. Online mentoring provides a useful chance to stop and think an issue through before replying (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:4). Elkin and Elkin (2008:18) suggest that the asynchronous nature of online mentoring facilitates greater deliberation before responding to communications. With the need for instant replies in live time being eliminated in online mentoring, more time can be taken for reflection and thoughtful deliberation before sending a response. Fielden and Hunt (2011:347) state that the response prepared by the individual can be more reflective because of the time-delayed nature of the communication.

Leppisaari and Tenhunen (2009:195) allude to the fact that online mentoring develops working life skills like team work, web-based writing, and communication. Williams and Kim (2011:82) note that web-based writing and communication skills are learned by mentors when ideas, practices and techniques are shared during mentoring. Homitz and Berge (2008:330) state that the mentor gains web-based skills from technological support personnel and, sometimes, from the mentees themselves.

4.4.6 Active two-way communication

Online mentoring creates the opportunity for setting up dynamic two-way learning networks, and for the network to be multidimensional, leading to the improved quality of the mentoring relationship (Headlam-Wells, 2004:217). Smith-Jentsch *et al.* (2008:203) report that mentor-mentee dialogue is significantly more interactive in the online environment than it is in the face-to face context, which is positively associated with the mentees' personal growth.

Mentees are able to take responsibility for initiating contact and to play an active role in online discussion. Headlam-Wells (2004:217) observes that conventional methods of mentoring, typically operating in large businesses, tend to cast the mentee in the role of a passive recipient of structured, formal assistance. Bierema and Merriam (2002:223) state that online mentoring is a process with unlimited features because it subjects the mentee to lower levels of stress when taking into account that they can decide when to initiate a discussion or provide an answer to the mentor; this ability attributes a more active role to the mentee (Ayer, 2010:31). De Janasz and Godshalk (2013:749) contend that when participants have time to exchange information, build impressions, compare values, and provide timely feedback, online mentoring permits highly interpersonal relationships to develop.

4.4.7 Greater networking opportunities

Petridou, Sarri and Kyrgidou (2009:294) list one of the benefits of online mentoring as the provision of networking opportunities to a greater extent than expected by participants, a particularly important feature for self-employed individuals and small businesses. Online mentoring allows both parties access to more than one mentor or mentee at a time, resulting in broader professional networks and providing participants with multiple perspectives on any given situation - all within a simultaneous and instantaneous environment (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S33; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:2). Additionally, Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013:552) note that females in rural settings are able to overcome feelings of isolation due to being able to expand their networks.

4.4.8 Multiple and timeous mentor interactions

Independence from time is online mentoring's most obvious logistical advantage over a face-to-face mentoring relationship (Mueller, 2004:57). The opportunity for networking with one or more mentors or mentees at any given time, in a time-efficient manner is an administrative and management benefit provided by online mentoring (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:280; An & Lipscomb, 2013:S33).

Online mentoring often allows for more rapid responses by the mentor to the mentee's urgent enquiries. While in a face-to-face scenario it may take several weeks to agree on a suitable time to meet, an online exchange could take place the same day or, at worst, within a few days (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:5; Homitz & Berge, 2008:329). Because

the connections do not occur at predetermined or regular time intervals in online mentoring, scheduling is no longer an obstacle (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:17). Online mentoring allows participants to access and respond to communications in their own time (Homitz & Berge, 2008: 329; Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

Online mentoring allows the opportunity for exchanging large amounts of information between individuals in a relatively short time span and with minimal effort (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:220). In addition, online mentoring offers a flexible communication environment independent of time, allowing for regular, informal conversation among individuals. This flexibility has the added benefit of not interfering with other daily commitments, making it especially helpful for individuals with childcare responsibilities (Headlam-Wells, 2004:215; Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:191). Whereas a face-to-face mentoring session may require a focused duration of a couple of hours, an online mentoring discussion can be broken down into shorter, on-going exchanges, spread over several days or more (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:5).

4.4.9 Means to overcome professional isolation

Since online mentoring offers universal access to mentors and mentees (Ehrich, 2008:479) – vital for those living and working in rural and remote areas (Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:552), it can be employed as an instrument to overcome professional remoteness and loneliness (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:199; Petridou *et al.*, 2009:290). Kalisch, Falzette and Cook (2005:200) considered the benefits of online mentoring from the viewpoint of nurse mentors who did not have time for face-to-face interaction with students, but were competent to provide advice, information and support while being deskbound or homebound. Paterson, McColl and Paterson (2004:32) used online mentoring to support students in rural employments: they found that the weekly teleconference helped to relieve the students' sense of isolation and accommodate for their need for support (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:200). Online mentoring appears to decrease the clinical isolation physical therapists practising in rural areas are subjected to, and has the potential to harness the experience of near-to-retirement or retired physical therapists in the role of mentor (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:204).

From the preceding it is clear that online mentoring is an alternative mentoring mode that facilitates the expansion of face-to-face mentoring as the benefits are additional to

those associated with conventional mentoring, as discussed in Chapter 3. It was noted that online mentoring relationships allow mentees from remote areas, or with problems of mobility, to access mentors with the expertise they seek (provided they have internet access) as it transcends geographical barriers. Online mentoring can furthermore lead to a reduction in costs with regard to the implementation thereof. The affordability of online mentoring for small businesses is noted. As online mentoring is faceless, it leads to an equalisation of status and reduces potential negative stereotyping and discrimination in mentoring relationships.

Cross-gender mentoring relationships are not being misinterpreted due to the physical separation of mentor and mentee and decreased emphasis is placed on demographics. As online mentoring makes use of leaner communication channels that allow for more direct information transfer, contextual issues are minimised leading to an improvement in the quality of the communication. Online mentoring allows for a written record of interactions to be kept, and it is thus easier to review and reflect on the relationship; it also allows for flexibility with time and space since mentees and mentors do not have to be in the same place at the same time. It has proved to assist mentees in rural and remote settings in both overcoming professional isolation and in expanding their networks.

Although online mentoring provides many special benefits when compared to conventional mentoring, it does present certain challenges which will be presented next.

4.5 CHALLENGES TO ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMMES

Table 4.2 provides a synopsis of the most significant challenges to online mentoring.

Table 4.2: Challenges to online mentoring programmes

MAIN BARRIERS	SPECIFIC BARRIERS
➤ Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No access to computers and mobile devices ➤ Computer and mobile device incompatibility issues ➤ Lack of computer literacy ➤ Breakdown in technology
Sources: Bierema & Merriam (2002:221); Headlam-Wells (2004:212); Mueller (2004:58); Bierema & Hill (2005:557); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:456); Single & Single (2005:304); Ensher & Murphy (2007); Wong & Premkumar (2007:6); Elkin & Elkin (2008:24); Homitz & Berge (2008:332) DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> , (2010:292); Rowland (2012:3); Leck & Wood (2013:105). Panopoulos & Sarri (2013:223)	
➤ Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poor language skills ➤ Inadequate writing skills ➤ Poor style of communication ➤ Lack of body language
Sources: Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:278); Stokes, <i>et al.</i> (2003:4); Purcell (2004:285); Ensher & Murphy (2007); Wong & Premkumar (2007:5); Elkin & Elkin (2008:23); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008:195); Bosch (2009:193) Stewart & Carpenter (2009:200); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:292); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); Leck & Wood (2013:105); Panopoulos & Sarri (2013:217)	
➤ Speed and effectiveness of relationship development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Slow pace of relationship development ➤ Response delays ➤ Disruptive behaviour
Sources: Bierema & Merriam (2002:221); Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:274; 277); Ensher & Murphy (2007); Wong & Premkumar (2007:15); Elkin & Elkin (2008:22); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008:203). Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); Leck & Wood (2013:103); Bourke <i>et al.</i> (2014:3); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:22); Wood (2014:12)	
➤ Availability and suitability of mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poor matching of mentoring pair ➤ Gender, culture and racial issues ➤ Difference in level of participation
Sources: Bierema & Merriam (2002:221); Wong & Premkumar (2007:7); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:302); Loureiro-Koechlin & Allen (2010:722); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:748); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:8); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:81); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:1); Wood (2014:14)	
➤ Ethical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of trust ➤ Lack of privacy and confidentiality
Sources: Purcell (2004:285); Bierema & Hill (2005); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005); Buche (2008); Elkin & Elkin (2008:27); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008:195); Chun <i>et al.</i> (2010); Leck & Orser (2013); Leck & Wood (2013:105). Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:83)	
➤ Organisational barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost of start-up ➤ Lack of training
Sources: Kasprisin <i>et al.</i> (2003:69); Mueller (2004:59); Single & Single (2005); (Homitz & Berge (2008:332); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); Panopoulos & Sarri (2013:217); Wood (2014:13)	

The most significant challenges of online mentoring programmes will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.5.1 Technology challenges

Single and Single (2005:304) report that online mentoring activities can present unique technological challenges. Online mentoring requires access to the necessary technology, such as the physical devices (specialised software and hardware) and networks is required for the online mentoring relationship to be made possible: this is a major challenge to overcome (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Rowland, 2012:3; Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013:223). The same is true when working with mobile technology since access to mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, is required (WhatIs.Com. 2016).

In order for the mentoring relationship to flourish online mentoring programmes must guarantee that participants have regular, easy, and cheap computer and internet access (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:456). Wong and Premkumar (2007:6) warn that many do not have access to the internet, so in an online mentoring scenario, it cannot be presumed that access to technology is available. Although webcams, Google Hangouts and Skype make real-time observations and conversations possible, the groundwork and technology malfunctions may deter participants from using this option. Those who wish to join a Hangout must be contracted in to a Google account in order to participate (McCray & Cooper, 2015:139), which can be a challenge since sending messages expends data and so works only on smartphones with data plans (Walker, 2016).

Inaccessibility can be location related and is more common in the less educated and in those from low-income communities (Bierema & Hill, 2005:557). With reduced access, there is less comfort and familiarity with computers and mobile technology. All of the above create barriers to developing mentorship programmes in areas where internet access is restricted amongst people who may need them the most (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:6).

Effective online mentoring can also be stymied by computer incompatibility issues, such as pop-up blockers, or not having synchronised versions of software available (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:453; Elkin & Elkin, 2008:24). A further barrier that would impact on communication (and therefore mentoring) is if the technology required to facilitate the mentoring programme breaks down (Mueller, 2004:58). This factor affects

online mentoring particularly harshly, since the challenge to re-establish communication lines in an online mentoring environment are greater than in a conventional mentoring environment (Mueller, 2004:58; Elkin & Elkin, 2008:24). Hence there must be alternative technology in place for mentor and mentees to contact one another (Mueller, 2004:58).

A number of authors (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Bierema & Hill, 2005:557; Homitz & Berge, 2008:332) warn that at this point in time an online mentoring relationship requires a definite level of computer literacy and internet knowledge otherwise communication will be flawed. The same applies for knowledge of mobile technology as users must be acquainted with how to use the mobile device as well as how and when to use specific functions (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:6). When measuring online mentoring's potential in the field of management development for females, Headlam-Wells (2004:212) found that a key challenge was the obligation to encourage the females participating to develop the necessary fluency in online communication in order for them to make use of all the properties that online mentoring has to offer. In an online mentoring programme, proficiency in the online environment will be vital given that one must be able to express one's thoughts and feelings via text-based messaging – an ability fundamental to a constructive relationship (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:292). A cavity or lack of technical skills between the mentoring parties can create a digital divide and diminish the quality of communication (Ensher & Murphy, 2007; Leck & Wood, 2013:105).

While many people are computer literate, considerable levels of anxiety may be felt by some individuals when using computers and the associated technology (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:451). This anxiety may result in cautious use of the technology, expressing as a low level of computer illiteracy with obvious effects on the effectiveness of online mentoring (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Rowland, 2012:3). DiRenzo *et al.*, (2010:293) argue that it is probable that the quality of an individual's online mentoring relationship will be grounded in his or her level of experience with online communication and the internet prior to the start of the programme. Although mobile technology is easier to use (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:16) some technical restrictions have been suggested, such as small screens with low resolution display,

inadequate memory, slow network speeds, and lack of standardisation and comparability (Cheong, Lee, Crooks & Song, 2012:1055).

4.5.2 Communication skills barriers

As language barriers may hold back a face-to-face mentoring relationship, online conversations and communication can be thwarted by an individual's ability and skill to communicate effectively online (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:292). Ensher *et al.*, (2003:278) propose that individuals with an above average degree of written communication skills are likely to have superior online mentoring experiences than those who do not. Participants of online mentoring programmes should be skilled in the English language and be good readers with an elevated writing ability (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5). While some online mentoring conversation tools like Facebook have converted pages into several languages, including Afrikaans, isiXhosa and isiZulu, the reading ability required may be a limiting factor within the South African context (Bosch, 2009:193).

Changeability in writing styles between parties can create a digital segregation and weaken the quality of communications (Ensher & Murphy, 2007; Leck & Wood, 2013:105). Since the skills required for online communication are distinct and unlike face-to-face communication skills (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:200), previous experience with a particular communication channel, for example email or online chat, would result in information being sent or received more effectively (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:293). Studies furthermore show that there are differences in the style of communication between men and females online, which could further serve as a potential barrier. While men have a tendency to be to the point and are factual, females tend to resemble face-to-face conversations in their communication (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:6).

The likelihood of miscommunication is enhanced in online mentoring as both parties rely on asynchronous communication exchanges, which emphasises the importance of the style of written communication (Ensher *et al.*, 2003: 276-277). Misunderstandings can even become antagonistic as the anonymous nature of the internet can promote a dropping of inhibitions, even among mentors and mentees who know one another well (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:276-277). This disinhibition can lead to increased incidences of mentors and mentees responding to one another in an

emotionally-charged, often negative, manner - often writing things to each other that they would otherwise be too reserved to say in person (Ensher & Murphy, 2007:300; Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

Sphigelman and Gill (2012:471) found that ineffective mentors used a more formal style and distant tone, and did not know how to facilitate an online mentoring relationship. When either the mentor or the mentee is uncertain of how best to use the online format, the relationship will not progress further than fleeting superficial exchanges. Sphigelman and Gill (2012:471) advise that online mentoring relationships should be created around a specific focus, or some topics of discourse developed, in the main, by the mentors.

The lack of additional information that body language and non-verbal communication usually adds to face-to-face conversations, makes online mentoring more vulnerable to misconceptions and misunderstandings (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:267; Panapoulos & Sarri, 2013:217) and, consequently, may lead to the failure of these relationships. The lack of non-verbal cues such as pitch of voice, flow of speech, facial expression, and body language, which would normally reflect interpersonal warmth in face-to-face conversations, may lead both mentors and mentees to feel that statements of psychosocial support provided online do not convey the same degree of emotion (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:23; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:195). As a result, these relationships can be characterised as weak ties and can lead to easily broken bonds. Communications can thus become tense in an online mentoring relationship, especially if the interactions are brief and/or sporadic (Purcell, 2004:285). Furthermore, distant communication in online mentoring often results in a substantial focus on transactional dialogues rather than on relationship building, tending to make the relationship shallower (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:4).

Although the process of developing an online mentoring relationship is very similar to the process in face-to-face mentoring, there is a diminishment of information exchanged in computer-mediated communication when compared to face-to-face communication (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:277). It is easier to send a message by mobile technology as it is a more accessible technology and is a lot more convenient than working on a laptop or desktop. This does not, however, mean communicating is easier.

Communication is essentially flawed, and no matter how progressive the devices are, it is challenging to eliminate potential misunderstandings, confusion and errors due to the fact that there is much more to communication than the mere sending of a message (Westenberg, 2015). Google Hangouts can aid with quick video chats, however people tend to text far more frequently than they video call each other (Barton, 2016).

4.5.3 Speed and effectiveness of relationship development

Leck *et al.* (2014:22) forewarn that although the ease of access of mentors and mentoring is much higher in an online environment, it is not confirmed that the quality and effectiveness of online mentoring matches that of conventional mentoring. Research findings examining the quality of the online mentoring experience are not consistently positive. Some suggest that online mentoring relationships grow with more difficulty than the conventional face-to-face mentoring relationships (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:15). The forming of an online mentoring relationship entails a similar process to that of the face-to-face relationship, but because the parties have never met, the process in the online mentoring scenario is much slower (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:22). The significance of what is being communicated in this environment is not as easily understood, as the text-based nature of online mentoring makes comprehending communications amid the parties more difficult (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5).

The quality and effectiveness of the online mentoring relationship can be impacted upon when either party does not receive a timely response, and they wonder about the meaning of unexplained delays (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:471; Wood, 2014:12). A stall in response between mentor and mentee will possibly increase anxiety, particularly in an online mentoring programme that should be based on trust (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:470). This anxiety may lead to accompanying angry feelings, and finally to termination of the relationship. Online mentoring may not be a well-timed process if one or both parties are not careful about responding swiftly to requests for information or advice (Wood, 2014:12). In a situation where there is a communication interruption, the reaction of the mentor seems to predict the furtherance of the online relationship (Wood, 2014:22).

Online mentoring can also lead to a protracted progression of relationship development due to the many means of communication that can be used and the unpredictability of these communications (Ensher & Murphy, 2007; Leck & Wood, 2013:103). Communications can moreover become strained in an online mentoring relationship, particularly if the interactions are fleeting and/or irregular (Purcell, 2004:284). Online relationships may also be characterised by less dedication from either party as an online relationship can without difficulty be initiated or terminated (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:203).

The relationship between the mentoring pair can be negatively influenced by a mentor who might 'forget' to copy the mentee in on an important communiqué, neglect to express an interest in a mentee, or simply not return and respond to a mentee's email (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:274; 277). Patronising mentors providing solutions rather than allowing the mentee to reach their own resolutions can also pose a challenge in the relationship and impact the quality and usefulness of it (Bourke *et al.*, 2014:3).

4.5.4 Availability and suitability of mentors

One of the primary challenges of online mentoring is the matching of a mentoring pair (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221). Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:81) confirm that choice of an appropriate mentor or mentee can create a significant challenge in the online mentoring environment. In conventional mentoring relationships, mentees and mentors typically work in one another's businesses and geographical locations, and are well informed about one another. The online environment, however, does not offer this luxury and information about the other may be confined to biographical profiles and summaries, which may not portray the personality of the parties.

Wong and Premkumar (2007:7) and DiRenzo *et al.* (2010:302) state that demographic variables like gender, culture and racial issues play a part in online mentoring relationships, and may pose a challenge to the matching of parties. The research of Leck *et al.* (2014:1) reveals that females and other minorities face significant challenges with respect to mentoring in the workplace and, because of that, mentees prefer to be, and benefit from, being mentored by someone similar in gender, race and age. The shortage of non-white men and females in senior positions makes it difficult to accommodate such matching. Rockwell *et al.* (2013:8) contend, however, that the

mentor's gender is not a determining factor in the success of the mentoring relationship and that future research is required to investigate how online mentoring programmes should be designed in order to be effective. De Janasz and Godshalk (2013:748) suggest that in online mentoring relationships, perceived comparability between mentor and mentee is positively related to online mentoring functions and relationship satisfaction, while actual demographic comparability is unrelated. The use of electronic methods for establishing mentoring relationships therefore reduces the importance of observable differences in favour of value likeness, even in the early stage of relationships.

Wood (2014:14) notes that when mentees have other support networks the mentoring programme possibly could run the risk of being perceived as unnecessary. A lack of response in this case could mean that the mentee is doing extremely well and does not need assistance, but it would be hard for a mentor to know whether or not this is the case (Wood, 2014:14). Another important barrier to building an online mentoring relationship is variances in views on the level of involvement required from both parties (Wood, 2014:12). Some mentoring pairs, in a study by Loureiro-Koechlin and Allen (2010:722), reported that they were dissatisfied with the mentoring process because of a time-frame difference which hampered the involvement of the mentoring pair, complicating the establishment of a working routine.

4.5.5 Ethical considerations

Requirements for any successful mentoring programme are mutual respect, trust, and privacy and confidentiality. Several research studies (Buche, 2008; Chun *et al.*, 2010; Leck & Orser, 2013) indicate that a low level of trust poses a significant hurdle to the usefulness of the mentoring relationship. Trust levels in the online environment are influenced by lack of privacy, which may result in personal information being disclosed inappropriately. Over and above this, the internet's major drawback is the fact that it allows all one's stored confidential information potentially accessible to intentional administrators, through lack of security. Communications that were intended to be private have no guarantee of remaining so, impacting on the transparency in the relationship (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:27). An additional privacy issue to consider is that in the online mentoring situation, it is easy to inadvertently send an email or message to the incorrect addressee (Purcell, 2004:285). The same applies to mobile technology,

as an sms or WhatsApp message can easily be send to the wrong person (Techwelkin, 2016).

Trust is also compromised when there is a fear of online communication being documented and captured (papertrail), and later reappearing and being miscomprehended by a third party (Bierema & Hill, 2005; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:195; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83). Developing the trust and confidence to sustain an online relationship takes time, understanding and input from the mentoring pair (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005; Leck & Wood, 2013:105).

4.5.6 Organisational barriers

Online mentoring is not necessarily an inexpensive alternative to face-to-face mentoring (Single & Single, 2005; Panapoulos & Sarri, 2013:217). Mueller (2004:59) underlines that creating and maintaining an online mentoring programme requires sufficient resources, not only for the development of a technical infrastructure, but also for the labour-intensive work of programme co-ordination, training and on-going communications with mentors and mentees. Single and Single (2005:306) report that online mentoring activities require setting up and maintaining websites, monitoring the internet and supporting two-way communication. These challenges lead to significant up-front and operational costs, which are hard to coordinate and manage (Panapoulos & Sarri, 2013:217). Preparatory training in the use of technology, software, online communication and related areas can be expensive. It is often challenging to secure funding for the proper tools, initial administrative costs and time away from work for training (Homitz & Berge, 2008:332) and this is why online mentoring is constrained in relatively small businesses (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:69).

Sphigelman and Gill (2012:471) found, in their research on unsuccessful mentoring relationships, that although the mentoring programme coordinator had provided training and support, ineffective mentors did not know how to create an online mentoring relationship as there was insufficient follow-up on the mentoring pairs. Without high levels of programme arrangements, mentees caught up in other assignments fail to follow through on commitment and mentors do not invest the time or energy to provide worthwhile support and encouragement to mentees. According to

Wood (2014:13) training and follow-up need to be established in order to extend the benefits of mentoring to participants in the online environment.

From the above it is clear that technological challenges such as limited access to mobile and internet technology; and computer incompatibility issues; a breakdown in mobile and internet technology; restricted access to computers and mobile devices; and poor computer literacy and understanding of mobile applications can restrict the development of online mentoring relationships. Shortcomings in online communication such as a delay in response from one member of the mentoring pair; the skill and style of the communication between the mentoring pair; certain expected literacy requirements; and the lack of body language and cues in online communication can hinder the development of online mentoring programmes. Aspects such as the availability and suitability of mentors as well as ethical aspects such as respect and trust, privacy and confidentiality are all barriers which can further restrict the development of an online relationship. Furthermore, organisational barriers such as the costs associated with start-up in an online mentoring programme, and the training that should be provided prior to online mentoring, should be taken cognisance of in the development of online relationships.

It is thus understandable that inevitably there may be factors that can limit the success of online mentoring programmes, although the potential benefits of these programmes have prompted many businesses to establish them formally. Some guidelines for the implementation of effective online programmes are presented next.

4.6 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONAL ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMMES

Figure 4.2 provides a summary of the guidelines to consider when implementing online programmes in a business.

Figure 4.2: Guidelines for implementing online mentoring programmes



Source: Adapted from Wong & Premkumar (2007:7); Williams & Kim (2011:83); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:80)

As depicted in Figure 4.2, three sets of online mentoring programme guidelines must be developed, namely pre-programme guidelines, guidelines to be established during the programme and post-programme feedback, which will be discussed next.

4.6.1 Pre-programme guidelines to consider

Following is a discussion of the guidelines to put in place before the commencement of an online mentoring programme in a business as depicted in Figure 4.2.

4.6.1.1 Purpose and long-term plan

A framework establishing the purpose of the online mentoring programme should be developed with contribution from all interested parties (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7). The goals, objectives, timelines and accountability for all aspects of the programme should be stated. Williams *et al.* (2012:113) confirm the importance of creating a framework for the programme, to afford structure and make sure that there is a pre-determined time frame and plan of communication.

According to Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:82) it is vital to clarify the intention of any programme and this should include who it is aimed at and what specific changes it is intended to bring about. It is also important to understand the broader organisational

or societal objectives underpinning a mentoring programme as well as how it can influence the quality of the participants' experiences and outcomes (Beddoes-Jones & Miller, 2006:54; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:82). The development of an organisational value system that assists technology, lifelong learning and transformation can furthermore set the groundwork for supporting distance mentoring (Berge & Kendrick, 2005; Homitz & Berge, 2008:328).

The goals are, in some cases, affiliated with the objectives of the business and, in others, determined by the participants in the initial phases of the relationship (Single & Single, 2005:309; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:82). Kasprisin *et al.* (2003:70) state that the purpose, goals and objectives need to be adaptable and multi-dimensional and that participants should be able to adapt the parameters to converge their unique needs, as required. Hence the purpose depends on what is required from the relationship. In some cases, the programme needs to have clear guidelines and outcomes while in others it could be more fluid and flexible.

4.6.1.2 Systems and technology development

After considering the goals and objectives of the programme, an effective communication system has to be established (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7). According to Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:83), during the start-up stages of preparation for an online mentoring programme choices should be made built on how much time and money would be required to invest in the programme, the knowledge and proficiency needed, the computer and technical support required and how the interface will be presented so that it is functional and user-friendly. For an online mentoring programme to be sustainable and successful, these issues must be dealt with and there must be consideration of the systems to be installed prior to initiating a mentoring programme (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:80;83).

Williams and Kim (2011:83) claim there is little proof on the essential structural components required for online systems for mentoring programmes. Headlam-Wells, Gosland, & Craig (2006:372) stressed the importance of integrating the principles of social interaction with those of human-computer interaction to develop and sustain a successful online mentoring programme. Communication technology systems and supporting resources, for example a computer that has a modem with access to the

internet, electronic mail and the world wide web, should be compatible (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Williams & Kim, 2011:83).

It is important to decide if the programme will be web- or email-based and whether it will be a separate stand-alone programme or an extension to an existing conventional programme. A choice can be made between (Starting an e-mentoring programme, 2016):

- A web-based model where mentors and mentees connect online and obtain the right to use the mentoring programme web page. The business can join with an existing online mentoring programme that fits with the goals of their programme, or it can design its own specific website to succeed its online mentoring programme. The latter will necessitate considerable capital and technical expertise.
- An email-based model, where the mentors and mentees use their own unique email address to connect and communicate with each other. The business must have technology in place that provides a safe and secure environment for email exchanges, archives all email messages, and the ability to track email communication between mentoring pairs.
- The use of online mentoring in addition to a conventional face-to-face programme.

The communication arrangement and system used have to be safe for all participants and so guidelines and procedures regarding confidentiality and safekeeping of the participant's data and communication should be put in place (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7). Akin and Hilbun (2007:4) confirm the importance of supporting materials for maintaining safety, and that confidentiality should be built in during the initial stages of the programme.

4.6.1.3 Participants' recruitment

A recruitment plan needs to be created for mentors and mentees before the programme commences (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7). The prospects and benefits of an online mentoring programme should be employed to market the programme to the target population. The suitability criteria for inclusion in the programme, as well as the characteristics of an effective mentor, should be listed taking into consideration the

purpose and goals of the programme during recruitment (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7).

When recruiting mentors for an online relationship the prospective mentors should understand that their involvement in another's life is just as important through the online relationship as it would be in a face-to-face meeting (Starting an e-mentoring programme, 2016). Akin and Hilbun (2007:2) stress that there must be a desire by both parties to participate in an online mentoring programme. Motivation is important as participants have to invest more effort in developing communication that is based primarily on text, with fewer visual or vocal cues (Mueller, 2004:57; Rowland, 2012:232).

It is important to engage inventive mentors who are able to motivate the mentored individuals through online activities (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:471). It may also be important to look for volunteers who show interest in participating in a trial before launching the programme (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8). Furthermore, Williams and Kim (2011:89) advise that during recruitment careful enquiry of each potential online mentor should be made regarding online media literacy and comfort in the use of technology.

4.6.1.4 Participants' selection and matching

The selection of appropriate participants is one of the most meaningful aspects of establishing an online mentoring programme (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:82). Initially, it does seem quite easy to select participants using online means because one simply locates experienced mentors and pairs them up with less experienced mentees. However, there is a mounting body of proof to suggest that deciding on the correct participants in an online environment is more vital than face-to-face contexts (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S32). This is due to the importance of efficient matching in the online environment.

After participants have been selected for the mentoring programme and depending on the programme goals, appropriate criteria have to be established for the matching of these participants. Criteria that may be considered when matching participants include gender, age, race, language, availability, needs, interest, geography, individual

preferences of mentor and mentee, life experience, and/or temperament (Cox, 2005:406; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8).

Cox (2005) states that there is ongoing debate regarding whether there needs to be an age difference as well as a gender similarity, and similarity on other issues between mentor and mentee. Shreshta *et al.* (2009:117) claim that mentees find it benefits them to be paired with mentors from different businesses and with whom they are unfamiliar, rather than individuals with an assigned interest in the mentees' decisions. This neutrality allows the mentee to share self-doubts, express concerns and ask trivial questions, in a manner that is almost unfeasible when mentee and mentor are from the same business (Single & Single, 2005:307).

De Janasz and Godshalk (2013:748) state that perceived similarity, with respect to values and attitude between the mentoring pair, impacts on the relationship positively, while actual demographic similarity between mentee and mentor is not important. Online relationships often begin and continue due to the closeness of values and ideas, rather than demographic similarity and so selection of the correct participants is important (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:763). Cox (2005:406), on the other hand, suggests that when alike personalities are paired, less personal development opportunities are available. The drawback of similar grouping is that individuals may show less growth when compared to dissimilar and unrelated groupings. Conversely, heterogeneous groups and pairs lead to weaker relationships at the start of relationships (Jolevski, 2012:8). Cox (2005:406) proposes that appropriate recruitment and training is the solution to matching dilemmas, since if the partnership is learning driven, this would seem to override the need for a fully compatible match. Mentors will have their work to do, and there is no need to develop matching criteria or to worry if two people seem, on paper, to be unsuited (Cox, 2005:413).

Another manner of dealing with the pairing challenge is by asking participants to post biographies online, and allowing participants to select who they would like to work with. Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:83) agree that this process could also present its own challenges as mentees may select mentors based on personal characteristics, friendship or in keeping with their comfort zone. Businesses should ensure that the prospective mentoring pairs complete a matching profile questionnaire and ask the

mentees to elaborate on what it is they are looking for in a mentor (Starting an e-mentoring programme, 2016). The importance of appropriate matching is a vital success factor in online mentoring relationships (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12; Cox, 2005:403). Effective pairing results in leadership style adjustments (Chun *et al.*, 2012:1071), an increase in management skills (St. Jean & Audet, 2012:120), dedication to the business (Lentz & Allen, 2009:358), career development and increase in salary (Van der Sijde & Weijam, 2013:194).

4.6.1.5 Training using systems

After successful matching participants specific pre-programme training is necessary to provide relevant information regarding the technology to be used, the means with which to build a meaningful online relationship, and more (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8; Williams & Kim 2011:86; Bullock-Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:80). Previous research on online mentoring strongly underlines the importance of online mentor training (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:214; Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:119). Pre-programme training for both mentors and mentees can occur separately or simultaneously.

(a) Training programme overview

Williams and Kim (2011:89) recommend that online mentoring programmes be developed to provide pre-programme training for online mentors in a face-to-face context with all online mentors being present for a full day orientation/training on programme content, and technology use. Programme content training includes discussions regarding the programme objectives, project concepts, detailed description of assignments, mentee expectations, online mentoring relationship management, and communication options (Williams & Kim, 2011:89). Wong and Premkumar (2007:8-9), on the other hand, contend that initial induction can occur online in the form of email messages sent to participants – they suggest that the following aspects be addressed (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8-9):

- programme synopsis and objectives;
- prospects and restrictions that the programme might have;
- description of eligibility, screening process, logistics and suitability requirements;
- the level of dedication required in terms of time, vigour, flexibility, and frequency;
- the benefits and rewards of participation;

- summary of programme guidelines and procedures, including those regulating privacy, reporting, communications and evaluation; and
- protection and security, especially around the use of the internet.

The meaning and purpose of the programme should be shared with the participants so that they comprehend how they will gain from the relationship (Williams & Kim, 2011:83). A well-developed programme should address prospects and focus on the skills required to avoid potential hurdles (Single & Single, 2005:309). Kasprisin *et al.* (2003:70) suggest that mentees involved in a required training tutorial will increase the number of mentees who remain involved with their mentors in an online mentoring programme. Williams *et al.* (2012:113) confirm that the expectations and parameters of an online programme should be shared with all participants so that everyone can be exposed to the issues that may arise as a consequence. Training to sustain a steady focus and a sense of direction and purpose within a programme, is vital (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:303).

(b) Technology training

Technology training ensures that online mentors are at ease with the technologies utilised by the programme (Williams & Kim, 2011:89). Wong and Premkumar (2007:8-9) propose that technology training should include:

- an explanation of the equipment required;
- a description of how the technology functions; and
- use of the technology.

Technology training involves navigating through the course management systems and using the features of the course website (Williams & Kim, 2011:89). Each online mentor should be supplied with a personal computer in the business who sponsor the laboratory, to benefit from a hands-on experience with all of the technologies being employed for the online mentoring programme. Individualised attention should be provided during the technology training session to ensure that all mentors fully comprehend and demonstrate a level of proficiency using the online mentoring programme website and other communication tools (Williams & Kim, 2011:89). When

reflecting on what is important with regard to online resources and training, a user-friendly interface would be important (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:84).

(c) Relationship expectations

Stokes *et al.* (2003:12) emphasise the need to establish the expectations and limitations of the mentor–mentee relationships in pre-programme training. Training can achieve this by exposing the parties to issues that may arise during the mentoring relationship. Smith-Jentsch *et al.* (2008:204) stress that pre- programme training must highlight the importance of having interactive discussions. Frequent interactions between mentees and mentors must be emphasised in the pre- programme training as lack of regular online interaction can have a significant impact on the sustainability of a programme. Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:80) suggest training in ways that provide multiple methods of contact in the online mentoring environment.

Training should focus on suggestions regarding how to initiate and develop an authentic relationship before the start of the programme. Headlam-Wells *et al.* (2005:453) note that in programme initiation the relational aspects, as well as the level of dedication required, must be discussed. Training should include reference to conflict-handling as some elements of online relationships, such as misunderstandings, flaming, and coldness of the medium can be mitigated with training (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:283).

By providing participants with opportunities for problem-solving in increasing complexity, the training programme can facilitate the solving of issues that may arise for both the mentor and mentee (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:70). Offering training and information about techniques to overcome hurdles that are unique to online relationships, including the use of emoticons and explaining how to make a good impression, can greatly reduce communication problems between mentors and mentees (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:283; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5). Information on acknowledged protocol while using the internet – netiquette – should also be provided during the training sessions (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:13).

4.6.1.6 Communication system access and modes

The communication system must be available to all participants – both mentors and mentees should have free right to use it. If participants' accessibility to computers occurs only in the workplace, it may diminish duration and frequency of communication (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7). The participants may thus only be able to communicate on weekdays during working hours. An important issue to consider, for instance, is who would be permitted to view emails and under what circumstances would they be permitted. It is also important to indicate, during this stage, whether or not the participants will need email accounts or computers, for instance (Starting an e-mentoring programme, 2016).

The use of both synchronous and asynchronous (both parties interact at different times) communication tools are recommended for effective dialogue since the richness associated with face-to-face conversations is known to decline with the use of online media (Williams & Kim, 2011:87). The use of multiple methods of contact in communicating as a means in which to increase comfort levels and learn about one another in multiple contexts is recommended as it can facilitate the success of the online mentoring relationship and must be kept in mind during pre-planning (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:284). Complementing email-based communication with other methods of communication is supported by Stokes *et al.* (2003:12). Mentoring pairs are often advised to incorporate Skype, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etcetera, as well as telephone conversations, into their mentoring partnership. Talking to someone in real time enables more efficient communication and allows a deeper, more meaningful conversation to occur (Mentor Jackets, 2016). Utilising a combination of communication mediums is stressed as an important success factor. It is furthermore recommended that the parties plan to meet at least once face-to-face, if possible. This can serve to strengthen an online relationship (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:763).

The supportive resources that online mentoring hinge on can often be undervalued (Clutterbuck & Hussain, 2010). It is important to have prepared templates, email replies, activity sheets, and a set of general guidelines so that future mentors have a starting point from which to expand. Mentors and their mentees are busy people and their time is precious. Therefore, if online resources were readily available it could lessen the workload of those involved and subsequently help support the relationship

(Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9). Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:84) suggest that although trying to make the process as easy as possible by providing prepared resources would be beneficial, it would also be ideal if the mentor could edit these to suit the individual needs of their mentee. Moreover, lessons derived from face-to-face mentoring can be further applied in an online context (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7).

4.6.2 Aspects to consider during the implementation of the programme

The following aspects need to be considered during the implementation of an online mentoring programme, discussed next.

4.6.2.1 Administrative support

The provision of relevant administrative support has been highlighted as a vital element for the success of online mentoring (Akin & Hilbun, 2007:3). Administrative staff should engage in a wide range of activities, facilitating the implementation and contributing to the administration, of the online mentoring programme by assisting the recruited mentor in acquiring personal authorisation to the online resources of the business. The online mentors should be provided with access to web resources exclusive to the business. In addition, the administrative staff should assist with essential technological instructions and general programme information (Williams & Kim, 2011:86).

4.6.2.2 Technical support

Technical support given to online mentors should involve online facilitation and support (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:222; Akin & Hilbun, 2007:4). Both the mentor and the mentee require support when utilising email sites, course communication tools, and online course delivery material (Williams & Kim, 2011:87). The online technical activities of support personnel can include aiding with technical access issues related to synchronous programme sessions; providing participant phone assistance for those wishing to call into the synchronous sessions; arranging online meetings for online conversations; and sending programme-related email announcements on various issues, for example, general problems encountered (Williams & Kim, 2011:87).

4.6.2.3 Authentic relationship building

Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:83) hold the view that training is integral central part of establishing any sustainable online programme and that it should focus on the relevant

issues of the target group and offer suggestions on how to create and sustain an authentic relationship. The ability to develop such a relationship could be considered one of the most important aspects of an online mentoring programme. Developing a relationship in an online mentoring environment comes with its challenges – discussed in Section 4.5 of this chapter. Some structured guidelines for relationship-building during the course of a mentoring programme which businesses should acknowledge is highlighted next.

(a) Reduce status differences

Generally, in a face-to-face mentoring relationship one member is either more experienced, or of a higher status, than the mentee. Status stereotypes are less obvious in online mentoring and do not have the same impact as in a face-to-face relationship (Hunt & Atherfold, 2004:6). Online mentoring decreases initial feelings of intimidation or discomfort with regard to status because typical indicators, such as position in the business or economic status, are often unidentified (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:68) which may enable mentors and mentees who differ on a number of status-related and demographic variables to have more beneficial relationships (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). The online medium diminishes status differences through the concealment of social cues that might otherwise block communication (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117). Male and Pattinson (2011:340) point out that in the online environment the mentor must be at ease being on an even playing field with the mentee. Online mentoring is particularly beneficial to individuals of marginalised groups such as females, because the online exchanges diminish markers of social status due to being less visible (Leck & Wood, 2013:104).

(b) Define role and responsibilities

It is important to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee to ensure that all participants understand they are bringing value to the relationship: thus an authentic reciprocal relationship can be established (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:469). To overcome this, it is vital for the mentor and mentee to take mutual responsibility for making the programme successful. A relationship should be developed in which the mentoring pair understands that they need one another in order to continue to move forward. The roles participants initially assume in an online mentoring programme have the potential to become switchable, as the mentees can

become empowered to create their own learning experiences by using technology to collaborate in an online environment that is personal, easily accessible, and associated with their own role and the roles of others (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:191; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83).

(c) Improve communication style

It is vital for both parties to be trained in how to use online communication effectively (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5). The online context eliminates non-verbal communication such as facial expression, intonation in a person's voice or other physical signs that give an indication of a person's thoughts and feelings (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:15). With regard to communication style, it was found that successful online mentors tended to use a colloquial conversational style (including emoticons, slang, nicknames, and humour), asked direct questions, and attached files and links of websites with additional information that mentees could refer to (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:470). Creativity was perceived a major feature of a successful online mentor (Sphigelman & Gill 2012:471). Smith-Jentsch *et al.* (2008:204) found that male mentors, in particular, need to be made aware that abbreviated language in online conversations can be problematic as mentors and their mentees may not be familiar with the same slang or figures of speech used by different generations or cultures. The use of emoticons, and training in netiquette are two ways in which interactions can be improved. Emoticons and abbreviations are used in online communication to compensate for the lack of body language that helps interpret communications. Emoticons are characters that resemble a face turned sideways and are added at the end of sentences to reflect emotions (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5).

(d) Build commitment

Participants need to make a concerted effort to stay committed to the online mentoring programme as there appears to be less commitment in an online context (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12; Leck & Wood, 2013:105). To overcome this, it is vital for the mentor and mentee to have an agreement to reflect on the success of the programme and to monitor their personal growth. During implementation of the programme, activities that build commitment should be planned and carried out. Wong and Premkumar (2007:9) and Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:82) propose that online programmes should centre on developing trusting relationships that encourage open communication and honesty.

Stokes *et al.* (2003:12) confirm that participant commitment to the programme at the start of the relationship, and giving priority to it, increase the success of the relationship.

(e) Agree on confidentiality

Ensuring that a participant's confidentiality is secured is of great importance in the online context as the programme must guarantee that information cannot be used for another purpose (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9; Williams & Kim, 2011:87). Without participants being assured of confidentiality, an authentic relationship would be very difficult to establish or maintain (Bullock & Ferrier Kerr, 2014: 83). It is therefore essential to create a confidentiality agreement at the start of the relationship so that both parties understand that conversations are private and that only what is mutually agreed upon, will be shared (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83).

(f) Cultivate a structured programme

A successful online mentoring programme develops a structured environment (that is, clear guidelines around career development, time-frame, and training for participants) otherwise the relationship tends to fade rapidly (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:9). Some online mentoring programmes require mentors and mentees to prepare personal biographies and write about their academic, professional and personal interests as a means of introduction. Setting a communication plan at the beginning of the programme, and regular contact between mentoring parties is essential for the development of a successful relationship (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12); it also necessitates that the parties establish frequent times to communicate (Bullock & Ferreir-Kerr, 2014:80). It is important to develop familiarity as mentees rated those relationships in which mentors were comfortable sharing their personal lives and expertise online as most successful (Williams & Kim, 2011:85).

(g) Observe the self-efficacy of mentee

Self-efficacy is an important element to focus on when discussing the dynamics of online mentoring (Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:7) during the programme. DiRenzo, *et al.* (2010:296) note that the mentee's general self-efficacy may greatly influence the rate of engagement and the overall outcome of the online mentoring relationship, because individuals with high self-efficacy are less sensitive to negative feedback and display greater hope, optimism, and resilience in their careers.

(h) Build trust and rapport

Establishing a good mentoring relationship in terms of rapport and trust is perceived as a vital component in the success of an online mentoring relationship (Stokes *et al.* 2003:12; Leck & Wood, 2013:107). Leck and Wood, (2013:107) contend that trust is a function of the number of communication exchanges, the desirability of the online content, the online mentoring tools used, the amount of personal information provided and the feedback of others. An obstacle that Clutterbuck and Hussain (2010) found problematic was how to create the rapport and trust required in a relationship. The word-based aspect of online communication can be very impersonal and sterile (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:3). Therefore, it is vital that opportunities are provided for participants to share a little about themselves whether in a face-to-face context (Single & Muller, 2001; Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:118), or using multi-media tools such as Skype, online chatting or voice thread (Clutterbuck & Hussain, 2010). This more personal interaction can significantly increase the longevity of the relationships developed in the mentoring programmes.

(i) Encourage frequent meetings

An additional element that increases the success of a mentoring programme is the frequency of mentoring: weekly mentoring tended to produce greater satisfaction than bimonthly mentoring (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:70; De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:747). The importance of meeting frequently should be communicated to the participants during the online mentoring programme. Van der Sijde and Weijam (2013:196) confirmed that the frequency of contact can determine whether or not a mentoring relationship is successful and may affect the dynamics of the relationship.

Participants may feel overwhelmed by the regularity of meetings (Bierema & Merriam, 2002; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:7), but it should be made clear to them that this helps maintain the continuity and flow of the mentoring conversation (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:747). Long periods of absence online often lead to disinterest or misunderstandings and should be avoided. Many formal online mentoring programmes expect communication at least twice weekly to establish the relationship. Sphigelman and Gill (2012:470) found that unsuccessful mentoring pairs experienced communication infrequencies, whereas successful pairs communicated more frequently. DiRenzo *et al.*, (2010:301) state that, in online environments, individuals

who conduct text-based communication may view it as more personal and experience the presence of the mentor through regular contact. For this reason, it is also vital that businesses ensure mentors have adequate experience with the internet (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:303). Assisting mentees in sustaining motivation can be achieved through regular messages of prompts and encouragement from facilitators (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12).

4.6.2.4 Conflict resolution mechanism

To support mentoring parties during the online programme, a mechanism should be established to manage grievances, re-matching, interpersonal problem-solving and crisis management (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9; Williams & Kim, 2011:84). One supportive strategy is to communicate programme progress to all mentors, mentees, administrative and technical support staff in the form of newsletters or other communications (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9).

The presence of a mentoring programme coordinator is important, in order to provide additional support by managing any grievances or other issues that might occur during the online mentoring programme, and to ensure that mentors and mentees complete the programme (Williams & Kim, 2011:90). The provision of discussion boards for mentors and mentees respectively, on which they can discuss any problems experienced, is another way of providing ongoing support (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9).

4.6.2.5 Recognition and appreciation system

There should, furthermore, be an opportunity for providing ongoing recognition of, and appreciation for, online mentors (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9) as they should be acknowledged for their efforts in providing guidance to their mentees and for the successful completion of the programme (Williams & Kim, 2011:90). The appreciation of online mentors provides means for them to gather together to socialise, learn from each other, feel comfortable with their roles, and be valued for their expertise (University of Saskatchewan, 2016). Ongoing peer support for volunteers and other mentors can be provided by arranging social gatherings and appreciation events. Newsletters or other communications should be distributed to mentors, supporters and funders (IOWA Mentoring Partnership, 2016).

4.6.2.6 Continuous reflection and evaluation

Evaluation and reflection should be an on-going process throughout the programme as it is an important part of any online mentoring process. Both mentor and mentee should decide how to evaluate the online mentoring process – this could be as simple as periodic process checks between the participants to assess how the relationship is working, with the purpose of improving communication, managing grievances, discussing the re-matching of participants and considering ways for improving it (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12).

Feedback measures should be established as it is possible that a participant could say one thing online, but continue to mentor or receive mentoring without any adjustment of his or her practice in the real world, due to having no direct accountability for change (Bullock & Ferreir-Kerr, 2014:82). All participants should commit to personal reflection and be willing to become analytical of their own practice (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:84). A potential problem with allowing participants to do this alone, is their inability to be objective enough to concede when progress is not being made and to seek assistance and guidance (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:5). It is the mentor's ability to pose insightful questions and to discern nuances in the mentee's dialogue, which will provide ways for the mentee to challenge their own thinking (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:117; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:84). This is not an easy task and moreover, the mentor must adjust the reflection tasks according to the needs of the mentee. If the mentor does not actively reflect on their role as a facilitator of reflection, it will potentially allow for miscommunication and a lack of understanding and trust in the relationship. With this in mind, it would also be essential to continue to reflect on the purpose of the relationship from the start (Bullock & Ferrier Kerr, 2014:84).

Consideration needs to be given to whether the programme is impacting positively and whether the online environment is aiding or challenging the development of the relationship (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:122; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:85). Clutterbuck and Hussain (2010) note that evaluation may be easier in an online context due to the written nature of responses, however, it is important to have clear goals to measure progress against. Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:85) confirm that continuous evaluation aids in measuring the value associated with the programme as it can identify best practices. Wong and Premkumar (2007:9) emphasise that the programme

planners should communicate regularly and consistently with staff, mentors and mentees and that a progress system for ongoing assessment and monitoring be established.

4.6.3 Post-programme feedback

Reflection and evaluation need to occur throughout the programme and also at the conclusion of the relationship, according to the goals that were set at the beginning of the programme. Without clear goals, the worth of the programme could be difficult to ascertain on evaluation (Single & Muller, 2001). Indicators of programme implementation practicality and participant commitment, such as meeting frequency and relationship duration; and systems for collecting and managing stipulated data, should be developed (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:10).

It is recommended that online mentors be afforded an opportunity to meet with each other face-to-face, sharing their original expectations and their personal learning experiences as mentors. Mentors can also comment on the design of the online mentoring programme, the various types of support relied upon and the process of the mentees' learning. These comments, along with the formal evaluation data, can serve as an excellent source of revision to subsequent repetitions of the online mentoring programme (Williams & Kim, 2011:91).

Distribution of the evaluation results should occur and the online mentoring programme's design and operations should be refined based on these results (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:10). Closure of the online mentoring programme could take the form of private and confidential exit interviews with mentors and mentees. Assistance should be provided to mentees regarding both how to continue into the future and how to maximise the benefits experienced on the programme (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:10). Providing ongoing support via an online mentor, after the mentoring programme has ended, would be an excellent way to reinforce and improve transfer of learning to a mentee (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:284).

From the preceding discussion it is clear that for an online mentoring programme to be effective in businesses, careful consideration is needed to ensure that a pre- and post-programme are in place. It is acknowledged that the guidelines presented as necessary

during the running of the programme could also be applicable to individual mentoring, with the exception of administrative and technical support. Pre-programme guidelines confirm the importance of establishing the purpose and long-term plan for the online mentoring programme. For such a programme to be sustainable and successful there must be consideration of the computer technology and systems to be developed prior to initiating a mentoring programme. After participants have been recruited, the selection and matching of participants should take place.

After successful matching, pre-programme training for both mentors and mentees is necessary with regard to both the technology to be used and to relationship expectations. Access to the necessary communication system and to different modes of communication should be provided. Aspects to consider during the implementation of the programme include the provision of appropriate administrative and technical support. Both the online mentor and mentee need support in utilising email sites, course communication tools, and online course delivery ware. Support on building an authentic relationship should also be provided. A recognition and appreciation system should be developed and continuous reflection and evaluation of the programme should take place. Post-programme feedback should occur and a plan should be in place for the programme's conclusion.

In summary, it should be noted that irrespective of how the communication in mentoring occurs, online mentoring has the same purpose as conventional mentoring with the exception that technology is used to facilitate mentoring relationships. From the chapter it is clear that online mentoring might provide contexts and exchanges that may not be possible to replicate in conventional mentoring relationships.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a review of, and commenced with a discussion on, the concept of online mentoring after which distinct differences between conventional and online mentoring were noted. Online mentoring was defined as technology-mediated mentoring between the mentor and the mentee characterised by its non-face-to-face nature that can be used as a mentoring approach on its own, or as a supplement to conventional face-to-face mentoring. The most frequently used tools in online mentoring were discussed, namely tools used for direct communication (email, instant

messaging, chat rooms and online voice and video chat); collaboration tools (online discussion groups, blogs and wikis); and social media tools (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn). It was noted that technological growth led to a change in the effective models in mentoring and provided methods to expand the possibilities of conventional mentoring.

The benefits that online mentoring programmes offer in comparison to face-to-face mentoring programmes, due to the unique features of technology-mediated communications, were outlined after which the key challenges associated with online mentoring were deliberated upon. Online communication offers easy and broader access to mentoring and is more affordable when compared to face-to-face mentoring. It was further noted that formal online mentoring programmes transcend geographical barriers that would otherwise prove prohibitive to mentoring opportunities. The equalisation of status differences was confirmed. Online mentoring, furthermore, provides a written record of the communication between the mentoring pair; it provides networking opportunities to a greater extent than participants expect; and it can be viewed as a means to overcome professional isolation.

Challenges that restrict online mentoring relationships are: technological challenges, such as limited access to technology and computer and mobile incompatibility issues; breakdown in technology; restricted access to computers and mobile technology; poor computer and mobile technology literacy; aspects relating to communication skills; aspects relating to the speed and effectiveness of relationship development; the availability and suitability of mentors; ethical aspects such as trust, privacy and confidentiality; and organisational barriers such as the costs associated with both start-up in an online mentoring programme and the training that should be provided.

The chapter concluded with three sets of mentoring programme guidelines that should be developed for the implementation of effective online mentoring programmes in businesses, namely: pre-programme guidelines; guidelines to be established during the implementation of the online mentoring programme; and post-programme feedback. It is acknowledged that the guidelines presented as necessary during the running of the programme could also be applicable to individual mentoring, with the exception of administrative and technical support. Pre-programme guidelines confirm

the importance of establishing the purpose and long-term plan for the online mentoring programme. There must, furthermore, be consideration of the computer technology and systems to be developed as well as the recruitment, selecting and matching of participants for the mentoring programme. Some pre-programme training for both mentors and mentees is necessary, and access to the necessary communication system and different modes of communication should be provided. Aspects to consider during the implementation of the programme include the provision of appropriate administrative and technical support. Support for building an authentic relationship should also be provided. A recognition and appreciation system should be developed and continuous reflection and evaluation of the programme should take place. Post-programme feedback on the programme should take place and a plan should be in place for the programme's conclusion.

In conclusion of this chapter it is acknowledged that online mentoring addresses many of the challenges inherent in conventional face-to-face mentoring and that it can be used as a transformative tool to advance females' careers and small business development in South Africa. This study explored the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in South Africa and it was surmised in Chapter 1 that further research was needed to gain a greater appreciation of the unique needs and challenges of online mentoring and, in particular, to determine how to effectively implement online mentoring programmes. In preparation of the results of this study, the following chapter will present a summary of the global online mentoring landscape. Different fields of online mentoring and the target markets which it serves will be considered. An overview will be provided of several large-scale global online mentoring institutions and a distinction will be made between those global online mentoring institutions with an affiliation to South Africa and those unique to South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ONLINE MENTORING LANDSCAPE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, an overview of online mentoring was provided. Online mentoring was defined as technology-mediated mentoring between the mentor and the mentee, characterised by its non-face-to-face nature and which can be used as a mentoring approach on its own or in addition to conventional face-to-face mentoring. A discussion of online mentoring, as opposed to conventional mentoring, was offered after which the discussion focused on the different communication tools that can be used in online mentoring as well as the benefits of this form of mentoring. It was contended that when participants have time to exchange information, form impressions, relate values, and provide appropriate feedback, online mentoring allows for a quality relationship to develop. The challenges that restrict online mentoring relationships such as technological challenges; aspects relating to communication skills; aspects relating to the speed and effectiveness of relationship development; the availability and suitability of mentors; ethical issues such as trust, privacy and confidentiality; and organisational barriers, were highlighted. Three sets of guidelines that should be developed for the implementation of effective online mentoring programmes, namely pre-programme guidelines, guidelines to be established during the implementation of the online mentoring programme and post-programme feedback, were supplied.

Research on online mentoring continues to enable users of this form of mentoring to benefit from empirically-substantiated guidelines regarding how, when, and for whom such programmes are likely to be applicable (Headlam-Wells, 2004:213; Smith-Jentsch *et al.* 2008:205; Clutterbuck & Haddock-Millar, 2016:9). This chapter will commence with a discussion on the different fields of online mentoring and the target markets it serves. An overview of several large-scale global online mentoring institutions will be provided. For each of the identified global mentoring institutions, the programmes offered and the target markets served in the respective online mentoring fields are referred to. Reference will furthermore be made to those global online mentoring institutions affiliated with South Africa (SA) and to those unique to SA. A summary of these institutions and the online mentoring services they offer will be provided.

5.2 FIELDS OF AND USES OF ONLINE MENTORING

There are a variety of different fields in which online mentoring is applied especially since online mentoring permits mentees from distant areas or with problems of mobility to contact mentors with the expertise they seek through internet access (Leck *et al.*, 2014:15). Online mentoring can serve as a form of small business development support (Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:551) and can particularly support female entrepreneurs as they improve their skills, confidence, networks and businesses (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Millar, 2016:9), as was noted in Chapter 1. Online mentoring furthermore provides career development functions, which offer mentees the tools and skills required to advance in their chosen career path (Headlam-Wells *et al.* 2005:446; Leck & Wood, 2013:107), as discussed in Chapter 1. It is additionally acknowledged that online mentoring programmes can support unemployed individuals to secure their first job (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204) and improve both mentors' and mentees' employability skills (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:455; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013:558). Online mentoring can also overcome the constraints of time, geography and the availability of mentors that may be experienced by expatriates or people on overseas job assignments (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:7; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204).

As far as it can be established most online mentoring takes place in the education, health and construction industry with the education field being the most prominent. An overview of online mentoring in these three sectors will be discussed next.

5.2.1 Education

Online mentoring is being offered in a number of fields, with educational institutions leading the way in the use of online mentoring programmes (Bierema & Hill, 2005:559; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:205). Most of these online mentoring activities are directed towards specific target groups: young female school and college students; potentially disaffected school pupils; school pupils as part of universities' widening participation initiative to encourage greater access to higher education (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:205); and females in the non-traditional areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Mueller, 2004:54). Since online mentoring in education circumvents boundaries of race, class and gender, marginalised groups in society such as minorities, low income students, and young girls are also targeted (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:216; Headlam-Wells, 2004:213). Other target groups for which online

mentoring in primary and secondary education are appropriate, are mentees from rural areas or low-income urban neighbourhoods (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). The application of online mentoring in the primary, secondary and tertiary education context will be discussed in the following section in greater detail.

5.2.1.1 Primary and secondary education

It must be noted that mentoring in primary and secondary education is not limited to learners and students, but also applies to teachers, and even new school principals.

(a) Learner-centered mentoring

In the field of primary and secondary school education, online programmes have been developed that link learners and teachers with tutors, experts, and/or data bases offering subject matter experts to assist teachers and learners in schools (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:217). These mentoring relationships vary from one-to-one mentoring to group mentoring, led by mentors who are teachers, community members, undergraduate students, peers or industry employees. An example of such a scheme is the web-based International Telementor Programme, which was started in 1995 by Hewlett Packard and whereby employees mentored school pupils in the USA (Stewart & Mc Louchlin, 2007:952) to improve the critical thinking skills of pupils, increase self-directed learning and improve teamwork among school pupils and employees.

One of the first examples of successful online mentoring was the K-12 teachers and high school students' project financed by the National Science Foundation in 1994 to stimulate female high school students' interest in science and technology as females were under-represented in these fields (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:69). The fastest-growing high school mentoring programme, Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) in America helps to mentor high school learners and encourages them to follow careers in those fields, and supports their continual advancement in the industry. Online mentoring has not been offered yet at ACE, but the possibility of augmenting face-to-face with online mentoring is being investigated by their board (ACE Mentor Programme, 2016).

(b) Teacher-centered mentoring

Online mentoring in education can furthermore assist with the support and mentoring of beginner teachers by employing online conferences as a complement to more conventional, face-to-face mentoring and by establishing groups where teachers become involved in online activities together in diverse cultural and social situations (Klecka, Cheng & Clift, 2004:2). The induction of beginner teachers benefits from online mentoring, because it is not constrained by geographic location, it has the capability of providing quality mentoring support that extends beyond the school day, and it has the potential to address the isolation new teachers experience as they are bound together by common teaching practices (Gentry, 2011:80; Mo & Chen, 2013:177). It was found that the nature of mentoring support desired by beginner teachers was widespread, including emotional support; how to manage workload; minimise administrative tasks such as paperwork; work effectively with other teachers; deal with time scheduling and receive instructional support (Ehrich, Hansford & Tennent *et al.*, 2004:526; Gentry, 2011:195).

Online mentoring also has the potential to enhance the professional learning of school teachers through the delivery of justifiable professional development programmes (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:77). School systems could apply online mentoring amongst their teachers to create a group of people with which teachers can communicate and share resources and information, permitting teachers with similar student populations to interact online when geography does not allow them to do so in person (Gentry, 2011:72). Gentry (2011:5) notes that within the field of special education, teacher attrition is a problem that contributes to the inadequate supply of special education teachers and discusses a programme where beginner and experienced special educators can be linked through an online platform. Hunt, Powell, Little and Mike (2013:286) emphasise the need to mentor beginner special education teachers due to teacher shortages. They warn that due to the various skill-levels of beginner special education teachers in schools and the small number of current special educators in each school who could serve as mentors, there is difficulty finding mentors that possess similar teaching credentials. Online mentoring could be the solution as it provides mentoring opportunities that increase collaboration time and reduce feelings of isolation and increases efficacy among new teachers (Hunt *et al.*, 2013:286). The real content of the interchanges between new special educators and their mentors can

be studied, since it provides a written record of their communications. Other issues that can be addressed include educators' concerns, professional competencies, and key factors identified in teacher development (Gentry, 2011:6).

Gentry (2011:79) furthermore states that research studies exploring online mentoring programmes' effectiveness, challenges, and possible drawbacks are lacking in special education, primarily because funded research has focused on online mentoring in mathematics and science. An example in this regard is the Electronic Mentoring for Student Success (eMSS) by the New Teacher Center at the University of California, originally funded by the National Science Foundation to enhance the induction of mathematics and science special education teachers with three or less years of classroom experience (Hunt *et al.*, 2013:288).

Quintana and Zambrano (2014:629) refer to how online mentoring can strengthen the educational performances of primary rural teachers with complex geographical access in Chile by developing an email relationship. However, assistance can be influenced by the technological resources availability as well as by identifying an adequately matched online mentor to influence teacher adherence to the process (Quintana & Zambrano, 2014:630).

In the South African primary and secondary school context, where there is a tendency for well-qualified teachers to move from rural areas to urban areas, online mentoring facilitates the acquiring of knowledge and skills by rural-based teachers who may be under-qualified, provided that the rural areas where the schools are located are provided with the necessary infrastructure (Department of Education, 2008:43). Online mentoring can also be employed to use knowledge and skills of people who are not at the same school as the mentees. If well-planned, it can encourage partnerships among schools (Department of Education, 2008:43).

(c) School principal-centered mentoring

Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:86) note that online mentoring can also assist in developing the professional and personal skills of new heads of school so that they can work effectively with their colleagues and communities to improve teaching and learning in schools. An example of such a programme is the First-time Principals'

Programme in New Zealand, which is an induction programme taking place through face-to-face meetings, email, Skype and other digital technologies and whereby first-time school principals participate in professional learning groups, online discussion with mentors and other first-time headmasters (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:86).

5.2.1.2 Tertiary education

Mentoring in tertiary education can be provided for undergraduate and graduate students, peer groups, staff and students with special needs.

(a) Undergraduate student mentoring

Online mentoring in tertiary education has been recognised as a way of providing mentoring for a large, disparate student body (Dewart *et al.*, 2005:1) and has been used extensively for the mentoring of university students (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). Research has shown that online mentoring leads to enhanced academic performance and job opportunities for students (Murphy, 2011:608). Well-designed online mentoring programmes in tertiary education support the attraction, retention and support of students in the numerous challenges they encounter during their years at university and during their transition into the workforce (Mueller, 2004:61). Shrestha *et al.* (2009:123) refer to how the online medium allowed for mentoring to target students without stigmatising them, how online mentoring reached out to more students, and how it enabled mentors to better manage the expectations of mentees in this context. De Janasz and Godshalk, (2013:763) mention that in education, undergraduate and graduate students can be matched with either university professors or career professionals.

In a study by Murphy (2011:606) management students were pooled online with working professionals for a semester to examine the applicability of course content, learn how topics are applied in practice, and cultivate understanding and participation, which significantly increased students' predisposition to initiate growing relationships – a critical skill for career development. Williams *et al.* (2012:109) refer to an online graduate course in human resource development, where individual students engaged in independent field projects, drawing upon advice and guidance from distanced consultants who served as online mentors. Cascio and Gasker (2001:283) reported on the effectiveness of online mentoring in social work education where students in one

division of a professional undergraduate course were randomly paired with a division of master's level students in a family therapy course resulting in a positive influence on the professional identity of the undergraduates (Wood, 2014:4).

To cope with the rapid change in modern technology, the Faculty of Law of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK Law) has launched an innovative online mentoring programme to facilitate connections between current law students and alumni of CUHK Law around the world to receive valuable advice and guidance on career planning, recruitment, and preparation for joining the legal profession. Alumni can join the e-mentoring programme by simply registering and providing information on their practice areas and expertise. Students can log into the system to look for mentoring assistance and reach out to those alumni with the most relevant experience from various professional fields (CUHK Communications and public relations office, 2016).

The Dedman School of Law's Mustang Exchange in Texas in the USA is a hybrid mentorship programme that connects each law student with multiple alumni for online and one-on-one mentoring meetings, and enables them to build their legal network from the onset with multiple alumni. A calendar feature on the Mustang Exchange site allows a mentor to participate as often or as little as her or his schedule permits and a student can initiate mentor contact through the Mustang Exchange site via email (Dedman, 2016).

In Australia the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) developed an online industry mentoring programme in early 2016 to make it easier for on-campus and external USQ students to connect with mentors regarding their future careers and development. With a large number of USQ students studying externally around the world, and a growing network of USQ alumni and industry connections based overseas, the programme creates more opportunities for students preparing for their transition to employment and to develop their careers. Students select a mentor who suits what they are seeking and uses profile analytics to ensure suitable matches based on skills, knowledge, common interests and goals. Allowing students to select their mentor gives them greater ownership of the relationship from the beginning of the programme, which makes it easier for participants to maintain their mentoring partnerships for the ten-week period (University of Southern Queensland, 2016).

(b) Postgraduate student mentoring

Michau and Louw (2014:136) argue that effective postgraduate supervision is a form of mentoring, where post-graduate students are guided into independent research through constructive interactive engagement and by modelling appropriate research behaviour. Online mentoring has also been found to be useful in establishing relationships between lawyers and paralegals (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:215). Barrister mentors in the legal profession are being matched with student mentees based on practice area and/or life experience and can communicate with one another in a convenient and safe environment where they can openly discuss and share their views on key issues affecting the legal profession, as well as academic or institutional changes (The Bar Council, 2016). A document platform is provided that hosts information to inform the mentor and mentee of all relevant communication and facts needed during the running of the mentorship programme, and the online portal and communications are monitored by the Bar Council's Bar Mentoring Service in the United Kingdom (UK) to comply with safeguarding standards. In Canada formal online mentorship initiatives and workshops were organised by funding institutions in partnership with universities to assist clinical scientists with challenges in their development (Straus, Chatur & Taylor, 2009:135).

An and Lipscomb (2013:S33) refer to using a cost- and time-efficient online mentoring method with nutrition professionals and students via LinkedIn. An online enquiry about prospective mentors can be made after a quick search of the more than 10 000 nutrition professional members who work in dietetics. Email, chat, and the posting of links, pictures, videos, and social networking present similar connectivity as conventional mentoring for these groups (An & Lipscomb, 2013:S36).

One of the many European strategies regarding the promotion of entrepreneurship in the tertiary education can be found at the University of Bucharest and the Romanian Institute for Education, who – together with five other partners from European countries – are participating in the CReBUS (Creating a business in the digital age) project. CReBUS developed an online training system for learning, collaboration and online mentoring to facilitate the development of entrepreneurship competences for young graduates between 18-35 years (Martin, 2012:223).

(c) Peer support mentoring

Online mentoring in tertiary education can furthermore provide peer support in an academic setting and student engagement is supported by providing first year students with a second or third year student as a mentor (Shreshta *et al.*, 2009:116). Students are taught to provide academic input to less knowledgeable peers. It has been found that students from metropolitan universities are often living at home with parents and have particular needs which may be met through peer support, as social and academic integration are a major hurdle for these students (Dewart *et al.*, 2005:1; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:193).

In SA, the use of online mentoring in tertiary education started to gain popularity in the nineties when it was realised that emails may be an easier way to connect with students around research and preparation for business. In an experiment at the North-West University in SA a programme was set up in the Economics and Business Management Faculty where honours students mentored undergraduates and honours students themselves had to find a non-university mentor from the business world. The report delivered on the programme reinforced the usefulness of these mentoring-structures on a university level (Lotter, 2015:8).

(d) Staff mentoring

Effective mentoring programmes have been reported for administrative staff, for new faculty members and for faculty members carrying out new roles in the tertiary educational context (Potgieter, 2011:63). Online mentoring in tertiary education can furthermore improve the quality of academic life for junior and senior female faculty members and extend valuable connections within the university environment. Hezlett and Gibson (2005:456) suggest that mentoring for females in tertiary education should be considered a serious campus enterprise to help them achieve admittance to information networks and organisational systems required for success.

(e) Special needs student mentoring

The accessibility of online mentoring allows people with disabilities to communicate with other people with or without disabilities to share personal experiences and to pursue academic and career opportunities as online mentoring takes the pressure off the transition from secondary school to young adulthood (Sphigelman & Gill,

2012:463). Online media may be the principal means by which mentors and mentees can become acquainted, for example, mentees who are homebound or persons with disabilities (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). An example of a national online mentoring programme in Israel (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking & Technology DO-IT) matches mentors and mentored individuals with similar disabilities to encourage disabled individuals to participate in post-secondary academic programmes and careers (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:463). Adding visual and vocal components to the online communication are valuable for the disabled youth who are more likely to experience social isolation compared to other students.

Online mentoring can furthermore assist with the transition of students into an overseas working environment (Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:204). Mentoring assistance programmes include outreach services, transition assistance, peer advising, counselling and academic advising, computer skills enhancement, faculty mentorships, research experience, and graduate preparation. Sea Change Mentoring works with American expatriate students who live abroad because of their parents' work (Sea Change Mentoring, 2016). This is a population at risk for addiction, depression, anxiety and suicide upon returning to the United States once their parents' assignments are over. With online technology these students can be reached no matter what country they live in and can be provided with mentors to help them develop coping, social and life skills needed for transition into a well-adjusted adulthood (Sea Change Mentoring, 2016).

From the preceding it is thus clear that online mentoring has been widely applied in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education. It transpires that mentoring is not just for learners and students in primary and secondary education, but also for teachers, university staff and even new school principals. Undergraduate and graduate students, peer groups, staff and students with special needs can all benefit from mentoring in the tertiary education context.

Although most of the mentoring in the healthcare sector is educational in nature, other examples of healthcare mentoring that fall outside the scope of education will be referred to next.

5.2.2 Healthcare industry

In the South African context, Lalloo, Bobat, Pillay & Wassenaar, 2014:S55) mention that one of the main challenges SA faces is the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals and suggest that online mentoring will be useful for South African health professionals as there is a large geographic spread of nurses and doctors. Online mentoring in health care has been promoted as a means to overcome professional isolation and a way to provide clinical support for health-care workers (Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007:954; Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:199).

Bourke *et al.* (2014:2) confirm online mentoring as a retention strategy to sustain rural and remote health workforces and present a suitable mentoring model to teach health professionals not from Australia about the cultural practice and understanding of indigenous populations (Bourke *et al.*, 2014:4). Kalisch *et al.* (2005:241), in their research, confirm the benefits of online mentoring for nurse mentors who do not have time for face-to-face interaction with students, but who are able to provide advice, information and support while sitting at their desks, workstations or at home.

BlueCare, one of Australia's largest providers of community health and residential aged care, introduced an email-based online mentoring system for their nurses to provide them with ongoing support and professional development even if from remote locations (Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007:954). Mentors and mentees could send secure, encrypted emails to each other. Mentors were requested to articulate their health professional and mentoring experience, and identify the skills they could offer a mentee. The nurses participating were asked to identify both what they wished to achieve and what they expected from a mentor. They supported the use of an email online mentoring system as it was easy to use, allowed communication flexibility, reduced feelings of isolation and increased networking within the business (Stewart & McLoughlin, 2007:955).

O'Keefe and Forrester (2009:245) report on the successful implementation of an online mentoring programme for nurses at an acute care medical center in the USA to improve nurses' employee satisfaction, retention, and recruitment outcomes; change the ways they themselves, and others, perceive nurses; and improve patient care outcomes. The online mentoring process provides benefits to the nurses and their

institutions in terms of real-time communication, facilitation of strategic thinking, ability to monitor progress and improve business knowledge. Pietsch (2012:632) suggests that health care institutions considering the adoption of online mentoring should encourage nurses with positive attitudes and previous mentoring experience to act as online mentors for the multigenerational nursing workforce. Physical therapists working in rural positions in British Columbia, Canada, participate in an online peer mentoring programme where retired or near-retirement physical therapists mentored them on a once-weekly basis using laptop computers. It was found that the peer online mentoring system facilitated collaborative learning and collegial discussion (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:199) and decreased the clinical isolation experienced by working in rural areas (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:204). Online mentoring has also been offered in the construction industry which will be discussed next.

5.2.3 Construction industry

The mentoring relationship is quite different in the construction industry and little research has been undertaken in this field. Hoffmeister, Cigularov, Sampson, Rosecrance and Chen (2011:673) refer to research to identify characteristics of effective mentors in this industry and found that communication skills, knowledge sharing, and correcting mistakes/giving feedback are vital in order for a mentor to be successful in the industry. Lack of construction skills has been identified as one of the biggest threats to the industry's growth and, coupled with an ageing workforce, means there is an urgent need to start transferring knowledge from those with experience to those who are just starting and developing their careers (Clarke, 2013:1). Based on the premise that mentoring practices can be enhanced through the use of technology, Kandie, Ngassam and Dlungwana (2009:400) propose an online mentoring model for small contractors in SA since mentoring is essential to accelerate the process of empowerment. Mentoring has been identified as a means of developing capacity and overcoming business impediments in the construction sector because it is individualised, contextualised, experiential and relevant (Kandie *et al.*, 2009:398).

An example of a successful mentoring model in SA is that of the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) which established an effective training and mentoring programme using the Emerging Contractor Development Model (ECDM). This enabled emerging contractors real project experience through the development

of their entrepreneurial, business and contract management skills (Kandie *et al.*, 2009:401). This mentorship model however has a lack of, or minimal use of, technology-mediated communication.

The South African Women in Construction Association (SAWIC) focuses on growing and supporting female entrepreneurs in the construction industry (SAWIC, 2015), but after a systematic internet search and scrutinising of information provided on their website, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring could be found. The South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) offers a company-to-company mentoring programme with the objective of transferring knowledge and skills to the business owner and personnel of a sub-contractor, via mentoring, coaching and training (SAFCEC, 2016). As with SAWIC, after an internet search and looking into information provided on their website, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring by SAFCEC could be found. For this reason, these programmes will not be discussed further.

From the preceding it is acknowledged that most of the online mentoring activity that exists is directed towards primary, secondary and tertiary education. Students with special needs, such as those who are disabled and students whose parents are on overseas assignments have also been assisted with online mentoring. It is furthermore recognised that the field of online mentoring has been extended to include the healthcare and construction industries. Online mentoring can also serve as a tool for small business development and corporate career development, can support unemployed individuals in finding their first jobs, and improve both mentors' and mentees' employability skills. An overview of global online mentoring institutions is provided in the following section.

5.3 GLOBAL ONLINE MENTORING INSTITUTIONS

Online mentoring began to gain popularity around 1993 and, as indicated in the preceding sections, is now utilised globally. Unlike formal face-to-face mentoring programmes, which are often limited to relatively small institutions, online mentoring facilitates large-scale programmes (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003:68). These large-scale programmes can benefit from economies of size and concentration of expertise to

provide mentoring services where they otherwise would not exist (Single & Muller, 2001:108).

An overview of global online mentoring institutions is provided next. It is acknowledged that this is not an exhaustive list, but these institutions appeared most often in online searches and will thus be discussed. Reference will be made to global online mentoring institutions with and without South African affiliation, as well as to South African-developed institutions. The programmes offered by these institutions and the target markets served will be discussed.

5.3.1 Online mentoring institutions with no South African affiliation

Table 5.1 provides a summary of online mentoring institutions with, as far as could be established, no South African affiliation.

Table 5.1: Online mentoring institutions with no South African affiliation

Country	Online mentoring institution
United States of America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MentorNet • Mentored Pathways • West Virginia eMentoring: Education Alliance • Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability Online
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brightside
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) • Unatti and Intergenerational e-mentoring
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA) • Griffith Global e-mentoring (GGEM) • MentorLink • CocaCola 5by20 programme in partnership with Beacon Foundation • Inspire Mentor Programme • OurSpace: Australia
Australia	
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Africa Women’s Mentoring Network (EAWMN)

Sources: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (2015); Gayomali (2015); Lindsay (2015); UNATTI (2015a); Ability Online (2016); Australian Women in Resources Alliance (2016a); Brightside Online Mentoring (2016a); CocaCola Journey (2016a); Education Alliance (2016); Flinders University (2016); Griffith University (2016); Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (2016a); MentorLink (2016a); MentorNet (2016a); Mentored Pathways (2016a); Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development (2016a)

The following sections will refer to online mentoring institutions as outlined in Table 5.1 from the USA, Canada, UK, Europe, Australia and Africa, without South African affiliation.

5.3.1.1 Online mentoring institutions from the United States of America

A discussion of online mentoring institutions from the USA without South African affiliation is presented next.

(a) MentorNet

MentorNet is a non-profit, web-based mentoring network, founded in 1997 in the USA, for students majoring in related sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Mueller, 2004:57; MentorNet, 2016a). The purpose and target market of MentorNet is to provide professional development to females, under-represented minorities and first-generation tertiary attendees in STEM fields (MentorNet, 2016a). The application process requests eligible prospective mentors (STEM professionals) to complete an online application, providing information about their professional disciplines, sectors of employment and student applicants in higher education (mentees) providing information about their intended majors and career interests. In addition, both mentors and mentees are asked demographic information to be used in a bi-directional matching programme that can sort through the application data identifying optimal pairings of mentors and students. MentorNet staff check the matches for compatibility and aim to resolve issues (Mueller, 2004:60; MentorNet, 2016a). The mentee and mentor determine the best meeting times in relation to their schedules and may communicate using MentorNet's chat interface or Skype, Google Hangouts, email, phone, or text. Pairs communicate 15-20 minutes weekly during the four-month mentorship cycle in which sixteen prompts (one per week) are presented for discussion. Following a cycle, mentees may invite their current mentor or a new one, to begin a new mentorship (MentorNet, 2016b).

MentorNet provides mentors and mentees with online training before their mentorship commences, to ensure that they interact successfully in an online environment (Kasprisin *et al.*, 2003). As mentees graduate and develop into STEM professionals, they are encouraged to rejoin as mentors. In 2011, MentorNet extended its reach to form MentorNetHealth aiming at connecting health sciences students and young

professionals (SYPs) interested in global health with experts in the field, by giving and receiving career and life advice in global health (MentorNet, 2016c). MentorNet has affected 32 000 mentoring relationships in its more than fifteen years of existence and partnered with LinkedIn in 2015 to further increase its connectivity and growth (Gayomali, 2015).

(b) Mentored Pathways

Mentored Pathways, established in 1995, is globally regarded the leader in the field of online academic-based mentoring between professional industry adults and students, enabling students to develop the necessary skills and foundation to pursue their interests and operate at their full potential (Mentored Pathways, 2016a). Interested school teachers apply online after which Mentored Pathways staff will contact them to provide support and guidance on the submission of a project plan. The projects must give students the opportunity to attempt real work issues in areas such as business, engineering, natural resource management and social entrepreneurship (Million Women Mentors, 2016). Prospective mentors apply to become a mentor and can then review submitted projects and select a student to mentor based on student application information (Million Women Mentors, 2016). Students can complete an application form and select the project plan they are interested in (Mentored Pathways, 2016b). Mentees are in touch with mentors at least twice per week via the secure website and at the end of the project both mentee and mentor are required to complete and submit a short survey about their mentoring experience (Million Women Mentors, 2016; Mentored Pathways, 2016a). Large companies such as Google, Hewlett-Packard and Intel support Mentored Pathways (Mentored Pathways, 2016b).

(c) West Virginia eMentoring: Education Alliance

West Virginia eMentoring (WV eMentoring) is a programme of the Education Alliance, a nonprofit research fund that advocates for a quality public education for all West Virginia children in the USA. The WV eMentoring programme was piloted in 2011 to connect students online across the state of West Virginia in grades eight-to-twelve to a mentor (a working or retired individual) through a portal of activities designed to help them explore their post-secondary school options and career fields (Education Alliance, 2016). Interested online mentors apply and, upon acceptance, complete a brief online training programme followed by the creating of an online profile (Education

Alliance, 2016). Mentees choose a mentor according to their career fields of interest or common hobbies. The programme runs for ten weeks at a time with fifteen-to-twenty weekly sessions conducted via email (Education Alliance, 2016). Sessions take place in a computer lab during school hours with a teacher present who allows mentees access (PERC, 2016). The annual programme evaluation shows that students feel more self-confident, better informed about their post-secondary options and value the relationship with their mentors.

(d) Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

The IEEE, established in 1963, is one of the world's largest technical professional associations, composed of engineers, scientists, and related professionals with its corporate office in New York. IEEE initiated Collabratec online mentoring in 2008 (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2016a). To join the mentoring programme prospective mentors and mentees must visit and sign in with their IEEE membership number to network and collaborate. It is expected that mentors who volunteer will mentor for a minimum of two hours per month. Mentors who have signed up compile a profile of their preferences and mentoring areas to assist in the match process (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2016b). Prospective IEEE mentees must be in their first or second job or consider entering a graduate programme; or be recent graduates entering the professional workforce for the first time; or professionals making a career move or career change (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2016c). Mentees self-select their mentor from a database of available volunteered IEEE mentors using a search criterion that makes provision for geographical preference (country, state, or city), types of mentees willing to mentor (students or professionals), and mentoring areas such as career, educational, leadership, technical, etcetera (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2016b). The mentoring pair can choose to informally communicate by email, phone, or in person, but follow an action plan with clearly defined goals and expectations. At the end of the relationship, both mentors and mentees are required to complete the post-mentoring survey to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the programme (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2016b).

5.3.1.2 Online mentoring institution from Canada

Below is a discussion of an online mentoring institution founded in Canada without, as far as could be established, South African affiliation.

(a) Ability Online

Ability Online was founded in 1991 in Canada by a visionary child psychiatrist to provide a supportive online community for children with chronic diseases who are hospitalised, young physically-disabled, teens and adults from six years and older, as well as their families and caregivers, who may feel isolated. The programme started as a primitive bulletin board system and has grown into a robust online community that provides skills development modules with connection to peers, role models and mentors for information and support. Interested mentors complete an online registration form and are then provided with a confidential and secure private activation code. Once membership is activated, mentors can go online and exchange public or private messages on a whole range of topics, and provide guidance and assistance to mentees who are looking for friendship, support, or first-hand information about a particular illness or disability. This free online programme can be accessed 24/7 from any computer/device connected to the internet. Members are manually screened and verified prior to being given access to the site, and all public messages on the site are monitored by police-screened volunteers (Ability Online, 2016).

5.3.1.3 Online mentoring institution from the United Kingdom

Below is a discussion of an online mentoring institution founded in the UK without, as far as could be established, South African affiliation.

(a) Brightside

Brightside is a non-profit online mentoring institution established in 2002 with the purpose of connecting trained online mentors with young people in need of information and guidance about education and employment (Brightside Online Mentoring, 2016a). This is done by working in partnership with sixty universities in the UK, alongside a broad range of companies, charities and public sector institutions and the institution works with an average of 15 000 young people annually (Brightside Online Mentoring, 2016b). Prospective mentors from various industries and educational backgrounds apply online and the information supplied helps the programme administrator to match

the mentor to a project and to a mentee (Brightside Online Mentoring, 2016b). Mentors are expected to commit to the duration of the project and must attend at least one training session (this may be delivered via webinar). They must support five mentees and interact via the secure mentoring platform at least once weekly, as well as respond to all messages. Stakeholders in the UK recommend and select mentees from applications (Brightside Online Mentoring, 2016a).

5.3.1.4 Online mentoring institutions from Europe

Following is a discussion of online mentoring institutions founded in Europe without, as far as could be established, South African affiliation.

(a) Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development

The Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) was formally launched in India in 2006 to contribute to the development of young professionals all over the world across disciplines, professions, age and regions to realise their full potential and contribute towards innovative agricultural development (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2016). In 2015 YPARD decided to run a pilot phase to test a purely face-to-face mentoring programme in a one-member country – a purely online mentoring programme for females in agribusiness – and a blended face-to-face and online programme. The purpose of the purely online mentoring programme was to unlock the potential of young female agricultural entrepreneurs by providing opportunities to engage and connect them online to senior agricultural professionals in business and research (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2015).

Fourteen female agricultural entrepreneurs from YPARD, from across Africa and South Asia, with a variety of business interests comprised the first twelve-month intake in November 2015 (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2015). Mentors apply online and must be forty years and older and willing to provide business/programmatic support to young agricultural professionals residing in rural areas. Mentees build their business skills and digital literacy through the online mentoring programmes developed in partnership with some of the world's biggest institutions such as Google, Facebook and United Nations Women (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2015).

Each mentee must meet with their mentor for at least two hours per month using telephone, Skype or face-to-face meetings Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2016). At present (2016) the programme is being evaluated together with other pilot programmes to inform ongoing implementation of the YPARD mentoring programme and the development of a best practice mentoring model for youth in agriculture (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2016). The EduMala Mentoring Programme for Nepali agricultural professionals is another example of a blended online/offline effective mentoring programme developed by YPARD (Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development, 2016).

(b) Unatti and intergenerational e-mentoring

Young African Leaders initiative was formed in 2013 as a platform specialising in intergenerational online mentoring to meet the need for development and exchange between employees in French companies in Europe. The goal is to foster relationships within companies while permitting everyone to grow professionally, as there is a need for teamwork between junior and senior workers, and to connect generations. Unatti believes older workers can bring knowledge in the innovation process and customer relationships, whereas junior workers can add through their technological knowledge and ingenuity (UNATTI, 2015a). For each programme, participants undergo introduction training depending on the kind of group, topics and programme length (UNATTI, 2015a). The programme could take place over six to twelve months with interaction taking place by phone or video-conference, with a monthly session of one hour or more. Monthly sessions are desirable to give time for reflection or for working on specific areas (UNATTI, 2015b). Unatti offers mentoring programme support in the following areas for the client: a coordinated launch to inform future users of the mentoring programme; mentoring training videos; profiles matching via a specific algorithm; statistical supervision of the mentoring relationships in real time on the platform; and assessment of the ongoing mentoring relationships (UNATTI, 2015b).

5.3.1.5 Online mentoring institutions from Australia

Following is a discussion of online mentoring institutions founded in Australia without, as far as could be established, South African affiliation.

(a) The Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA)

The Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA) was established in 2013 in response to a shortage of female colleagues for traditional face-to-face mentoring programmes in the resource, allied and related construction industries in Australia with the goal (Australian Women in Resources Alliance, 2016a) of increasing female participation by twenty-five per cent by 2020. Male or female mentors with experience in the resource industry apply online (Australian Women in Resources Alliance, 2016b) and, upon approval, are required to both complete their online profile providing information such as personal details, qualifications, relevant work experience, expertise, competencies, and mentoring goals and to watch a mandatory online introductory information session.

Prospective mentees employed by a business in the Australian Resource, Allied and Related Construction industries complete an 'expression-of-interest' form on the AWRA webpage for programme participation. Once approved, mentees complete their online profile providing information such as personal details, qualifications, relevant work experience, expertise, competencies sought in a mentor, and career and mentoring programme goals (Australian Women in Resources Alliance, 2016b). Trained programme coordinators then carefully match the mentee and mentor based on experiences and competencies (Australian Women in Resources Alliance, 2016b). Once matched, mentees will have access to the 'art of mentoring' e-learning modules, which they must watch prior to the first webinar. It is the mentee's responsibility to initiate the first mentoring meeting of this nine-month programme utilising email, chat, Skype, phone and regular webinars. Approximately three hours per month are spent on both meeting preparation and meetings with one another. Upon completion of the programme, mentees must fill in a compulsory 'mentoring relationship closure' survey to reflect on their mentoring experience (Australian Women in Resources Alliance, 2016b). The programme has earned consecutive federal government funding to continue the initiative and expand its capability beyond the already 400 successful mentoring relationships.

(b) Griffith Global e-mentoring

Griffith Global e-mentoring (GGEM), launched in 2013, is an online mentoring programme for Griffith students focused on global engagement to support career

development learning, global citizenship and graduate outcomes by connecting them to industry professionals beyond Australia's borders (Griffith University, 2016). Interested mentors from a wide range of disciplines can register online if having at least four years' experience in their field, after which an online profile is created from the information provided. Mentors can choose how many mentees they wish to mentor during the four-month-long programme, with at least two hours of contact monthly. The programme has three intakes per year. Mentors must commit for the duration of the programme, after which he or she can work with another mentee(s), and the mentee can work with another mentor, but mentoring pairs are encouraged to continue their relationship on an informal basis (Griffith University, 2016). Undergraduate students who have completed more than eighty credit points and all postgraduate students are accepted into the programme and can register as a mentee at the beginning of each trimester. Mentees (students) attend a mandatory orientation and can then select their own mentors using the programme's search engine for mentor profiles, commencing after confirmation of the mentor's willingness to participate. Mentees can only select one mentor at a time and communication takes place via Skype, email, phone, or via the GGEM community forum (Griffith University, 2016).

(c) MentorLink

MentorLink is a free distance mentoring programme developed in 2008 by the Australian Occupational Therapy Association for member therapists in distant areas of Australia with the aim of providing Australian occupational therapists with peer support tailored to their professional development and performance needs (MentorLink, 2016a). Non-members can participate at a fee (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:199). Mentors apply on the website by completing a self-assessment survey indicating their current competencies, strengths and skills (Stewart & Carpenter, 2009:199). Each successful mentor applicant is subsequently notified about the competencies they are registered to mentor in (MentorLink, 2016b). A mentee can search and select a mentor online for the required development competencies whereupon, after confirmation of the mentor about possessing the skills, a first session date and time is arranged. Sessions are held via phone or email or any other preferred method (MentorLink, 2016b). Mentors and mentees are required to complete brief evaluations prior to commencing and, on completion of the programme, to review their goals and evaluate the effectiveness of the relationship. A mentee satisfaction survey at the end of the

mentoring relationship is also completed with the overall results being added to the mentor's profile (MentorLink, 2016b).

(d) CocaCola 5by20 programme

CocaCola initiated the 5by20 mentorship programme in partnership with Beacon Foundation in 2010 to economically empower five million female small business entrepreneurs by 2020 to overcome sustainability barriers in over 200 countries globally (CocaCola Journey, 2016a). To date, 300 000 females across twelve countries access training, financial services and connections with peers and mentors. However, after completing a systematic internet search and examining the information provided on their website, no evidence of the broad use of online mentoring by the global 5by20 programmes could be found, except in Australia (CocaCola Journey, 2016a).

The online Australian 5by20 programme, established in August 2016, supports young girls in disadvantaged communities in making the transition from education to meaningful employment. The Coca-Cola workforce is used as volunteer mentors to support the young females' school experience, diminish their drop-out rates and set them up for a successful career (CocaCola Journey, 2016b). Australian schools can apply online and nominate potential mentees whereafter their suitability will be assessed. Details of the school's relationships with local business; the number of business people/community members the school engaged with in regard to activities for students and teachers over the past year; the number of career development activities run across different year levels in the school; and the confidence of the school staff in engaging with business, are taken into consideration when looking to become a Beacon School (Beacon Foundation, 2015).

(e) Inspire Mentor programme

The government-funded Inspire Mentor programme, established in 2004 in Australia, offers the *Journey to Higher Education' programme* to connect low socio-economic status, indigenous, rural and remote primary and secondary learners (6-12 years) with mentors to empower them to consider higher education as an option for improving their future in South Australia. Schools apply online to become part of the programme with mentoring occurring during school hours, with dedicated school services officers

providing both support during sessions and obtaining ongoing feedback from both mentors and mentees (Flinders University, 2016).

Mentors must be reliable role models who support engagement in learning, social and emotional well-being and academia. All students from Flinders University, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia are eligible to become mentors, while students studying at other educational institutions are be considered. University alumni and individuals holding a professional qualification are also eligible to become mentors (Flinders University, 2016). Mentors apply online to mentor for one hour weekly during the school term, for a minimum of ten weeks. Mentor training and other professional development opportunities are available. Based on information provided in the application and the interview, mentors are matched to school students (mentees) by the Inspire Mentor team, in consultation with participating schools. Mentoring is delivered either face-to-face or online using interactive technology with online mentoring mostly available for school learners residing in rural and remote areas. The programme has successfully partnered with over 70 schools in South Australia for the past eleven years (Flinders University, 2016).

(f) OurSpace: Australia

Big Brothers Big Sisters launched OurSpace in October 2015 in Australia with the support of partner, The Walt Disney Company, to help connect children in need – irrespective of geographic location – with positive online role model mentors. Mentoring activities focus on having fun; developing mentees' confidence, and building a sense of well-being. Technology allowed this programme to expand into geographical areas not previously served, such as Tasmania, Perth and Canberra, with intentions to expand into further regions. OurSpace also extended to include support to children unable to participate in traditional mentoring relationships due to chronic illness, unstable mental health, physical disabilities, and those excluded or isolated due to cultural and other reasons. Mentors volunteer by registering online and administration stays in touch with them by both advising prospective mentors when they are ready for a volunteer intake and by providing programme updates. Approximately 30 per cent of young people are referred to the programme by their parents or grandparents, with the remaining being referred by schools, youth and

family support agencies, foster care agencies, child protection services and those offering disability programmes (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2015).

5.3.1.6 Online mentoring institution from Africa

Following is a discussion of an online mentoring institution founded in Africa without, as far as could be established, South African affiliation.

(a) The East Africa Women's Mentoring Network (EAWMN)

Females experience a disproportionate burden of disease and death due to inequities in access to basic health care, nutrition and education, which can partially be attributed to a significant under-representation of females in leadership positions. To address some of the challenges faced by females in East Africa in becoming employed in leadership positions, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded the Leadership, Management and Governance Project (LMG), launched by EAWMN in 2014 (Management Science for Health, 2014). EAWMN provides emerging Saharan Africa female leaders online access to experienced mentors who can provide active support for professional and personal development related to gender, family planning and reproductive health, and many other relevant health issues. EAWMN is a borderless online platform offering a flexible mentoring model that matches, supports, and guides a one-year mentoring relationship with both the mentor and mentee residing in any country pursuing set goals and outcomes related to family planning and reproductive health (Lindsay, 2015).

Mentors are female leaders who have worked in family planning and reproductive health as service providers, midwives, programme managers, policy makers, teachers, advocates, and other relevant positions (US Aid, 2016). Mentees are young female professionals in the field of reproductive health who are interested in learning from seasoned professionals and mentors with experience. Mentors can be matched with more than one mentee, therefore allowing mentees access to new networks that would otherwise be out of reach (Lindsay, 2015). WhatsApp, facebook messenger, email, and Google enable the mentoring pair to meet online at least once weekly on a regular basis. The mentoring pair is bound by a mentoring agreement signed by both the mentor and mentee to facilitate access to resources on family planning, reproductive

health, leadership, and management skills, as well as a community of practice of emerging and accomplished female leaders (US Aid, 2016).

In the previous sections an overview was provided of several large-scale global online mentoring institutions without a South African affiliation. MentorNet, Mentored Pathways, WV eMentoring and IEEE were institutions referred to as founded in the USA. Ability Online, an online mentoring institution founded in Canada, was discussed after which reference was made to an online mentoring institution from the UK, namely the Brightside Trust. Two institutions from Europe were referred to, namely YPARD and the Unatti and the Intergenerational e-mentoring programme. Institutions from Australia included AWRA, GGEM, Mentorlink, CocaCola 5by20 programme in partnership with Beacon Foundation, the Inspire Mentor programme, and the Big Brothers Big Sisters OurSpace online mentoring programme. EAWMN was discussed as an example of an online mentoring institution founded in Africa. For each of the identified global mentoring institutions, the programmes offered and the target markets served in the respective online mentoring fields were referred to. It transpired that most of these institutions are involved with mentoring in education aimed at youth and career development. The following section refers to global online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation.

5.3.2 Online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation

Table 5.2 provides a summary of online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation.

Table 5.2: Online mentoring institutions with a South African affiliation

Country	Mentoring institution
United States of America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders • iCouldBe • Infinite Family • MicroMentor
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherie Blair Foundation
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Elumelo Foundation Entrepreneurship (TEEP) • Mara Mentor

Source: Gross (2011); Mara Foundation (2012a); MicroMentor (2014); Infinite Family (2016a); Mkize (2016); Tony Elumelo Foundation (2016a); Young African Leaders Initiative (2016a)

The following sections will refer to online mentoring institutions as outlined in Table 5.2 from the USA, UK and Africa, with a South African affiliation.

5.3.2.1 Online mentoring institutions from the USA

The following section refers to online mentoring institutions from the USA with a South African affiliation.

(a) Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders was launched in 2014, and is the flagship programme of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) – a programme that empowers young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa through academic coursework, leadership training and networking (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a). The Fellowship provides outstanding young leaders with the opportunity to enhance their skills at a United States university with support for professional development after they return home. There are four YALI Regional Leadership Centers – in Kenya, SA, Senegal and Ghana – which receive financial contributions from many private sector partners, including Microsoft, Intel Corporation, Cisco Systems, and Mara Foundation, enabling the US Government to maintain the centers, and provide business software and hardware, mentoring, and information technology training (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016b).

A prospective mentor must have a minimum of five years of full-time work experience. Information provided in the online application form is entered onto a mentor profile that is available on a password-protected mentorship portal available exclusively to programme participants (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a). Participants can identify and request a match with a mentor based upon the criteria that he or she is looking for, for example, someone working in a particular sector, with experience in a certain functional area, a specific gender, or country of location or origin (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a). Prospective mentees must be a citizen of, and residing in, a sub-Saharan African country; proficient in English; between the ages 25-35 years at the time of application; and should have a proven leadership record or accomplishment in public service; be a business entrepreneur, or be involved in community engagement (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016c). The applicant must submit an essay on achievements and future-intended goals. The most important criterion is to have a

commitment to return to, and put the new leadership skills into use to benefit the African community and country. Countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt are excluded from participating in this programme (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a).

The mentoring pair is encouraged to interact online at least once weekly by means of email, Skype and/or text messaging. At the conclusion of the twelve-week programme, the mentoring pair has the option to continue their engagement or end it if they feel they have achieved their mutually-set goal. Each mentee participates in a six-week academic and leadership programme at a US university in one of three t Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016b). Following the academic component, the mentees visit Washington, D.C., for a summit featuring networking and panel discussions with US leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a). Upon returning to their home countries, mentees continue to develop the obtained skills through support from US embassies, four regional leadership centers and YALI. Mentees have access to ongoing professional development opportunities, mentoring, networking and training, and support for their ideas, businesses, and institutions (Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016a; Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016b). Since 2014, 2 000 young African leaders from 49 Sub Saharan Africa countries have participated in the programme Young African Leaders Initiative, 2016c).

(b) iCouldBe

iCouldBe is an online mentoring programme founded in 2000 to provide at-risk students across the USA with adult professional mentors to empower them to stay in school and plan for future careers (Gross, 2011). A prospective mentor applies online and employees from iCouldBe's corporate partners such as AT&T; Thomson Reuters, Communities in Schools and The British University of Columbia are often used as mentors (iCouldBe, 2016a). iCouldBe provides online training modules to help people become an online mentor, modules on site navigation, how to communicate with mentees, and how to best use the iCouldBe's system and customised curriculum (iCouldBe, 2016b). Mentees are selected from partner schools with at least 50 per cent of their student population designated as being at risk – meaning they have a poor school attendance record, lack motivation for the regular school programme and are

economically disadvantaged. iCouldBe enters into agreements with senior primary and high schools, which provide consent to participate using an existing class. Mentees from these schools, schedule one class period weekly, for the entire school year, to engage with their mentors online. Mentees and mentors are matched through self-selection, school staff conducting matching, or by requesting a specific pairing via email to the programme administrator (iCouldBe, 2016a). Each week, the mentor can log in at any computer, from any location, in his or her own time for one hour of mentoring. Because mentoring occurs online, participation is flexible and suits the challenging schedules of corporate professionals. Since inception, iCouldBe has connected over 19 000 students across America. iCouldBe collaborates with Infinite Family, which will be discussed next.

(c) Infinite Family

Infinite Family was founded in 2006 in the USA as a global mentoring institution that inspires and motivates teens and pre-teens who have been affected by HIV/AIDS, or who are poor in SA or Sub-Saharan Africa in developing the confidence and skills to build a better life. The purpose of the volunteer mentors is to teach, encourage and befriend their mentees. A web-based application process for volunteering mentors is available. Mentors must be at least 21 years old and need access to high-speed internet connection and a webcam to log in. There is no software necessary to download on personal or work computers. They commit to thirty minutes weekly for online video conferencing interaction for a minimum of one year (Infinite Family, 2016a). The mentors undergo five to six hours online training at a time convenient to them, as well as one live 90-minute webinar session.

Mentees are from communities without access to life's basic necessities: parents, a safe home, three meals a day, a good education, and medical attention (Infinite Family, 2016b). This programme partners with local schools and non-governmental institutions to identify the teens and pre-teens in need of mentoring. Video mentoring sessions are personal and interactive via the secure Ezomndeni Net platform (Ezomndeni means 'everything related to family', in Zulu) and discussions are centred around homework, career options or just generally sharing information about their lives (Infinite Family, 2016b). The programme runs for 33 weeks annually. Mentors have the flexibility to decide on a convenient time for arranging weekly video mentoring chats in order to

help improve mentees' skills related to becoming self-reliant, building the future of their dreams and competing in an increasingly technology-driven economy (ForGood, 2016). An eco-friendly solar-powered laboratory supplied by the British Telecommunications Group was first established in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, and was later extended to other parts of SA to provide mentees access to video-conferencing facilities and contributing towards computer literacy in the country (Virtual Press, 2012). The mentees engage with mentors globally, share videos and are assisted with homework using modern collaboration tools.

(d) MicroMentor

MicroMentor was established in 2009 in the USA to help small businesses grow through mentoring by connecting entrepreneurs with volunteer business mentors globally (MicroMentor, 2014). MicroMentor's portal is widely accessible, allowing members and the community served to initiate a meaningful mentoring relationship, regardless of location. Top countries involved outside the US are Mexico, India, UK, Canada, Tunisia, SA, Colombia, Guatemala, Australia and Nigeria. To connect a mentor and mentee the parties need only complete their profile on the MicroMentor portal. Once a mentoring pair is connected, they must set goals, expectations and a schedule to guide the relationship. Mentoring pairs can communicate by phone or video chat, and can decide on the frequency of meetings, as well as the goals and milestones to achieve (Mercycorps, 2010).

5.3.2.2 Online mentoring institution from the United Kingdom

Following is a discussion of an online mentoring institution founded in the UK with a South African affiliation.

(a) Cherie Blair Foundation

The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women was established in 2008 in the UK, with the mission of empowering female entrepreneurs in developing and emerging economies. To date, the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women has reached over 136 000 females in more than ninety countries (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller, 2016:10). Working in partnership with local and international non-profit institutions, and the private and public sector, the foundation channels its projects through three programmes:

- The Enterprise Development programme is aimed at developing female enterprise by providing tailored business support through strategic partnership and providing access to capital (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2015a).
- The Mobile Technology programme has a wide range of mobile partners to provide female entrepreneurs with access to training, technology, networks and capital in order to become successful business owners (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2015a).
- The only online Mentoring Women in Business programme established in 2010 matches female entrepreneurs in developing and emerging economies, with male and female mentors around the world (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller, 2016:10).

For the Mentoring Women in Business programme, mentors can apply online throughout the year but must be fluent in English, must be a professional or entrepreneur with at least seven years of relevant experience, must be committed to mentor for one year, and be willing to engage online with a mentee for at least two hours monthly (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2015b). Prospective mentees must own or be about to launch a business. They could also be nominated by one of the foundations' partner institutions. Prospective mentees must be female, proficient in English, living in a developing or emerging country, and must have internet access. Mentees must further commit to meeting with their mentor online using Skype and/or Google Hangouts for at least two hours monthly and must agree to complete four feedback questionnaires during the programme (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2015c).

Matching takes place twice annually using a unique matching algorithm that helps improve the chances of a good relationship fit. The team closely tracks the progress of mentee-mentor pairs both during and after programme participation (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2016d). The two-hour interaction each month requires the parties to work on an action plan that revolves around the mentee's business and professional development needs, as well as the mentor's own expertise and learning objectives (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller, 2016:10). Mentees are required to complete tracking forms to inform of meeting times, progress on their action plan and signify whether or not they need any additional resources (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller,

2016:15). Mentees and mentors are given the opportunity to remain in the programme on an ongoing basis (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2016d; Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller, 2016:15).

Other support provided includes the fact that the mentoring pair become part of a global community of committed, ambitious entrepreneurs who share knowledge through an online platform that houses a wide range of resources including videos, webinars, articles, templates, working groups on business topics, participant profiles and training (Haindl, 2016). Training is an integral part of the programme and when joining, the mentoring pair undertakes three hours of training on best practices in mentoring, which helps to set expectations and ensure that they know how to build a successful mentoring relationship. Monthly webinars on business and inspirational topics give mentees and alumni access to inspiring experts and industry leaders. Some countries offer events such as an annual conference which allows mentees and mentors to connect in person (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2016d).

The programme has supported 2 000 female entrepreneurs in more than ninety developing countries since its inception (Mkize, 2016) and has recruited and trained over 2 000 mentors from over 45 countries (Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller, 2016:10). The programme had 230 South African mentees in 2016, the largest number in any one country. Of the 106 South African mentees to graduate from the programme so far, the benefits cited were an increase in confidence, business skills and achieving business goals, and finding ways around barriers to grow mentee businesses. The remaining South African mentees are still in their mentoring relationships and have not yet graduated from the programme (Mkize, 2016).

5.3.2.3 Online mentoring institutions from Africa with South African affiliations

Following is a discussion of online mentoring institutions founded in Africa with South African affiliations.

(a) The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme (TEEP)

The Tony Elumelu Foundation is an African non-profit organisation founded in 2010 with headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria. The TEEP, the flagship entrepreneurship programme of the foundation, was established in 2015 with a vision to create 10 000

entrepreneurial startups across Africa within the next ten years in order to generate significant employment and wealth (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2016a). The TEEP programme is open to all African citizens and legal residents owning a business with strong market feasibility and clear financial models.

The programme recruits world-class global mentors who have faced similar challenges and can steer the start-ups in their entrepreneurial journey to grow. Mentors apply online and must meet certain criteria: they are selected by mentees for their expertise, passion and alignment to the programme vision and mission. Acceptance to mentor provides access to the mentorship and learning platform with its 1000 mentees. Mentors commit to a minimum of four hours monthly, per mentee (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2016b).

Prospective mentees apply through the online application portal and are required to apply in person themselves and, own a for-profit business. All applicants must have a business idea or own an early-stage (less than three years) established company (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2016b). Start-ups must attend a boot-camp and the Elumelu Entrepreneurship Forum in order to qualify for funding and to remain on the programme.

Matching occurs based on both mentee requests and through the programme administrator to ensure best fit. The mentors are assigned based on compatibility criteria such as business/industry experience and country. Each start-up mentee has one assigned mentor, although each mentor may have more than one start-up mentee. Mentoring sessions are delivered online through the programme portal at communal times agreed upon, with a combination of online and face-to-face mentoring, including webinars and video tutorials with mentor support throughout. Topics covered include starting a business, business development, marketing strategy, effective management and product design (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2016b).

This programme provides access to a twelve-week Startup Enterprise Toolkit Training Programme, online mentoring and digital resource library to equip start-ups with the basic skills required to both launch and run businesses in the early growth stage. The programme beliefs are that entrepreneurship and business skills can be taught and

learned (Tony Elumelu Foundation, 2016a). One thousand inaugural participants from fifty-one countries were selected in 2015 to partake in an intensive online training curriculum, mentoring, and participation in a two-day entrepreneurship boot-camp. The interim report on the inaugural mentees showed that more than 90 per cent of Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurs, with existing businesses, have recorded increased growth in the past year (Nsehe, 2015).

(b) Mara Mentor programme

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is a state entity responsible for youth development in SA and was established in 2008 through an act of parliament to support young South Africans between the ages of 18-35 years with various programmes (NYDA, 2015). The Mara foundation has partnered with NYDA to establish the programme in SA in 2015 after a presence already in thirty African countries, (Corporate Image, 2015). Key global stakeholders in this programme include Ernst and Young, while major local partners like ABSA, MTN, the Tim Tebeila Foundation and Vodacom are also involved. Mara Mentor has been successfully launched in six African countries to date and is the largest such initiative in Africa boasting over 800 000 young entrepreneurs across the continent (Corporate Image, 2016).

The online programme can be accessed through a mobile application that is free to download on Google's Play Store and Apple's App Store. Users are able to log onto Mara Mentor via its web and mobile application versions and from there on engage with business leaders on any topics and questions they may have (Mara Foundation, 2012a). The programme supports young and female entrepreneurs globally in their business endeavours, in recognition that they are the driving force behind global development and growth through innovation (Mara Foundation, 2012b). Young and aspiring entrepreneurs with access can connect to renowned mentors, peers and business leaders globally through discussion and debate forums, resources, industry news and updates.

Mentors apply online by completing an application form and writing a short paragraph on both why they would like to get involved, and where their expertise lies in terms of how they can contribute. The programme has recruited, as mentors, successful business and other leaders, such as Ashish Thakkar, Basetsana Khumalo, Yershen

Pillay, Susan Palanee, Funso Akere and Khathu. Mentors are encouraged to share general business tips and resources, get involved in discussions and offer one-on-one advice to those who need it. Mentors can log in daily or choose a dedicated afternoon once monthly (Education Innovations, 2015).

Prospective mentees complete an online registration form on the foundation's website, confirming his or her email address and logging on to participate immediately. In South Africa, the youth are able to register as mentees at one of NYDA's fourteen offices countrywide. A mentee can be a student, entrepreneur, employee, or an individual seeking business advice from an experienced industry professional or reaching out to like-minded individuals to identify new business opportunities. Mentees can search for mentors in their industry or country and 'follow' them for advice, tips and updates. The programme does not require matching of mentors and mentees and mentoring is provided as and when required (Mara Foundation, 2012a).

The mentoring platform enables NYDA to increase its reach to rural areas – previously impossible as it was too costly for service delivery in such areas (NYDA, 2015). NYDA is able to reach a large number of users across the country who have cellular phones, and has the potential to empower thousands of young people who want to start businesses or who are already in business (NYDA, 2015). More than 340 000 young South Africans have been mentored by 269 mentors from Mara Mentor at a mentor/mentee ratio of 1:1263, since its inception in 2015 (Corporate Image, 2016).

In the previous sections an overview was provided of several large-scale global online mentoring institutions, which have an affiliation to South Africa. The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, iCouldBe, Infinite Family, and MicroMentor were institutions referred to as those founded in the USA. The Cherie Blair Foundation for Women from the UK was discussed and it was noted that it is the only online programme in the world reported to focus solely on the development of female entrepreneurs in developing and/or emerging economies. The Tony Elumelu Foundation and the Mara Foundation were two examples from Africa that were discussed. For each of the identified global mentoring institutions, the programmes offered and the target markets served in the respective online mentoring fields were

referred to. The South African online mentoring environment will be discussed in the following section.

5.3.3 South African mentoring environment

Before a discussion ensues on online mentoring institutions in South Africa, it is key to refer to two governing bodies representing the mentoring profession in South Africa, namely the Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) and Institute of Business Advisors South Africa (IBASA). COMENSA was launched in April 2006 with the primary purpose of giving power to mentors and coaches to contribute positively to the people of SA. COMENSA's mission is to support professional practice and a learning culture in mentoring and coaching through standards and ethics. COMENSA schedules regular monthly meetings to discuss mentoring/coaching issues with additional meetings for each special interest group, plus public forums in related subjects such as research, definitions, supervision, ethics and marketing. COMENSA membership provides benefits as it advances the credibility of the mentor and coach through its affiliation to South Africa's largest representative mentoring and coaching body (Coaching and Mentors of South Africa, 2015c).

Members conform to a strong code of ethics, which prescribes a strict *modus operandi* and a code of professional conduct thereby protecting the clients and reputation of the industry. The training, qualifications, background, and other information of an interested party regulates eligibility for specific COMENSA membership categories. COMENSA has 1 380 members - 90 per cent of whom come from all of South Africa's nine provinces, as well as members across Africa. COMENSA applied for registration with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) at the end of 2015 (Government Gazette, 2015).

The Institute of Business Advisors South Africa (IBASA) is recognised by SAQA as the professional body in control of the grading, accreditation and continuous professional development of business advisors, business coaches and mentors serving the micro, small and medium enterprises (SMMEs) in SA. IBASA is in partnership with the South African Institute of Professional Accountants, various business chambers and various financial institutions, development finance institutions and municipal local economic development (LED) departments as well as tertiary institutions to create platforms for

SMMEs to access information, funding and markets for their sustainability. IBASA has a membership in excess of 600 members across SA, accredited and graded in accordance with their level of skill and experience.

IBASA's goal is to become a statutory body for business advisors in SA, with the purpose of regulating the small business environment and creating a barrier to entry for unqualified and unscrupulous operators who are influencing the reputation of small business service providers. Owners, directors, managers and staff will have the assurance that an IBASA-registered business advisor is an independently accredited professional who adheres to the IBASA code of conduct; who has relevant business experience and training; and who has met the professional criteria as defined by IBASA (Institute of Business Advisors South Africa, 2016).

In summary it can be stated that COMENSA and IBASA are professional bodies launched to empower and grade mentors and coaches operating in South Africa. Where COMENSA's mission is the support of professional practice and learning in mentoring and coaching through standards and ethics, the core function of IBASA is the grading, accreditation and maintaining of professional standards of conduct among business advisors, mentors, coaches and counsellors with the purpose of regulating the small business environment. Both institutions act as a barrier for unprofessional members displaying dishonourable behavior.

5.3.3.1 Mentoring institutions in South Africa

Table 5.3 provides a summary of mentoring institutions in SA. As mentioned before, although many institutions claim to provide online mentoring, they have not done so when making contact with the institution's representative. It is also difficult to make contact with mentors and mentees as due to the confidentiality of the online mentoring relationship, the institution would not provide the researcher with a database.

Table 5.3: Mentoring institutions in South Africa

Conventional mentoring institutions	Online mentoring institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanduka Black Umbrellas • Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWASA) • Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) • Investec • Business Partners • South African Youth education for Sustainability (SAYes) • DreamGirls Outreach and Mentoring Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khulisa Global Mentorship Movement (KGMM) • Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship • The Old Mutual Legends programme • Fetola Mentor Hotline

Sources: Business Partners (2014); BCE (2016); Business Women Association South Africa (2016); DAD Fund (2016a); FETOLA (2016a); Global South Africans (2016); Investec (2016); SAYes (2016); Seda (2016); Shanduka Black Umbrellas (2016)

The following sections will discuss the online mentoring environment as outlined in Table 5.3.

(a) Conventional mentoring institutions in South Africa

In conducting a literature search to establish which fields use online mentoring as well as the specific target markets it serves, only a few institutions were listed from SA. Upon a further search the institutions below were listed as offering online mentoring, but after perusing their website and other information provided, no evidence of online mentoring could be found.

(i) Shanduka Black Umbrellas

Shanduka Black Umbrellas is a non-profit enterprise development incubation institution that was launched in 2009 with partners in the private sector, government and civil society to address the low levels of entrepreneurship and high failure rate of 100 per cent black-owned emerging businesses in SA. The aim of the nation-wide incubator is to nurture the black-owned businesses in the critical first three years of their existence (Shanduka Black Umbrellas, 2016). Mentors play a crucial role in the development of entrepreneurs as mentees learn from the mentor's experience, knowledge and expertise in a collaborative exchange. Mentors and mentees are assessed and matched to form an ongoing mentoring relationship aimed at improving

the sustainability and growth of the clients. There is a database of voluntary mentors in each area, linked with participating clients (Shanduka Black Umbrellas, 2016). However, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring could be found and this was confirmed by the Port Elizabeth office of Shanduka Umbrellas (Personal communication, F. Matshoba, 2016).

(ii) Business Women's Association of South Africa

The Business Women's Association of South Africa (BWASA) was formed in 2000 and is the largest and most prominent association of business and professional females with branches in Gauteng, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Zululand, East London and Limpopo and has its head office in Johannesburg (BWASA, 2016). The BWA Mentorship programme provides a valuable platform for the inspiration and empowerment of female entrepreneurs and for personal growth and development. The BWA aims to support members' growth by pairing established female business owners with less experienced members and branches provide local and national forums where members can exchange ideas and become informed about topical issues and create business opportunities (BWASA, 2016). No evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring could be found and this was confirmed by the Port Elizabeth office of BWA (Personal communication, L. Pretorius, 2016).

(iii) Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda)

Seda was established in December 2004 as an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry, and provides business development and support services for small enterprises through its nationwide network (branches in each district municipality) in collaboration with other role players in the small enterprise sector. Seda also implements programmes targeted to business development in areas prioritised by the government in which individuals can apply for start-up business assistance or develop their established business and seek information, advice and referrals, mentoring and linkages (Seda, 2016). No evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring could be found and this was confirmed by the Port Elizabeth office of Seda (Personal communication, A. Yengeni, 2016).

(iv) Investec

Investec, established in 1974, has a presence not only in SA, but also in the UK and Australia, offering a variety of financial products and services (Investec, 2016). Investec bursaries are presented to young individuals to advance their skills for further education and to guarantee that they are ready for the workplace after successful completion of their studies. South African bursary holders are teamed up with South African Investec staff members who, on a voluntary basis, mentor them during their academic career to overcome educational challenges. Mentors also appeal to the skills and expertise of other colleagues when necessary to assist bursary students with academic challenges (Investec, 2016).

In 2011, the bursary programme partnered with Maureen Kark and Associates, a psychological consultancy, to offer bursary students professional, confidential and impartial counselling, information and advice. Investec supports personal development as well as providing assistance in coping with complex emotions and life events and lifestyle pressures. In 2012, Investec partnered with Young and Able to provide mentorship support to the mentors, which can be accessed through a dedicated hotline and/or one-on-one consultation. After viewing Investec's website information, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring by Investec could be found (Investec, 2016).

(v) Business Partners

Business Partners was established more than thirty-three years ago, to facilitate entrepreneurship through a service offering business finance, mentorship and business premises to entrepreneurs in the small and medium enterprise (SME) space. In 2012 the company repositioned itself and its corporate identity was designed to reaffirm its commitment to and support for entrepreneurs. Carefully selected consultants and mentors in all provinces provide a mentoring service and are expected to be available to assist entrepreneurs to improve business efficiency, profitability and growth, and to subscribe to Business Partner's code of ethics. Business Partners attempts to match the consultant or mentor with the appropriate expertise and skills to the needs of the particular business. After performing an internet search and viewing information on their website, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring by Business Partners could be found (Business Partners, 2014).

(vi) South African Youth education for Sustainability (SAYes)

SAYes was founded in 2008 to offer support and guidance for youth (aged between 14-25 years) leaving children's homes to enable them to develop their skills, further their education, source suitable housing, and participate in society as independent, mature, responsible adults. SAYes screens, selects, trains and supports volunteer mentors who are individually matched with a young person who is living in, or has recently exited from, the children home. SAYes mentors meet mentees weekly for one hour, for a year, and attend a two-hour monthly workshop. After performing an internet search and viewing information on their website, no evidence of the use of online mentoring by SAYes could be found (SAYes, 2016).

(vii) DreamGirls Outreach and Mentoring Programme

The DreamGirls Outreach and Mentoring Programme was established in South Africa in 2012 to encourage young females aged 15-19 years to plan for the future, fulfil their potential, receive a tertiary education and become independent, empowered and successful professionals (DAD Fund, 2016a). DreamGirls motivates young females to study at a college or university, to set goals for the future and find the right path to achieve their goals and so promotes all-round wellness, focusing on the areas of life design, education, entrepreneurship and career, leadership and service, health and spiritual wellness, etiquette and grooming. The DreamGirls ambassadors who mentor are successful young females, either tertiary students or graduates, are good role models and have great leadership qualities. DreamGirls has initiated programmes at selected schools in Johannesburg, Polokwane and Cape Town and has a vision to be established in all nine provinces in SA. After performing an internet search and viewing information on their website, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring by DreamGirls could be found (DAD Fund, 2016b).

From the preceding it is thus clear that although some South African institutions were listed as offering online mentoring programmes, very little evidence of actual online mentoring activity was found in these institutions (Shanduka Black Umbrellas, BWA, Seda, Investec, Business Partners, SAYes and DreamGirls Outreach and Mentoring Programme). The following section will refer to some online mentoring institutions from SA.

(b) Online mentoring institutions from South Africa

Following is a discussion of selected online mentoring institutions from South Africa which could be traced.

(i) Khulisa Global Mentorship Movement (KGMM)

The Khulisa Global Mentorship Movement (KGMM) started as a crime rehabilitation not-for-profit organisation (NPO) and in 2009 a strategic decision was made to reposition the organisation from that of focusing on crime to dealing with the root causes of crime and poverty. It was renamed Khulisa Social Solutions. The KGMM programme was developed in 2016 to harness the potential of the worldwide web and social media platforms to provide needed support and mentoring to vulnerable individuals and communities in SA and provide cross-cultural long-distance mentoring to suitably identified mentees from vulnerable groups throughout South Africa (Global South Africans, 2016). Khulisa South Africa's in-house mentoring unit administers the online mentoring applications, matching process, monitoring and evaluation systems and accesses various mentor platforms.

Khulisa has thirty-one offices nationally and employs 250 staff working in at least one hundred rural areas around the country (Khulisa Social Solutions, 2016a). Khulisa's vision is a safer, healthier, more prosperous and restored South Africa where all people, especially youth, have access to the information, skills and opportunities they need to contribute to local and national development and avoid involvement in crime. Since its inception the organisation has analysed its experience in working with over two million community members to develop a sustainable approach that could provide a solution to the increasing crime and violence factors challenging SA (NGO Pulse, 2016).

To participate in the newly established KGMM programme, mentors complete a web-based application form and must be older than twenty-five years with certain skills and experience that young people in South Africa need (Global South Africans, 2016). Most mentors are from the expatriate South African community, South Africa and South African-originated businesses in the UK as well as from trusts and family foundations. This organisation has the backing of the South African High Commission, BrandSA and the South African Chamber of Commerce United Kingdom (Khulisa Social

Solutions, 2016b). The entire mentoring process occurs online and requires mentors to invest two hours per month in long-distance mentoring through a variety of different communications, for example, letter writing/emailing, WhatsApp text and calls, and Skype. Mentees include abandoned and abused females/children, school-going students between 14-18 years of age, victims of rape, leaders of child-headed households, those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS (including service providers), parents, orphans, vulnerable girls, emerging NPOs and SMMEs, university students, job seekers and first time employees. The mentor-mentee matching process is done via Khulisa's online application portal whereby the mentee's development needs are aligned to the mentor's skill, experience, interest and/or passion (NGO Pulse, 2016).

(ii) Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship

The Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship (BCE), South Africa is an initiative of Virgin Unite, a non-profit foundation founded in 2005 by Richard Branson. Virgin Unite is a major funder of the BCE and supports the centre with their online mentoring platform, co-developed with Everwise, while other funding is provided by corporate business leaders and investors from across the globe. Nedbank South Africa, partnered with the BCE to provide training, mentorship and development to budding entrepreneurs as part of the bank's continuing efforts to support and be the banking partner of the SME sector through various interventions (Nedbank, 2014).

The foundation course, limited to twenty-five participants, introduces entrepreneurs to basic business skills such as identifying the right market, customer and product, and effective strategising and planning. Entrepreneurs then have three months to implement their business models and, provided they show growth in their business, are eligible to apply for the advanced course, limited to just twenty participants (Ventureburn, 2014). Each course runs for six weeks and only those who complete the advanced course are eligible for the six-month mentorship programmes. All training is free (although transport and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the participants) and no funding is offered through the BCE. Entrepreneurs can apply online and must have an operational business for at least six months with turnover not exceeding R800 000 per annum (Nicol, 2015). Business leaders with at least ten years of experience in running their own business, or at least seven years' entrepreneurship

experience on executive/board level act as mentors and are required to give one to two hours a month online mentoring (BCE, 2016).

An online mentorship platform matches mentors and mentees and a dedicated relationship manager is available who manages the matching process and guides the mentor and mentee along their six-month mentorship relationship (Virgin Unite, 2016). Online platforms, Skype, Google Hangouts, and WhatsApp, as well as the traditional telephone, are used to establish relationships between entrepreneurs and mentors. There are the added benefits of having an international pool of mentors and entrepreneurs, as well as the opportunity for an international perspective on the mentees' businesses, and the chance to make contacts in a new market (Everwise, 2016). Mentoring pairs are advised to try and arrange some face-to-face meetings to avoid disconnection with local context (Virgin Unite, 2016). Between 2005 and 2015, the centre supported over 3 500 entrepreneurs. A milestone was reached when BCE expanded their footprint beyond Gauteng into Durban, Kwazulu Natal, during October 2016 (Endeavor, 2016). Several phone calls were made to obtain a participant, but no name of a mentor or mentee was supplied.

(iii) The Legends Programme

The Old Mutual Legends programme was started in 2007, in response to Old Mutual's desire to increase their impact on job creation through the empowerment of emerging enterprises, in particular to support the growth and sustainability of small black-owned businesses in rural and poor areas across South Africa. The Legends initiative was designed and implemented in 2006 by Fetola for Old Mutual (FETOLA, 2016a). Fetola's business development model utilises skills development, mentoring, and operational and technical support to build the confidence of entrepreneurs (FETOLA, 2016b).

The Legends programme was repeated annually between 2007 and 2013, and grew in size from ten participants in three provinces, to support an intake of 72 participants across all nine provinces in 2013 (FETOLA, 2016a). Many of the methodologies developed through Legends have become standard practice in the enterprise development field. Specially designed mobile phone compatible tools and methods were used, enabling the business support programme to assist anyone, anywhere and

in any sector of SA regardless of having internet access. Online business skills training was offered and the Old Mutual Legends programme was the first South African initiative to employ user-friendly online training modules to enable business skills-transfer to SMMEs, including those in rural areas with limited internet access. A formalised and systematic system to identify, assess and select high-performing entrepreneurs across the country was implemented (FETOLA, 2016a). As a result of a lack of sponsorship, the Legends programme discontinued at the end of 2013.

(iv) Fetola Mentor Hotline

The Fetola Mentor Hotline provides entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders with personalised expert guidance, advice and counsel via Skype, phone, online platforms, email and face-to-face. In addition, subscribers gain access to a broad range of business tools, templates and resources. Everyone is welcome to join the Fetola Mentor Hotline, however, it is mainly designed to help owners or managers of SMEs, or entrepreneurs with a business idea requiring start-up assistance (FETOLA, 2016c). Prospective members can register online after which a member will receive a username and password that can be used to log into the site. Once logged in, the member is able to browse the tools and resources, post a question and join a group. To connect with a mentor, the member can simply ask a question. One or more mentors will respond to the question and the member may then choose which one to use.

Senior mentors with entrepreneurial experience can apply online to become a mentor (FETOLA, 2016c). Mentor Hotline members can search for information and request articles and step-by-step guides to starting and building their businesses, and can connect and meet mentors. Thirty minutes of free mentoring is provided each month, and access to additional mentoring at a preferential rate is made available. Mentor Hotline has silver, gold and diamond packages to suit members' needs and budget for accessing different levels of business tools, templates and resources. At present (2016) Mentor Hotline has 2 247 members and thirty-six senior mentors with advanced entrepreneurial experience (FETOLA, 2016c). As this study's focus was on one-to-one mentoring, this institution was not considered for participation.

From the preceding it is clear that limited evidence was found of South African institutions offering online mentoring programmes. Reference was made to the Khulisa Global Mentorship Movement (KGMM), the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship, the Old Mutual Legends programme and the Fetola Mentor Hotline, as examples from SA. It would seem that most institutions involved with online mentoring are doing so in collaboration with an overseas partner or funding institution. A broad discussion of the online mentoring institutions was provided to indicate how few there actually are in South Africa that is operational and are indeed online mentoring institutions. The following section summarises the discussion of this chapter.

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the online mentoring landscape and commenced with a discussion regarding the different fields of online mentoring and the target markets it serves. It transpired that online mentoring has been widely applied in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education and the application is not just for learners and students in the primary and secondary education, but also for teachers, university staff and even for new school principals. Undergraduate and graduate students, peer groups, staff and students with special needs can also benefit from online mentoring. It was further noted that online mentoring can serve as a form of small business development support and can particularly support female entrepreneurs as they develop their skills, confidence, networks and businesses. Online mentoring, additionally, provides career development functions, which give mentees the tools and skills required to advance in their chosen career path. Online mentoring can also overcome the constraints of time, geography and the availability of mentors that people on overseas job assignments and expatriates experience. It was acknowledged that although most of the online mentoring activity that exists is directed towards primary, secondary and tertiary education, fields of online mentoring have been extended to include the healthcare and construction industries.

Several global online mentoring institutions were discussed and for each of the identified global mentoring institutions, the programmes offered and the target markets served in the respective online mentoring fields were referred to. Reference was made to both global online mentoring institutions with and without an affiliation with South Africa. It is acknowledged that this is not an exhaustive discussion of global mentoring

institutions, but that these were the institutions listed and which appeared most often in online searches. It was noted that the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women from the United Kingdom is the only online programme in the world reported to focus solely on the development of female entrepreneurs in developing and/or emerging economies. A discussion ensued on online mentoring in SA and reference was made to COMENSA and IBASA as the governing bodies representing the mentoring profession in South Africa. COMENSA and IBASA create a barrier to entry for those mentors, coaches and businesses that can possibly taint the character of professional members by disreputable behaviour. Only a few institutions were listed as offering online mentoring in SA. Even with some of the institutions listed, no evidence of the wide-scale use of online mentoring could be found. Reference was made to the Khulisa Global Mentorship Movement (KGMM), the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship (BCE), the Old Mutual Legends programme and the Fetola Mentor Hotline as examples from South Africa. Most institutions that are involved with online mentoring appear to do so in partnership with an overseas collaborator or funding institution.

Chapter 5 indicated that online mentoring has been implemented globally to a great extent, but that the presence of online mentoring programmes unique to SA is more limited. Empirical research examining the effectiveness of online mentoring programmes is scarce. It was noted in Chapter 1 that mentoring programmes for females are needed globally and in South Africa. The key issue is how online mentoring programmes can be tailored to best suit the needs of females and how the challenges associated with it can be overcome to assist in career development and small business development. Very few programmes are dedicated to female entrepreneurs and conducted solely online, with the vast majority of programmes offering a mixed approach to mentoring communication, including regular face-to-face contact. The following chapter provides a summary of the biographical profiles of the selected online mentors, mentees and online mentoring field specialists that participated in this study and indicate their involvement in online mentoring.

CHAPTER 6

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 a global perspective of the online mentoring landscape was provided. A discussion ensued regarding the multiple fields in which online mentoring can be applied, as well as the target markets it serves. An overview of several global online mentoring institutions was given, including how they operate, their mentoring type of programmes offered, and the target markets served. The online mentoring landscape in South Africa was also discussed and it was indicated which of the institutions had an international affiliation.

In this chapter, a summary is provided of the biographical profile of the participants, with a clear indication of their involvement in online mentoring. The online mentors were comprised of both males and females however, as the focus of this study is on female mentees, the mentee sample consisted of corporate female mentees and female small business entrepreneurs. A summary is furthermore provided of the biographical profile of the interviews conducted with the three online mentoring field specialists of phase two of this enquiry. The following section deals with the biographical profile of mentors.

6.2 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF MENTORS

Five mentors (three female and two male) were interviewed. All five mentors reside in South Africa and are involved in various fields of online mentoring. Although the mentors resided in SA, some of them were involved in global online mentoring programmes. The biographical profile of each mentor will be presented as a case study with an indication of the development focus of their online mentoring, as well as the specific sector in which they provide online mentoring.

6.2.1 Mentor A

Mentor A provides online mentoring in the education sector for personal development to affect career advancement. Mentor A is currently (2016) a 49 year-old, white Afrikaans-speaking female who holds a Doctorate in Commerce from the erstwhile University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where she graduated in 1996. This mentor

is employed at a South African tertiary educational institution situated in Summerstrand in the coastal city of Port Elizabeth. The educational institution was founded through a merger of three institutions in January 2005. There are in excess of 27 000 students registered, with a contingent of over 3 000 international students, including some from the United States, Europe, Asia, United Kingdom and many African countries like Uganda, Nigeria and Kenya. It is a comprehensive institution comprising six campuses, offering academic and work vocational training. Students at the institution can study towards a diploma or a degree, up to doctoral level qualifications.

Mentor A has 28 years of working experience in the educational industry and was a senior lecturer in the Department of Business Management before she served as the head of the Department of Marketing at the institution from 2011 to 2015. Mentor A was promoted in 2015 (ten months ago) to directorate level in the School of Business Management, at the same institution, overseeing the operations of four academic departments, namely Business Management, Logistics, Management and Marketing.

Mentor A has ten years of experience in online mentoring in the education sector and one of her tasks is to provide online guidance to foreign post-graduate students studying towards a doctorate degree. At the inception of the doctoral programme, this mentor meets face-to face with a student and then again after the student has completed a draft of the study and, during the doctoral programme, she provides online mentoring by means of Skype and email. Mentor A has successfully supervised eight doctoral students, of which four were from outside the borders of South Africa, representing Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. This mentor prepares and supports students during the planning, research and writing stages of their studies and her online mentoring services include identifying deficiencies in the student's research capacity and offering suggestions on training programmes available to increase their understanding of the research process and the requirements necessary for research rigour. Students seek advice via email to which a response is given, also via email. In the event of difficulty in understanding the research expectations, Mentor A uses Skype to clarify. A written review of core recommendations, or corrections on the draft chapters submitted, are made and scanned in to send via email. At times changes are indicated electronically by using track change and comment functions. Online advice on how to manage work, home and study life is also provided. Mentor A is responsible

for harmonising the field of interest and academic ability of the mentored student and, furthermore, referring the student to experts in the field of the proposed research. In addition, this mentor also coordinates the time line and progress of the mentee's research.

6.2.2 Mentor B

Mentor B provides online mentoring in small business development. Mentor B is currently (2016) a 55 year-old, English-speaking coloured female and holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Business Management and Industrial Psychology from the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, where she graduated in 2002. This mentor is the managing director of a 100 per cent female black-owned South African management consulting company situated in Port Elizabeth, providing business development services to the private sector, state-owned, and government-led businesses.

The company was established in 2012 and assists in supply-side business solutions to increase their competitiveness, competencies and capacity, and preparing them for local and global market opportunities. The services provided include company diagnostics; diagnostics for financial soundness; business planning and strategy; business mentoring and coaching; supplier development programmes; business skills development and training; cooperative advisory and training services; facilitating access to government and other donor incentive grants and schemes; and acting as implementation agents for government and other donor institutions.

Mentor B has 36 years of working experience in various fields and has been the managing director of the company for the past six years. This mentor is a business advisor, mentor and trainer with more than thirteen years of experience in business and local economic development in South Africa. As managing director of the company, Mentor B oversees business development services and facilitates SME business management advice and training, conducts business assessments and provides mentorship, particularly to service, tourism and manufacturing industries. In doing so, Mentor B has acquired extensive project management skills; expertise in implementing community and supplier development, as well supplier diversity and linkage programmes for governmental, state-owned businesses and large corporate

companies. As a previous employee of the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) she has advised, conducted face-to-face mentoring and trained more than 150 SMEs in all aspects of business management, business systems, strategy and decision-making.

Mentor B is an appointed and approved online mentor of Edge Growth, a national enterprise and supplier development company in South Africa. Edge Growth is run by a team of highly qualified business experts to provide strategic knowledge, management guidance, operational tools and financial support that inexperienced entrepreneurs require to overcome challenges in long-term growth. Mentor B will be assigned an online mentee once there is a client in the geographic region.

Apart from her current employment, Mentor B has – over the past two years – provided online mentoring for small business development to two mentees from the Tony Elumelo Foundation entrepreneurship programme Africa. This mentor engages with her mentees telephonically or via SMS, Skype and email. The programme does not require any face-to-face interactions with mentees. Further information regarding the Tony Elumelo programme was provided in Section 5.3.2.3.

6.2.3 Mentor C

Mentor C provides online mentoring for corporate employees at large manufacturing companies. Mentor C is currently (2016) a 56 year-old Afrikaans-speaking, white male and holds a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Industrial Technology and Management from the Production Management Institute of South Africa where he graduated in 2013. Mentor C is currently enrolled for a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) at a distance education university in the United States of America and also holds a National Diploma in Packaging Management, which he received from the Natal Technikon Business Studies Unit. This mentor qualified as a fitter and turner in 1982 through the Department of Manpower and also received a Mechanical Engineering Certificate in 1981.

Mentor C is the managing director of a South African-based manufacturing consultancy company in Durbanville, Cape Town. The company was established in 2008 primarily to provide consultancy on issues in the manufacturing industry, but has since branched

out and provides consultation to other industries as well. The main areas of consultation include capital productivity and elimination of waste; enhanced product consistency and process capability; on-time-in-full product delivery every time; the meeting of safety, health and environmental standards; shortened lead times in the supply chain; focused plant capabilities and responsiveness; cutting edge manufacturing processes and practices; and real time credible decision-making information.

Mentor C has 33 years working experience and has been in the position of managing director of the manufacturing consultancy company for the past nine years. Mentor C's current work responsibilities include networking and signing of consultation contracts; collaboration with other industry specialists; the development of training material including strategies, plans, procedures work instructions, training modules and reports; training in specified areas; performing of ergonomic studies in the workplace; and time and motion studies.

Mentor C has been involved in online mentoring for 15 years and is actively involved in the mentoring of corporate employers and employees in the manufacturing industry, in his capacity as the managing director. This mentor focuses on work content and management, leadership and career development, client service, technical aspects relating to the business, change management, organisational effectiveness and goal alignment. Mentor C engages with mentees telephonically, via SMS, WhatsApp conversations and emails and provides business consultation to his corporate clients in addition to the online mentoring provided. At times this mentor also meets with the mentees face-to-face although most online mentoring takes place via emails.

6.2.4 Mentor D

Mentor D provides online mentoring for personal and small business development. Mentor D is currently (2016) a 51 year-old, English-speaking white female and holds a diploma from the Institute of People Development (IPD). This mentor is the founder and managing director of project management education training and development company and a training and skills development academy in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

The project management education training and development company was established in 2011 in Port Elizabeth with the vision to make a sustainable, quantifiable impact on the economy by promoting the growth of small businesses, specifically those female-owned. The company provides business and socio-economic development solutions for public and private institutions through training, mentoring, and coaching, when required. Mentoring is done individually (face-to-face) or as peer or group mentoring. Financial empowerment of small businesses is achieved through partnering with financial institutions and auditing firms.

The skills development academy founded by Mentor D was established in 2000 in Port Elizabeth and presents and coordinates various training courses required by the maritime industry. The courses offered at the academy are accredited with Umalusi (Department of Education), SAMSA (South African Maritime Safety Authority), TETA (Transport Education and Training Authority) and Services SETA. It is a non-profit community-based training centre that is greatly committed to the fishing community, through various outreach programmes. The training is not location restricted and can take place anywhere. The academy has a large role to play in the development, upskilling and restructuring of the fishing industry and is committed to black empowerment and development of previously disadvantaged individuals, assisting them in empowering themselves through knowledge and skills to take up their role in the new restructured fishing communities. Since its inception the training academy has trained approximately 15 000 individuals, both shore-based and seafaring staff, for shore-based sectors of the maritime industry.

Mentor D has 33 years working experience and has been in the position of managing director for the past 17 years. This mentor is an internationally accredited programme provider to various United Nations institutions, a facilitator of Women Entrepreneur Development and Leadership and an International Labour Organisation (ILO) Women Entrepreneur and Community Development Specialist. From 2010 to date, Mentor D has been involved with the 5by20 and ABAFAZI–Coca Cola Fortune ILO Incubation Programme for 13 500 women entrepreneurs. Since 2012 to date, Mentor D has been involved with various advocacy and capacity building programmes across five chapters of the Value Chain Analysis/Supplier Diversity Programmes of the Business Women's Association of South Africa. Mentor D has been the project manager, implementation

partner and community coordinator on projects valued in excess of R72 Million. Furthermore, this mentor serves as a nationally appointed representative on various development and training boards in South Africa. In 2008 Mentor D won the Social Entrepreneur category of the Businesswomen's Association's Regional Business Achievers Awards and in 2009, she won in the national category.

Mentor D is an internationally accredited mentor of Mentors and Business Coaches International (MBCI) with headquarters in Australia. Mentor D is an executive mentor and coach of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders for the Young African Leaders initiative programme (Section 5.3.2.1). This mentor has been involved in online mentoring for YALI over the past two years and is actively involved in online mentoring for young African leaders in various areas from different business sectors. Mentor D focuses on the career and leadership development of mainly females in large corporate companies or young entrepreneurs in Africa. The online mentoring takes place by means of Skype and WhatsApp calls and conversations. The programme is purely online and no physical face-to-face meetings take place.

6.2.5 Mentor E

Mentor E provides online mentoring to individuals for personal development, corporate employees in large companies, and managers at educational institutions. Mentor E is currently (2016) a 61 year-old, English-speaking white male and holds intermediate and advanced Diplomas in Personnel Training and Management. This mentor is an internationally accredited mentor and business coach with Mentors and Business Coaches International (MBCI). Mentor E is also a member of COMENSA (Section 5.3.3). Since receiving accreditation, he has become the managing director of MBCI, Eastern Cape region, South Africa.

Mentor E has 41 years working experience and is self-employed, but has been in the position of managing director of MBCI, Eastern Cape for the past 13 years overseeing the activities of MBCI and the accreditation of mentors. This mentor has a strong human resource development background and specialises in organisational development and organisational culture change from senior to operational levels. Prior to joining MBCI, Mentor E had been involved in the development of the start-up of businesses and is experienced in the identification of staff members who need

mentoring and who can be developed into future managers. Before becoming director of MBCI, Mentor E served as headmaster of a Christian school in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Under this mentor's guidance, the school has grown to offer education up to matriculation level. Mentor E also initiated the first Joint Liaison Committee between private schools and government.

Mentor E has been involved in online mentoring for two years and became involved after one of his existing corporate clients from SA approached him to mentor one of their financial directors located in Dubai. This mentor became involved at a later stage in mentoring the financial director's wife. Mentor E engages with mentees mostly through Skype and email communication and is involved in online mentoring to a group of school principals from the Eastern Province in SA via regular Skype meetings. Mentor E has met some of his mentees face-to-face in addition to the provision of online mentoring, but has primarily built online relationships. Due to the confidentiality of this mentor's relationships with mentees, he could not disclose the identity and nature of the corporate companies he assisted with online employee mentoring.

6.2.6 Summary of biographical details of participating online mentors

The biographical profile of the participating online mentors, as described in this chapter, are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Summary of biographical profile of participating online mentors

Biographical data	Description	Frequency
Gender	Male	2
	Female	3
Race	Coloured	1
	White	4
Age	46 to 50 years	1
	51 to 55 years	2
	56 to 60 years	1
	61 to 65 years	1
Employment position	Director	5
Highest qualification	Diploma	2
	Bachelor	1

Biographical data	Description	Frequency
Highest qualification	Honours	1
	Doctorate	1
Work experience	26 to 30 years	1
	31 to 35 years	2
	36 to 40 years	1
	41 to 45 years	1

From Table 6.1 it can be seen that three out of the participating five mentors were female and two were male. The average age of the mentors was 54 years, with the oldest being 61 years and the youngest 49 years. In terms of racial demographics, one of the five mentors was a coloured South African, with the remaining four mentors being white South Africans. All five of the mentors were employed at directorate level. With regard to the highest educational qualifications, two of the mentors had a diploma, one a bachelor degree, one an honours degree and one a doctorate degree. All the mentors had general work experience exceeding 26 years.

Table 6.2 provides a summary of the online mentoring history of the mentors.

Table 6.2: Summary of the online mentoring history of mentors

Online mentoring data	Description	Frequency
Period of online mentoring experience	1 to 2 years	3
	3 to 10 years	1
	11 to 15 years	1
Focus of online mentoring	Career development	4
	Small business development	2
Online communication method utilised	Email	4
	SMS	2
	Skype	4
	Telephone	3
	WhatsApp calls	2
	WhatsApp messaging	2

As can be seen in Table 6.2, only two mentors had more than two years of online mentoring experience, with three having two years or less of online mentoring

experience. Online mentoring was provided mostly to corporates employed in large companies for personal development to advance their careers. Online mentoring was also provided for small business entrepreneurs for business development. The preferred online communication methods seem to be email and Skype. In addition, conversations take place telephonically and via WhatsApp calls, WhatsApp messaging and SMS. Three of the mentors had occasional face-to-face contact with their mentees in addition to online mentoring.

The results of the biographical profile of the participating mentees are provided in the following section.

6.3 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE MENTEES

Six mentees were interviewed, all of whom have received online mentoring in different fields. Most of the mentees were identified by obtaining their contact details from the mentors participating in this study. It must be noted that although all mentors were located in South Africa, due to the fact that online mentoring is not restricted to a geographical area, mentees were globally located. Three mentees were from South Africa and three were from other countries in Africa, namely Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Uganda. Online mentoring took place for personal development, to develop within the current job (career development) and for business development. The biographical profiles of these participating online mentees are presented in case studies in the following sections, showing the focus of why mentoring took place.

6.3.1 Mentee A

Mentee A is currently (2016) a 37 year-old, Spanish and English-speaking, black female from Equatorial Guinea who holds a Bachelors Degree in Sociology, which she obtained from Goldsmith's University of London. Mentee A completed a Certificate in Employment Relations, Law and Practice (CERLAP) at the Hammersmith College in 2008 and attended the University of Delaware (USA) from June 2015 - August 2015 as a fellow of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Programme (Civic Leadership), where she received lecturing and training in leadership, networking and skills building. At the end of June, 2015 Mentee A attended a presidential summit in Washington DC.

Mentee A has 17 years work experience and has been in her current position for the past 12 months as a social project manager for the national electricity company of Equatorial Guinea, with head offices in Malabo. It is the sole operator of the electricity sector of Equatorial Guinea. The company was created in November 2001 by a merger of the national rural electrification company and the national electricity corporation and is one of the most important companies in Central Africa. Before joining the electricity company as a social project manager, Mentee A worked as a child protection officer at an international institution in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, for a period of two years.

This mentee's duties as a social project manager for the national electricity company include the designing, executing, and overseeing of the company's social responsibility strategies and social projects, philanthropic social projects, charitable giving, volunteerism, education, health, infrastructure and public relations programmes. Mentee A is also responsible for implementing plans and programmes for communities in Equatorial Guinea and the training of new social project coordinators in Equatorial Guinea.

Mentee A is totally bilingual in both Spanish and English and has been involved for the past seven years, to date, in various social and English training programmes in Madrid, London and Malabo as part of her personal community involvement. Furthermore, this mentee designs international English related training programmes for workers in Sonagas, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, as part of her personal community involvement efforts.

Mentee A receives online mentoring on the YALI programme from a South African mentor via the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, to help her adapt more easily in her new position as the social project manager for the national electricity company in Equatorial Guinea. Mentee A engages with her mentor primarily through Skype and WhatsApp calls and WhatsApp messages and receives mentoring in the field of leadership and career development. This mentee has received online mentoring for the past four months (since July 2016) and is continuing to do so. Mentee A has not met her mentor personally in a face-to-face manner. During June and July 2015, this mentee was required to complete six weeks of academic coursework,

leadership training and networking at the University of Delaware in the United States of America, in addition to the online mentoring.

6.3.2 Mentee B

Mentee B is currently (2016) a 32 year-old, English-speaking Liberian female and holds a Master's Degree in International Public Health from the University of Queensland, Brisbane, in Australia, which she received in 2012. Mentee B graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from the Cuttington University, Bong County in Liberia and holds numerous post-graduate diplomas in World Health Organisation and Health and Human Rights. This mentee has also attended numerous workshops and conferences on performance-based financing and training.

Mentee B has ten years work experience and has been in her current position as the manager of the performance-based financing unit in an office of the Ministry in Liberia for one year. Before that Mentee B served for two years as a director of a health services unit in an office of the Ministry in Monrovia, Liberia. This mentee was an international public health specialist with over ten years work experience in community and facility-based health services. At the onset of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, Mentee B established and coordinated the Ebola case investigation team and worked closely with the case management team to respond to Ebola-related cases. Mentee B's past work experiences involved working as a community health nurse; research assistant for gender issues; assistant project evaluator of HIV and gender projects; and as a gender-based violence and psychosocial response officer in both governmental and non-governmental institutions. This mentee has also participated in a series of national and international training workshops including a four-month United Nations Human Rights and HIV training workshop in Geneva, Switzerland.

Mentee B coordinates the development of technical health documents and the restoration of routine health services, as well as the building of a resilient health system in Liberia. This mentee's specific roles and responsibilities at present include providing technical information regarding performance-based financing (PBF) implementation at national level; facilitating the development of PBF programme plans and budgets; ensuring timely availability of these documents, and making recommendations for the PBF governance committee's consideration; ensuring that PBF implementation is in

line with national guidelines, the legal framework, and agreements between the government and funding partners; developing operational manuals and required PBF implementation tools, and updating as necessary; reviewing quarterly performance reports from implementers (counties and NGOs); preparing summary observations and feedback to implementers; and holding implementers' feedback sessions.

Mentee B receives online mentoring on the YALI programme from a South African mentor via the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders to help her fit into her new position as the manager of the performance-based financing unit. This mentee has received online mentoring, primarily through Skype and WhatsApp calls and WhatsApp messaging, in the field of leadership and governance and has been involved in the online mentoring programme for a period of twelve months (since September 2015) and is continuing to do so. Mentee B has not met her mentor personally in a face-to-face manner. In addition, this mentee was required to complete six weeks of academic coursework, leadership training and a networking programme at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies in the Georgia State, United States of America, from 22 June to 31 July 2015.

6.3.3 Mentee C

Mentee C is currently (2016) a 53 year-old, English-speaking white female who holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Management (Human Resources), which she received at the Wits Business School in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1992. Mentee C graduated with a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Witwatersrand in 1985 and is currently enrolled for a Master's Degree in Management, specialising in Business Executive Coaching at the Wits Business School, and will graduate in 2017. This mentee was a finalist in the entrepreneurial category for the regional awards for the Business Women's Association (BWA) in 2003 and is a past member of the BWA Johannesburg Committee and past chairperson of the BWA Mentoring Committee. Mentee C has 30 years work experience and has been in her current position as the founder and managing member of a human resource business situated in Johannesburg, South Africa, since February 1992. Mentee C is an experienced management consultant with skills in all aspects of strategic and human resource management, and people and organisational development. The human resource business has been rated a Level 2 contributor to Broad Based Black Economic

Empowerment (BBEE) and is a leader in South Africa in terms of behavioural change regarding mindset and attitude towards work. Mentee C has gained experience by searching for leading practice around the world and in Africa. The business services include management consulting; talent acquisition, HR outsourcing and provision of locums; mentoring and coaching; and changing employee mindsets.

Mentee C's preferred mentoring scope is focused on females and relates to employee engagement, business performance, organisational learning, mindset and attitude change and leadership development. This mentee's passion lies in mentoring, coaching and sharing organisational values and her clients have included, amongst others, Rand Water, Investec, Fuchs, DeBeers, Nedcor, Ernst and Young, Department of Local Government for Gauteng, General Cologne, Standard Bank, International Business Machines, South African Airways (SAA) and Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).

Despite the fact that Mentee C was an accomplished mentor herself, she joined the Mentoring Women in Business Programme hosted by the Cherie Blair Foundation (Section 5.3.2.2) in 2015 to receive online mentoring on how to grow her business to increase her business turnover. Mentee C was alerted to the Cherie Blair Foundation programme through a members' association in Gauteng, South Africa, called Business Engage, which encourages its local members to apply for the Cherie Blair online mentoring programme. Mentee C has a one-hour meeting twice a month with an appointed mentor from the United Kingdom and will continue to do so for a period of one year. This mentee engages with her mentor primarily through Skype and telephone conversations and has never met her mentor in a face-to-face manner.

6.3.4 Mentee D

Mentee D is currently (2016) a 36 year-old, Afrikaans speaking white female who holds various certificates in Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) at NQF level 5 from the National Occupational Safety Association (NOSA). The certificates include training in health and hazard identification and risk assessment; SHE systems tools; risk measures for construction supervisors; first aid, use of and handling of portable fire extinguishers/ fire hose reels; introduction to spill response and product awareness; and skysite rope access.

Mentee D is the SHE manager at the quarry unit of a South African company situated in Cape Town. The company is comprised of three divisions: a quarry unit, a hollow core slabs manufacturing plant and a ready-mix concrete division. The quarry produces aggregates in various sizes from stone. Each stage of crushing produces progressively smaller stones. In order to produce a usable end-product, the crushed rock has to be screened into various size categories. Crushed and screened rock is called aggregate. The hollow core plant manufactures hollow core panels used on construction sites for decking or roof slabs. The ready-mix division supplies ready-mix concrete to building clients.

Mentee D has 18 years of working experience in SHE and has been in her current position for almost three years. This mentee has to ensure that the company complies with the legal requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Mine Health and Safety Act, and coordinates programme activities with safety committees. Mentee D recommends, develops and implements safety policies and procedures in the company and investigates work place safety and unsafe working conditions on an ongoing basis. Mentee D furthermore recommends remedial measures and takes immediate action when necessary to eliminate hazards in the workplace, and provides emergency procedures and first aid facilities to employees in the company. Mentee D liaises with other businesses and relevant authorities with regard to audits and remedial actions and ensures that safety and housekeeping standards are adhered to, and also conducts audits. In addition, this mentee provides advice on the training needs of employees.

Mentee D has been receiving primarily online career development mentoring for the past two years, since her company embarked on an initiative called world class manufacturing. The company this mentee is employed at appointed an outsourced business consultant to provide her with online mentoring. The online mentoring revolves around effective management and business skills in the corporate business environment. Mentee D also received personal development mentoring to grow personally as an individual. The online mentoring sessions last between 30-45 minutes and take place through telephonic conversations and emails. Mentee D has met face-to-face with her mentor, but most of the interactions are online in nature.

6.3.5 Mentee E

Mentee E is currently (2016) a 40 year-old Baganda female from Uganda and holds a Doctorate in Business Management, which she obtained in April 2016 from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Mentee E also holds a Post-graduate Diploma in E-Teaching, which she received from the University of Agder in 2015. A Master of Science in Marketing from the Makerere University, Kampala, was conferred upon Mentee E in 2004 and she received her Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing at the Makerere University in 1999.

Mentee E is a lecturer at an institute of open distance and e-learning at an educational institution in Kampala, Uganda, and has been in this position for the past ten years. The educational institution is Uganda's largest and third oldest tertiary institution, first established as a technical school in 1922 and becoming a university in 1963, offering courses leading to general degrees from the University of London. It became an independent national university in 1970 and is composed of nine colleges and one school offering programmes for approximately 36 000 under-graduate students and 4 000 post-graduate students.

Mentee E's duties as a lecturer include teaching graduate and under-graduate business students marketing and management modules. As part of this mentee's duties, she compiles, marks and moderates continuous assessments and examinations, and advises students on academic module content matters. Mentee E supervises research projects for students and assists in their mentoring. In addition this mentee participates in the development of learning materials and acts as the coordinator for the Bachelor of Commerce External Programme at the institution.

Mentee E received online mentoring for almost four years while completing her PhD study in Business Management. Mentee E's supervisor assisted in the compilation of a general plan for the research, as well as the planning and coordination of the progress of research. The supervisor assisted Mentee E in gaining access to information networks at the university and other organisational systems required for successful completion of her studies. The online mentoring took place via email as the need arose, but occurred at least once monthly. Mentee E met her supervisor twice face-to-face during the course of her study – at inception of the study and then again

during the finalisation of her results (this latter meeting enabled her to understand the analysis process). The mentee obtained feedback from her supervisor regarding: her progress with the research; problematic areas; new information sources available on the topic and on how to improve her research writing. Personal guidance was also provided by the supervisor regarding how Mentee E could balance her work and home life as well as how she could develop her career in academia to qualify for promotion.

6.3.6 Mentee F

Mentee F is currently (2016) a 36 year-old, English-speaking, white female who holds a BSc Honours from the University of Kwazulu Natal. Mentee F also completed an Advanced Internet Marketing certification programme in 2010 and qualified in Google Analytics and Google Adwords.

Mentee F has 15 years work experience in digital marketing and has been in her current position as the managing member for the past seven years at a global digital marketing company in Durban, South Africa. The company headquarters are in Toronto, Canada, with offices in over eighty countries. Within South Africa the company has a very strong presence, with independently owned offices in Gauteng, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein and Nelspruit. This participant uses her knowledge and expertise to make a difference to businesses all around the world. The network of marketers strive to discover, analyse, build and implement digital solutions that help businesses succeed online, assisting small to medium-sized businesses in developing an internet marketing strategy.

Mentee F's duties as a manager member includes digital marketing consultancy on tracking her clients' successes online, designing strategies that include social media and web development to ensure clients get the best possible return on investment from their internet marketing strategy. This mentee has assisted in the development of online strategies for brands such as Toughees, MECSAfrica, Leisure Lounge and Rand Trust Financiers and her fields of interest lie specifically in internet marketing, paid search marketing, social media optimisation and training, web analytics, Wordpress and brand management. Mentee F has presented workshops at the Zululand Chamber of Commerce and Seda, among others, and acts as the 2016-2017 Chairperson for the Kwazulu Natal Branch of Women in Business and was a finalist in

the 2016 Business Women’s Regional Business Achievers Awards. The Regional Business Achievers Awards (RBAA) is an annual event aimed at celebrating the success of females in each BWA branch. The awards actively seek to identify, acknowledge and cultivate entrepreneurs, corporate and professional female leaders in the various regions. Mentee F was nominated in the Entrepreneur category.

Mentee F is a mentee in the Mentoring Women in Business Programme hosted by the Cherie Blair Foundation (Section 5.3.2.2) and she has received online mentoring for personal development and business development over a period of ten months to date, and is continuing to do so. Mentee F has a one-hour meeting twice a month with an appointed mentor from the United States of America. This mentee engages with her mentor through Google Hangouts and email and has never personally met with her mentor face-to-face.

6.3.7 Summary of biographical profile of participating online mentees

The biographical profile of the participating online mentees, as described in the preceding sections, are summarised in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Summary of biographical profile of online mentee participants

Biographical data	Description	Frequency
Gender	Female	6
Race	Black	3
	White	3
Age	30 to 34 years	1
	35 to 39 years	3
	40 to 44 years	1
	45 to 49 years	0
	50 to 54 years	1
Employment position	Consultant	1
	Lecturer	1
	Manager	3
	Director	1
Highest qualification	Diploma	1
	Bachelor	1

Biographical data	Description	Frequency
Highest qualification	Honours	1
	Master's	1
	Post-graduate diploma	1
	Doctorate	1
Work experience	10 to 14 years	2
	15 to 19 years	3
	30 to 34 years	1

From Table 6.3 it is evident that all six mentees interviewed were female, as the focus of this study is on female mentees. The average age of the mentees was 39 years, with the oldest being fifty-three years and the youngest thirty-two years old. Three of the mentees are employed in a managerial position and the other three mentees function as a consultant, lecturer and director respectively. The highest qualification achieved by the mentees ranged from merely a diploma to a doctorate degree. In terms of ethnic affiliation, three of the six mentees were African blacks from Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Uganda, with the remaining three mentees being white South Africans. All the mentees had general work experience exceeding ten years, with one mentee having thirty years work experience.

Table 6.4 provides a summary of the online mentoring involvement of participating mentees.

Table 6.4: Summary of mentee online mentoring involvement

Online mentoring history	Description	Frequency
Period engaged in online mentoring	Less than 1 year	4
	2 to 3 years	1
	4 to 5 years	1
Focus of online mentoring	Career development	4
	Small business development	2
Online communication method	Email	3
	Google hangouts	1
	Skype	3
	Telephone conversations	2
	WhatsApp calls	2

Online mentoring history	Description	Frequency
Online communication method	WhatsApp messages	2
Online mentoring institution	Cherie Blair Foundation	2
	YALI	2
	Educational institution	1
	Self-employed private consultant	1

As depicted in Table 6.4, two mentees were engaged in online mentoring for a period of more than two years while the other mentees were engaged in online mentoring for a period of less than one year. Four mentees received online mentoring in career development and two in small business development. The online communication methods used included a combination of methods with email being used most frequently and Google hangouts least frequently. It was noted in the preceding discussion that two of the mentees had face-to-face interaction with their mentees to a minor extent, in addition to their online mentoring sessions.

The following section will provide a summary of the biographical profile of the interviews conducted with the three online mentoring field specialists during phase two of this enquiry.

6.4 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE ONLINE MENTORING FIELD SPECIALISTS

A brief background is provided of the online mentoring field specialists.

6.4.1 Online mentoring field specialist A

Online mentoring field specialist A is the managing director of a Leadership Institute established in April 2009 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa for the purpose of providing training, workshops and individual leadership mentoring and coaching for mostly corporates. The Institute focus on businesses who wish to make mentoring and coaching a part of their leadership culture and empower managers through their own individual mentoring and coaching journey and teach managers to mentor and coach their teams effectively. Value based conversations are facilitated that embrace customised blended leadership experiences and use is made of both online and face-to-face coaching and mentoring. The Leadership Institute has physical representation

in Gauteng, Port Elizabeth and Europe and has the technology to interact virtually all over the globe. Clients include VWSA, Coca-Cola SABCO, NMMU, SPAR, Canon, and the Graca Machal Trust.

Online mentoring field specialist A is currently (2016) a 52 year-old, white English-speaking female and holds a Master of Philosophy in Management Coaching from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, where she graduated in 2014. A Masters in Business Administration (MBA) was also conferred upon her in 2008 by the Mill Park Business School affiliated to Oxford University. She has more than 120 female business owners clients in South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia through programmes sponsored by Seda and the Graca Machal Trust and is a certified mentor and coach. She conducts both face-to-face and online conversations globally using webinars, digital platforms and communities of practice. She has worked extensively with the BWA's Mentoring Programme, Cherie Blair Mentoring Foundation, as well as small business owners and corporates like Coca Cola in mentoring and coaching, learning and leadership development.

6.4.2 Online mentoring field specialist B

Online mentoring field specialist B is the managing director of an enterprise development company established in 2006 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, but operating throughout the Eastern Cape Province. The company specialises in the provision of general small business management training and mentoring programmes (SMME development and training), business linkages and consulting for private, public and the SMME sectors, including:

- Planning and financial modelling for SME businesses;
- Business incubator development;
- Turnaround management for businesses in distress;
- Company diagnostics (assessments);
- Turnaround feasibility studies;
- Change management;
- Business feasibility studies;
- Loan packaging;
- Business- and marketing plans;

- Business mentoring / counselling; and
- Post loan aftercare and mentoring services.

The company holds an associate database of seasoned SMME development practitioners, all whom have specialised skills that when brought together provides a synergy in the management of the business and provision of quality higher end consulting, training and mentorship interventions. The company's staff complement consists of Engineers, Technologists, Business Support Specialists, Accountants as well as industry leaders (Board Member of Bidvest and other listed entities). Online mentoring is done to SMMEs via the company website well as Skype and Zoom webinar sessions.

Online mentoring field specialist B is currently (2016) a 42 year-old, coloured English-speaking male and holds a Doctorate in Business Administration from the NMMU, South Africa, where he graduated in 2013. He also holds a BSc (Botany, Geography and Zoology) and a Higher Diploma in Education from the erstwhile University of Port Elizabeth and an MBA from the Trinity University, London. He has 18 years of working experience and was a branch manager at NYDA (Port Elizabeth) for four years where he co-ordinated the mentoring programmes, mentor reports and mentor visits before establishing the company. Prior to the appointment at NYDA Port Elizabeth, he acted as the Executive Director of COMSEC, Eastern Cape where he managed 64 on site incubator clients for seven years. He has worked extensively with black executives in the small business arena and has a passion towards igniting entrepreneurship among the youth in South Africa. He has been in the current position for the past six years.

6.4.3 Online mentoring field specialist C

Online mentoring field specialist C is a Professor of Educational Administration at National University in La Jolla, California, United States of America. National University is a private, non-profit institution of higher education in California and was founded in 1971, and headquartered in La Jolla, California. National University offers in excess of 120 academic degree programmes at 28 campuses located throughout the state of California. Convenient online lectures are offered in conjunction with a flexible, one-class-per-month format. The university embraces diversity since it brings

a new perspective to every industry with staff acting as online mentors and has a large contingent of international students. National University's online academic programmes are interactive with streaming videos, real-time discussions, multimedia learning material, and online classrooms.

Online mentoring field specialist C is currently (2016) a 60 year-old, white American English-speaking male and holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration received in 1972 from Walden University in America. He has been a teacher at all grade levels, a principal, assistant superintendent in Fairbanks, Alaska, and an active superintendent of schools in the north county of San Diego. He has worked as an international business consultant and was an educational advisor to American Samoa's Educational Television System and was instrumental to the implementation of an online mentoring student programme. Currently, he is working at the headquarters of National University at the Department of Educational Administration and has been in this position for the past 16 years where he is actively involved with the development and instruction of online learning and in particular online mentoring to remote students. He was the State Treasurer for the California Association of Professors of Educational Administration, and has been an active member of this Executive Board for the past ten years. As an international business analyst, he was an independent consultant to major Fortune 500 companies, including institutions in Indonesia and Canada. Educational technology and Leadership have been a large part of his research agenda and he has published and presented papers at conferences nationally and internationally. He has authored and co-authored many books on educational leadership and the use of online learning methods for students in remote locations and speaks four languages namely English, Spanish, Indonesian and Samoan.

6.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter a biographical profile of the five selected online mentors, six mentees and three online mentoring field specialists was provided. The biographical profile of the five mentors, all residing in South Africa, was presented as a case study with an indication of the development focus of their online mentoring, as well as the specific sector in which they provide online mentoring. The mentors had relatively limited involvement in online mentoring as only two mentors had more than two years online

mentoring experience, with three having less than one year's experience in providing online mentoring. All the mentors were employed at directorate level and the average age was fifty-four years. The mentors provided online mentoring to corporates employed in large companies for career development, for small business owners for business development and to individuals for personal development. The preferred online communication methods used by these South African mentors seem to be email and Skype. WhatsApp calls, WhatsApp messaging and sms were used to a lesser degree.

Six female mentees who have received online mentoring in different fields were interviewed. Three mentees were from South Africa and three mentees were from other countries in Africa, namely Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Uganda. The biographical profiles of these participating online female mentees were presented in case studies and the reason for mentoring was also indicated. Online mentoring took place for personal development, to develop within the current job (career development) and for business development. Four of the mentees received mentoring from two global online mentoring institutions, namely the Cherie Blair Foundation (2) and the YALI Foundation (2). One mentee received online mentoring from a self-employed private consultant and one mentee from a national educational institution. The online communication methods used included email, Google hangouts, Skype, telephonic conversations, WhatsApp calls and WhatsApp messaging.

The biographical profile of the interviews conducted with the three online mentoring field specialists was presented. Online mentoring field specialist A is the managing director of a Leadership Institute providing mostly corporate leadership mentoring and coaching. Online mentoring field specialist B is the managing director of a small business development training and mentoring company. Online mentoring field specialist C is actively involved with the development and instruction of online learning and online mentoring to remote students.

The following chapter will present the results of the qualitative research phases of this study.

CHAPTER 7

THE RESULTS OF THE ONLINE MENTORING INTERVIEWS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 presented the biographical profiles of the selected online mentors and female mentees that participated in the study. The biographical profiles of the five mentors were each depicted as a case study with an indication of the development focus of their online mentoring, as well as the specific sector in which they provide online mentoring. The online mentors comprised both males and females. However, as the focus of this study is on female mentees, the mentee sample consisted only of corporate female mentees and female small business entrepreneurs. The biographical profiles of these participating online mentees were depicted as individual case studies, indicating the focus of why mentoring took place.

The results of the online mentoring interviews will be presented within the emerging themes, subthemes and issues that were identified when conducting the content analysis regarding the online mentoring involvement and benefits experienced, online mentoring processes, challenges and enabling conditions for effective online mentoring. Thereafter, the results of the institutional online mentoring analysis using the constant comparative data analysis method will provide insight into how similar or dissimilar institutions approach online mentoring.

7.2 ONLINE MENTORING INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS EXPERIENCED

In the following section, background is provided on why both participants became involved in online mentoring, how the opportunity came about, the type of programme participated in, and the benefits experienced of participation.

7.2.1 Purpose of online mentoring involvement

The reason mentors become involved in online mentoring is twofold. Mentors wish to make a difference to the lives of the mentees (linked to the outcome of the online mentoring) and they regard themselves as equipped to do so based on their experience, skills or resources. Mentors also get involved with online mentoring to assist in developing their own careers, to transform businesses, and to make a contribution to changing the everyday lives of people. Extensive experience in

conventional mentoring results in some mentors receiving requests to become involved in online mentoring. One mentor suggested that online mentoring was a natural progression from conventional mentoring as he specifically became involved in the online aspect when he observed a gap between managers' skills and behaviour.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *I decided to become an online mentor for my own career development about ten years ago. I always had, and still have, my own career plan and at that stage looked where I wanted to be in five years time.*

Mentor B: *....exposure to real life problems in other countries and I am also learning and growing the whole time.*

Mentor C: *....tool to increase productivity, staff retention and generally assist employees through the change process.....mentoring of managers in organisations to motivate and encourage them in the process.....to bridge the gap between skills and behavior.....developed employees with the correct profile to become mentors.*

Mentor D: *I love engaging with and empowering people from all walks of life mentoring in the workplace, especially corporate online mentoring.*

Mentor E: *....transformation in individuals and organisations....sessions improved my work productivity as I planned everything around the sessions and managed to get more work done.*

From the interviews, it appeared that female corporate employee mentees engaged in online mentoring either as a means of career development for a new job or for promotion purposes, or to have a better job fit in their new management position. It was, moreover, indicated that it could also be used to pass on the skills learned and used, in turn, to mentor subordinates. Female small business entrepreneurs engage in online mentoring to grow their businesses, or to increase their turnover. One female mentee acknowledged that being a business consultant or even a mentor, does not necessarily mean one will be knowledgeable on all aspects of business and one may need a mentor to provide an objective view on business improvements. For university doctoral students, it enabled them to study part-time at any chosen university without job or financial losses.

As noted by female mentees:

- Mentee A: *I took it because I felt I needed some guidance at that moment for my new career path.*
- Mentee B: *....contribute to my experience and career development and also use the tool to mentor my co-workers.*
- Mentee C: *I wanted to increase my business turnover and increase my business growth. There is a difference between consulting in business as I have done and being able to mentor in a specialist area as I have done, and having an actual developmental need yourself (which I did).*
- Mentee D: *I have realised my shortcomings and decided to approach my company for the possibility of a mentor. Also wanted to grow as a person...not just in my career and position at work.*
- Mentee E: *I could not afford to be full-time at the university. Online mentorship was an excellent enhancement of my face-to-face interactions. It offered me the opportunity to stay in contact with the mentor/supervisor irrespective of the physical distance between both of us.*
- Mentee F: *Seemed like a great opportunity to get an outsider's view of my business and life.*

The purpose of involvement of the online mentoring field specialists in online mentoring platforms and programmes was indicated in their biographical profile in Chapter 6, Section 6.4, in great detail.

How the online opportunity was presented, will be discussed next.

7.2.2 How opportunity was presented

From interviews with the mentors it emerged that they got involved with online mentoring either because an opportunity for it presented itself in the work environment, or they viewed it as a job opportunity. Belonging to business associations, being involved in training programmes locally and internationally, or being involved in business consulting and having the necessary experience also create opportunities for venturing into online mentoring.

As noted by the mentors:

- Mentor A: *The online mentoring of students was a great opportunity of growth for me.*
- Mentor B: *I was nominated by my peers from the small business association to which I am affiliated.*
- Mentor C: *....first contact with a client....discuss the importance of mentoring.*

Mentor D: *I was approached because of my experience in mentoring and training programmes nationwide and my involvement with a United States aid programme.*

Mentor E: *An existing corporate client of mine here in South Africa approached me.*

From interviews with the mentees it emerged that female corporate employee mentees either approached, or were chosen by, their superiors, or were informed by a co-employee regarding an online mentoring opportunity. Belonging to either business associations with connections to global online mentoring institutions, or the local business chamber, or engaging in online searches also advance online mentoring opportunities.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee A: *Someone in a leadership position offered me this opportunity, and I took it because I felt I needed.....*

Mentee B: *I found out about it online.*

Mentee C: *I was made aware of the opportunity through a members association called the Business Engage. It is a membership organisation that offers the Cherie Blair Mentoring programme for local members.*

Mentee D: *I have realised my shortcomings and decided to approach my company for the possibility of a mentor.*

Mentee E: *It is through a colleague who went to NMMU.*

Mentee F: *I am on the Executive Committee of the Women in Business Forum. I was put forward for the programme through my connection with the Durban Chamber of Commerce.*

From the interviews with the online mentoring field specialists it emerged that institutions providing corporate and small business mentoring became involved with online mentoring because of the opportunities presented by advancements in technology, specifically the increased functionality of mobile phones and social media for connecting people. In the academic tertiary education environment, online mentoring involvement was driven by the demand of the target market served (students).

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *You have to recognise where technology fits within the mentoring paradigm. I love technology ... always been able to connect with people via technology ...the relationship and*

connectivity I can do over email, the mobile phone, over Facebook...whatever. I was really intrigued. How do you take this powerful face-to-face methodology and technology that has just gone wild, and bring them together and get a better product?

Online mentoring field specialist B: *The evolution of technology and the use of smart phones by most of our SMME clients have made online mentoring a natural one. SMMEs can now access business support and mentoring from anywhere in South Africa by logging on to our Mentorfind portal. It allows for a greater geographic footprint (clientele) with the same and more efficient mentoring capacity (mentors).*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Found that more and more students demand online mentoring. Medical profession has increasingly become involved with online mentoring to teach students.*

The type of mentoring programme that the participants were involved in, will be discussed next.

7.2.3 Type of mentoring programme involved

The interviews revealed that the working environment of mentors predominantly dictates the type of mentoring programme they will become involved in. The university professor supervisor (A) was primarily involved in online mentoring for masters and doctoral international students, while a self-employed small business consultant was involved in a global online mentoring institution with young entrepreneurs in start-up businesses as their target market. The self-employed manufacturing business consultant mentored managers employed in the manufacturing industry, while the internationally-accredited mentor and coach mentored corporates and school principals. Another self-employed mentor owning a skills development training company is involved in a global online mentoring institution targeting leadership development of young people in leadership positions in Africa.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *....the online mentoring of international doctoral students.*

Mentor B: *I have two mentees with start-up businesses (one from Uganda and the other from Kwazulu Natal in South Africa) with Toni Elumelo.*

- Mentor C: *I transformed businesses and realised the need for mentoring of managers in organisations.*
- Mentor D: *I was approached to engage with YALI, mentoring young Africans in leadership positions.*
- Mentor E: *An existing corporate client of mine here in South Africa approached me to mentor a financial director of theirsalso mentoring a group of school principals.*

From interviews with the female mentees it emerged that they were involved in online mentoring either through global online mentoring institutions with a South African connection (such as the Mandela Washington Fellowship Leadership Programme or the Cherie Blair Small Business Programme), at an academic tertiary education institution or with a private mentor owning a consultancy business.

As noted by female mentees:

- Mentee A: *.... apply to the Mandela Washington Fellowship Programme.*
- Mentee B: *I am part of a flagship fellowship programme designed for young African leaders that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership and networking, Mandela Washington Fellowship Programme.*
- Mentee C: *It is a membership organisation that offers the opportunity for members to apply to the Cherie Blair Online Mentoring Programme.*
- Mentee D: *Although our mentorship programme is informal at this stage, each manager was assigned a mentor from a private consultant firm.*
- Mentee E: *I did a PhD in Business Management at NMMU.*
- Mentee F: *I was put forward for the Cherie Blair Online Mentoring Programme through my connection with the Durban Chamber of Commerce.*

The type of programme that the online mentoring field specialists were involved in are highlighted in Chapter 6, Section 6.4, in great detail.

The perceived benefits of online mentoring will be discussed next.

7.2.4 Perceived benefits of online mentoring

The benefits associated with online mentoring seem to be related to time, costs, wider geographical reach and record-keeping. It is natural that self-employed mentors (B, C and E) would value the benefit of saving time and costs. The self-employed manufacturing (C) consultant also highlighted the benefit of greater geographical reach; widened access; that records of conversations can be kept to measure

progress, and that online mentoring allowed for more than one mentee to be mentored at the same time. The university professor supervisor (A) highlighted the benefit of having access regardless of the location of the other party, which she felt may reduce feelings of isolation for the mentee.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *Might reduce the feeling of isolation they often experience.*

Mentor B: *...the time saved and the saving in traveling cost.....I just like it when it all comes together.*

Mentor C: *The fact that one can reach a wider audience allows the mentor to mentor a group simultaneously which is a great advantage in terms of saving time and costs. Technology, if set up correctly, can keep track of your online mentoring and efficiency, and growth can be monitored more successfully than in face-to-face mentoring.*

Mentor E: *People who previously may not have had access to a mentor can now enjoy the benefits in their own environment.*

From the interviews it was noted that none of the female mentees indicated that they received specific benefits from online mentoring. This may be due to the fact that they assumed that by merely applying for online mentoring they would benefit from the process (see purpose of mentoring Section 7.2.1).

From interviews with the online mentoring field specialists it emerged that institutions providing small business mentoring perceived the benefits of online mentoring to be mostly related to the increased geographical coverage afforded by the process, thereby increasing their customer base. The advantage of the immediacy of online mentoring in answering challenges experienced, and the flexibility with time and space – pointing to the benefit of not interfering with other daily commitments – were additionally highlighted. If a university student, the benefit of online mentoring would be holistic and focus on the whole person to provide work-study-life balance.

As noted by two online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist B: *We use online mentoring mostly for entrepreneurial clients. It has proven highly effective and has allowed us the ability to reach many rural-based clients who would otherwise not have been afforded this opportunity due to their location. It also allows the SMMEs, with some immediacy, to have their urgent*

challenges addressed in an almost real-time manner where they would previously have travelled vast distances to access business advisory or mentoring support in urban centres. It is already utilised in a few corporate clients and has been effective as it is non-invasive and can easily be done from their desks/terminals without disrupting their work attendance or productivity.

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Mentoring provides a broader spectrum, a focus on the whole person, and puts balance in their life.*

The following section presents the results of the themes identified in the content analysis.

7.3 THEME IDENTIFICATION

A content analysis identified three main themes emerging from interviews with the participants regarding online mentoring, as summarised in Table 7.1, along with the corresponding subthemes.

Table 7.1: Main themes and sub themes emerging from participant interviews

MAIN THEME	SUBTHEMES
Online mentoring processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Application procedure ➤ Selection procedure ➤ Matching procedure ➤ Conflict resolution procedure
Online mentoring challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Matching preferences ➤ Technology impediments ➤ Cultural fit ➤ Language differences ➤ Lack of mutual trust ➤ Meeting scheduling, frequency and duration ➤ Impersonal nature of online mentoring ➤ Mentee related ➤ Mentor-related
Online mentoring enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generic ➤ Mentee-specific ➤ Mentor-specific

As depicted in Table 7.1, three main themes with subthemes transpired from the participant interviews with ensuing issues pertaining to each subtheme. The participants include five mentors (male and females), six female mentees and three

online mentoring field specialists. Two of the online mentoring field specialists owned South African institutions, of which one provided online mentoring for corporate employees to develop their careers, while the other provided online mentoring for small business development. Since literature confirms the extensive use of online mentoring in the field of education, especially outside the borders of South Africa, the third online mentoring field specialist was instrumental in the implementation of online mentoring for tertiary education university students at one of the largest universities in the state of California, USA, which offers in excess of 120 academic degree programmes at twenty-eight campuses. The results of these online mentoring field specialists provided for further refinement or confirmation of the identified themes and subthemes.

7.3.1 Results of the online mentoring processes

Based on the content analysis, the online mentoring processes (first main theme) in terms of the subthemes, as depicted in Table 7.1, are discussed in the subsequent sections.

7.3.1.1 Application process

It emerged from the interviews with the mentors that online mentoring institutions require the completion of an online application, whereas, if the online mentor is self-employed, or an academic supervising postgraduate studies, no formal application procedure is necessary. No application is required when being approached by a potential client, but a meeting is set up to discuss expectations and needs.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *... leadership programme for which I applied online in the United States of America.*

Mentor B: *With global mentoring organisation.... had to complete an application form.*

Mentor D: *....complete an application form.*

Mentor E: *Applied online at international institution....*

It emerged from the interviews with the female mentees that all global online mentoring institutions require the completion of an online mentoring application form, or that the applicant be selected for a leadership programme with an online mentoring component. The female university doctoral degree student mentee completed an application form for admission to a doctoral degree. If embarking on an online

mentoring programme for employees in a company, it is obvious that female mentees need not apply for the programme.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee A: *.... after completion of the leadership programme (for which I applied online) in the United States of America.*

Mentee B: *I went through a strict online application process.*

Mentee C: *It was an online application process.*

Mentee E: *I apply for admission to a PhD.*

Mentee F: *Was all done online through the Cherie Blair Foundation.*

It was noted by the two South African online mentoring field specialists that mentors and mentees must complete an online application form (see Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2). The online mentoring field specialist employed at one of the largest online educational institutions in California, USA, confirmed that staff act as mentors while mentees only have to apply for mentoring assistance (see Section 6.4.3).

The second subtheme, the selection procedure for online mentoring and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.3.1.2 Selection procedure

After the application to become a mentor is accepted, some global institutions require further documentation before finally appointing the online mentor, or they may have required that the documentation be sent together with the application. These requirements include a written presentation of a mentoring case study in a face-to-face manner clearly outlining the intended outcome, or being interviewed via Skype. It was clear that whether a mentor has international accreditation or not may play a role in the selection process of the institution. Some global institutions also require proof of previous (not necessarily online) mentoring experiences. For academic supervisors of doctoral studies, their qualifications, previous supervision experience, and field of experience are considered before being allocated a student. Providing online mentoring for a business requires attending a meeting with the corporate client to establish expectations and needs.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *....had to complete a case study and then had to present my outcomes (a mentoring plan for a business) to a panel.....a two hour interview.*

Mentor C: *.....contact with a client....discuss that I can assist in the process through online means.*

Mentor D: *.... and had a Skype interview.*

Some female mentees (A) were not initially applicants to online mentoring, but to a leadership programme with an online mentoring component, so selection was based on the application for the leadership programme. Female corporate employee mentees were selected by their managers for participation. To apply for online mentoring programmes, small businesses applicants must supply reasons for participation in the programme as well as background and business performance information. The tertiary education institution required proof of previous academic qualifications which was then considered in relation to the programme requirements applied for.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee B: *I was not specifically screened to be a part of the mentorship programme as mentoring is offered to all after completion of the programme.*

Mentee C: *I had to motivate why I wanted to be mentored and supply information about my business.*

Mentee D: *Our company embarked on an initiative called world class manufacturing. During this initiative my manager approved mentoring of all managers.*

Mentee E: *NMMU developed criteria for screening the applicants in relation to the requirements of a particular programme. When applying there were several academic documents that I was requested to attach. It was also a requirement that my previous academic qualification should be in line with my PhD.*

Mentee F: *Was all done through the Cherie Blair Foundation, online. I had to fill in a detailed online questionnaire about my history and current business, including financial performance of the business.*

Both South African online mentoring field specialists indicated that their businesses had selection requirements whereby prospective mentors were required to upload their profiles and curriculum vitae, after which a selection would be made based on mentee needs. Online mentoring field specialist C did not comment as it could be assumed

that lecturers at the United States University are sufficiently qualified to provide online mentoring to the students.

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *On our online portal – Mentor Find.- we are getting the mentors to upload their profiles, their CVs, any qualifications that they have and any industry body that they are affiliated to, because from there I will pick up whether we are going to have issues.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *We make use of an online application form with weighted fields to ensure that the aspiring mentors meet our selection criteria.*

The third subtheme, the matching procedure for online mentoring and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.3.1.3 Matching procedure

Mentors are matched based on their experience field and/or preference to mentor within a field. The university professor mentor was matched with the female student mentee based on staff availability, qualifications and experience. If a self-employed business consultant, there was no need for matching, but after finding a suitable client, the signing of a contract concluded the process. Some institutions, such as when being an accredited mentor is a requirement, personally involve the mentors in the matching process allowing them to choose a mentee. Some institutions allow the mentees to choose the mentor from the information provided in their mentors data base.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *.... was allocated international student from administration. because of my academic qualifications and experience.*

Mentor B: *....based on my sector experience and preference.*

Mentor D: *....host presented mentees with available mentors and they chose accordingly.*

Mentor E: *.....always involved in the process of selection.*

From the interviews, it can be surmised that the female mentees may request to be matched based on certain criteria such as the mentor's gender, the country resided in, specific experience and the business sector he or she is working in. Alternatively, the goals set to be achieved by the female mentees had a further influence on how

programme administrator allocated mentors. To save costs, companies seemed to employ one mentor for all their female mentee employees, so matching was not considered. The tertiary education institution matched the student mentee with a supervisor (mentor) based on the student's qualifications and research area.

As noted by female mentees:

- Mentee A: *Participants can then identify, and request to be matched, with a mentor based upon the criteria that she/he is looking for in a mentor – working in a particular sector, experience in a certain area, gender, country of location or origin.*
- Mentee B: *It was done by the foundation, but in the application process I had to describe clearly what three goals I wanted to achieve. I expressed a desire to be mentored by someone with an expertise in my area of interest – health and governance – and was sent a communication by the programme organiser to connect with a mentor to schedule a call on an established platform called the ExpertPrep.*
- Mentee C: *It was done by the foundation, but in the application process I had to describe clearly what three goals I wanted to achieve.*
- Mentee D: *The company appointed a mentor of the mentees. Individual mentoring takes place of these mentees by this one mentor. Because of the cost involved the company decided to appoint this specific consultant to mentor the managers.*
- Mentee E: *Here administration matches the mentor's areas of research interest with the student's research area. required to attach a synopsis on my application and in here my research area was mentioned. When I was allocated a mentor I was informed and her email was given to me and I then started contacting her.*
- Mentee F: *It was done internally at the Cherie Blair Foundation.*

From interviews with the online mentoring field specialists it emerged that in SA the field of work experience of the mentor was regarded as very important when providing corporate mentoring. The other South African online mentoring field specialist indicated that when providing mentoring to a small business entrepreneur, an automated process is followed taking into account the previous mentoring experience, business experience, qualifications and own business experience of the mentor. No information was forthcoming from the US university professor, but in the educational online mentoring field it can be assumed that all staff are viewed as sufficiently qualified as it is part of their employment condition.

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *I do look at personality. Field of work experience would be a big one.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *Automated process is used gauging mentoring experience, business experience, qualifications and own business experience.*

The last subtheme, the conflict resolution process and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.3.1.4 Conflict resolution procedure

It transpired from the interviews that all institutions have institutional policies, guidelines and procedures guiding conflict resolution in the online mentoring relationship. Conflict can be addressed by the governing bodies at local offices or at head office. With some institutions, the conflict resolution process is included in the mentoring agreement, signed by both parties at the commencement of the relationship.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *....refer to the policy for guidelines, if there is a problem the policy document serves as a guide.*

Mentor B: *....have guidelines instructing us.... forms part of the mentoring agreement that we sign at the commencement of the relationship.*

Mentor C: *....business or company procedure explained to mentee....called an appeals procedure and deals with conflict handling as sub section....should mentee feel that process or mentor dealt with matters inappropriately or inadequately, he/she will follow procedure.*

Mentor D: *...have guidelines, but never had to use it.*

Mentor E: *No local resolution process, but access to international office to share issue. International board takes such issues very seriously.*

Although female mentees acknowledged that there may be, at times, conflict with their mentors, none of those interviewed had ever sought interventions. One female mentee mentioned that she was not familiar with the conflict procedure. It emerged from the interviews that all the institutions that provided the female mentees' online mentoring have procedures in place to guide online mentoring conflict. The female university

student mentee indicated that potential conflict can also be resolved through timeous self-intervention within the mentoring pair.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee A: *.... they have but I have not used it. Sometimes is difficult for me to have access to internet which can lead to conflict with the mentor.*

Mentee B: *I have not experienced such an issue, but the programme had a procedure in place.*

Mentee C: *....there was, but I did not make use of it. Both the mentor and mentee had to evaluate the progress of the relationship about three times in total, through on-line questionnaires.*

Mentee D: *.... in the work place there is a conflict resolution procedure, but I have not made use of it yet. Should the mentee be dissatisfied, a specific appeals procedure highlighting step-by-step for the mentee to follow.*

Mentee E: *Just like in any other relationships, there may come a time where emotions run high due to an issue that has evolved. Like issues of the mentee not meeting a deadline agreed upon earlier by both parties, sending work where some of the comments have not been responded to among others. Earlier communications about late submission of correction can help to address and resolve such issues. Where an issue cannot be easily resolved by the mentor and the mentee, then the university administration can come in to hear both sides of the story so as to resolve the conflict. This will necessitate a face-to-face meeting for the conflict to be resolved very fast. The university has procedures in place to deal with conflict.*

Mentee F: *....there is but I am not familiar with it as I have not needed to make use of it.*

Both South African online mentoring field specialists indicated that the conflict resolution procedures were built into the mentoring agreement. One online mentoring field specialist (A) believed in resolving conflict amicably while another (B) had appointed an assigned mentoring mediator, which followed a due-diligence process for resolving conflict that small business mentees experienced with their mentors. It can be assumed that at the US university the mentoring pair utilised the university's formal conflict resolution process, but since a process of self-mentor selection is followed, limited conflict should be experienced.

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *The most important thing is that the contracting upfront has to be clear and you must, as part of your contracting phase, talk about what happens. Give both parties the freedom to say it is not working, then you can gently resolve the conflict. It's got to be done with absolute respect, and quiet conversations.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *We have a conflict resolution clause built into our mentoring agreement. The aggrieved party will be able to lodge their concern to a dedicated email address which is manned by an assigned mediator. The veracity of the conflict/concern is evaluated by the mediator and he/she then attempts to reconcile the parties or recommend either disciplinary action, for example, termination of either party, or for either party to be replaced within the online mentoring pair.*

The second theme, online mentoring challenges, will be presented next.

7.4 RESULTS OF THE ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES

Based on the content analysis, the online mentoring challenges (the second main theme) in terms of the subthemes, as depicted in Table 7.1, are discussed in the subsequent sections.

7.4.1 Matching preferences

Mentors seem to experience, at times, incompatibility problems if mentoring the opposite gender, or a mentee from a different culture, or they may experience personality clashes. An academic supervisor female mentor found mentoring older men difficult, and noted that males and females differ in how they regard online mentoring, with females being more cautious and uncertain, but at the same time, more curious and focused on detail. The mentor's mentoring style could be influenced by these mentee characteristics. It was further indicated that female mentees' needs also differ as they may require more psycho-social support, while males are more focused on job completion and career development. The self-employed small business consultant found ethnic affiliation to play a role whereby males and females from black ethnic affiliation seem more receptive to being mentored online while white males appear more hesitant.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *..... prefer a person from a different gender.... found the males to be more receptive and accepting of the online environment.... females were more cautious and inquisitive and they did not trust the process.....females I have mentored were curious about the processwhy online mentoring and not face-to-face.... found females more worried about the detail, while the males want to get the job done.....females wanted more psycho-social support and the males worried more about career development. In beginning years of my mentoring I was often younger than the mentees, and although I said I found it easier to work with male mentee, it was quite difficult as a young female to mentor and supervise older and black men.*

Mentor B: *....have mentored and worked with all races and gender through the years.... found black males and females from all races to be more receptive.... White males are hesitant at the beginning of the relationship.*

Mentor E: *.....chemistry is important.*

When matching is conducted by institutional programme administrators, or through self-selection, it seemed that the female mentees interviewed did not regard matching as a challenging process. However, one female mentee mentioned that coming from a different cultural background to her mentor caused her some anxiety regarding whether the matching would lead to an effective online mentoring experience. Another female mentee mentioned that in matching, language differences could be a challenge for the mentoring pair if they are from different countries.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee A: *I did not have any reservations about it, I just waited to see that the selection was good and I am happy with the decision.*

Mentee B: *I expressed a desire to be mentored by someone with an expertise in my area of interest- health and governance. Participants can identify and request to be matched with a mentor based upon the criteria that she/he is looking for in a mentor – working in a particular sector, experience in a certain area, gender, country of location or origin.*

Mentee C: *I had no reservations at that time.*

Mentee D: *None.*

Mentee E: *In the beginning I was worried because my mentor and I had different backgrounds. She was white and I am black and I thought it would be hard for me to understand her.*

Mentee F: *None – I am quite a cosmopolitan individual, so I was not worried about there being a “culture clash” and since I am in the technology field, I knew that any paired mentor would have similar interests. I frequently deal with suppliers and colleagues from all over the globe (India, USA, Canada and Middle East) and have never had any communication issues. I knew that communication could be an issue in this type of mentoring situation.*

The South African online mentoring field specialist providing a corporate mentoring platform indicated that, with regard to matching preference, there is debate about whether there needs to be a gender similarity between mentor and mentee. The South African online mentoring field specialist providing a small business online mentoring platform acknowledged that matching preference problems can occur and indicated that it is managed based on feedback so as to decide whether to continue or discontinue the relationship.

As noted by the South African online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *.... some people are better matched to same-gender, some people are better matched to the opposite gender. It is a fallacy that females want to be mentored by females, although there can be a safety factor there in the beginning that females feel safer in the hands of a female, but males change your thinking in a whole different way.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *We track the mentoring relationship and based on feedback decide on whether the pairing should be maintained, or if we should suggest a new mentoring match.*

The second subtheme, technology impediments and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.4.2 Technology impediments

Technology-reported challenges by mentors were mostly related to using Skype. Connectivity challenges occur due to mentees not having data, or internet access or not always having access to Wi-Fi facilities. When connected, the camera may not be available which may influence the effectiveness of the communication process if illustrations are needed, or mentees may find the camera disturbing due to using Skype

for the first time. Signal problems may interrupt the Skype video conferencing process and cause calls to be dropped.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *....first Skype was difficult because of interruptions, but now stable connectionsespecially in the beginning years...connection would break down. Mentees did not have cameras with Skype in the beginning and the mentees could not see me...difficult to show things....especially with regard to detail...*

Mentor B: *....online conversations are conducted via Skype...sometimes have cameras on.... and we then find that having the camera on can be disturbing. Lack of exposure to technology etcetera previously Mentees also battled with technology access. Sometimes have to wait until they have data available to go on Wi-Fi.*

Mentor C: *....technology failure, which include signal failure.*

Mentor D: *....are unable to connect due to connectivitylack of internet access of mentees key frustration.*

Mentor E: *Calls being dropped and break up of signal.*

Technology challenges recounted by all the female mentees were mostly related to connectivity issues, access to the internet and the stability of the internet connection, which could all lead to the disruption of conversations. Lack of familiarity with Skype technology was also mentioned as a challenge for online mentoring, unless the person worked in an IT environment, such as female mentee F.

As noted by female mentees:

Mentee A: *Access to internet.*

Mentee B: *My biggest challenge is the stability and usage of internet services.*

Mentee C: *The only challenge was the connectivity issue of Skype sometimes.*

Mentee D: *Sometimes bad signal would end the conversation.*

Mentee E: *To effectively participate in online mentoring both supervisors and mentees need to have easy access to technology, such as a computer, a reliable internet connection, and email service, among other. There were instances where I failed to meet the deadline because of technological issues.*

One of the South African online mentoring specialists also referred to the lack of typing skills when working in a text environment as an impediment to effective online mentoring. All online mentoring field specialists interviewed agreed that lack of a stable internet connection could impede the effectiveness of the mentoring

relationship. South African technology-reported challenges were mostly related to the quality, availability and cost of the internet with disrupted conversations due to dropped calls, as well as the security issues associated with the online environment such as privacy and hacking of passwords and other information. The lack of prior use of Skype by mentees can also be a challenge. The US university professor stressed the importance of ensuring that all systems are in place prior to implementation of online mentoring.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *When you are working in a text environment....typing skills can be a challenge. I think the other thing that gets very frustrating is when your internet quality is variable and it keeps dropping calls and you have to go backwards and forwards. That is probably one of the most disruptive parts of e-mentoring. The visual audio thing is either a challenge or it isn't. Mentees' prior use of the internet may be a challenge. Insecurity with regard to confidentiality, privacy, hacking, viruses, securing your data with passwords could also influence mentees' perceptions of the safety of the online mentoring process.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *Access to stable internet (availability and cost).*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Technology can be challenging. Before online mentoring takes place, ensure that all systems are in place. Interruptions can take place in communication. It can be very bad with no mentoring taking place.*

The third subtheme, cultural fit as an online mentoring challenge and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.4.3 Cultural fit

It seems that from a mentor perspective university academics mentoring mature students for a doctoral degree may experience cultural challenges regarding having the same norms and values, especially in SA with such a diverse racial population. It appears that when online mentoring takes place on a global scale for small businesses, culture can also be a challenge as it may influence respect for one another.

As noted by two mentors:

Mentor A: *Culture can also play a role. White males are hesitant at the beginning of the relationship. I have found that differences in cultural behaviour ...norms and values.....can be a barrier in the development of the relationship. In South Africa where we have very diverse population, culture will have a great influence. It was also quite difficult to mentor and supervisefrom another culture and race.*

Mentor B: *Culture and lack of respect for each other can also play a role, especially in the online environment where we work with global institutions.*

One female mentee participating in a global mentoring programme confirmed that dealing with different cultures in the online global environment can pose a challenge to effective mentoring taking place.

Mentee F: *I would imagine that different cultures would find the process a bit more daunting.*

Two online mentoring field specialists reported that cultural sensitivity is required if engaging in global online mentoring, otherwise cultural challenges relating to age, race and gender can occur. Cultural fit problems may also be related to the resentment of using technology instead of conventional, face-to-face mentoring.

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *Ultimately, for me it is about: are they a cultural fit for the programme? They've got to be connected into that. Race and gender come into play where you have an older person where there could be a cultural clash and you have to be sensitive around that. You might have a black woman who is mentored by a strong man and culturally that is not a good fit. The cultural fit is more important than most of those things and in the online environment it is becoming even more important, because the whole nature of online mentoring is that it is global and has to be able to have a cultural sensitivity not only in your own country, but in any country you go into.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *All comes down to culture. Use example of the Western Samoa culture. Programmes failed to consider the culture of the people. Lack of internet culture. The local culture resented the use of technology as they were used to have chiefs in charge and were used to face-to-face contact.*

The fourth subtheme, language differences as an online mentoring challenge and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.4.4 Language differences

Mentors emphasised that the communication challenge in online mentoring was related to language spoken and written. It was even more problematic for a mentee if from South Africa, with eleven official languages, or from an African country like Uganda which has thirty-two different languages and dialects. The problem seems to be that as online mentoring conversations typically take place in English, mentees from these areas have a poor command of the language. It appears that a poor command of English makes it difficult for international mentees from Africa to express detail in written conversations, which is especially important in the educational field. However, mentors involved in global online mentoring programmes such as Mentor D did not regard English conversations as a challenge, as it is a requirement for programme participation. In the case of Mentor E that mentor corporate South African employees, communication may not have been a challenge as the business language is predominantly English.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *In South Africa where we have eleven official languages ...Language expression and writing in English is difficult for mentees, in Uganda, thirty-two different languages and dialects... Especially with regard to detail. We can write a lot of detail, but difficult to illustrate.*

Mentor B: *Writing skills: different educational backgrounds especially from the rural areas poor command of English.*

Mentor C: *To the larger population in South Africa it might be a challenge due to the language barriers. Literacy ... also comes in the equation when online mentoring is applied which can be a problem in South Africa.*

Only the female university student mentee who received online mentoring while completing her PhD, mentioned that miscommunication could pose a challenge as a written email message might be interpreted differently than intended. The other female mentees had all been in managerial positions for many years so may have obtained the ability to converse in English and therefore it did not pose a challenge. Female

mentees (A, B, C, F) participating in global online mentoring programmes are required to be fluent in English.

As noted by the female mentee:

Mentee E: *Much as internet provides for quick communication, there is also a likelihood of miscommunication, the email may be interpreted differently from what I originally intended.*

Two online mentoring field specialists agreed that language differences can influence the success of online mentoring as the mentee's English communication ability influences online mentoring conversations, whether oral or written. As written communication has no verbal signs and nuances, the meaning of words or sentences can be misinterpreted. If using synchronous visuals such as in Skype conversations, the verbal tone and language become more important.

As noted by one online mentoring field specialist:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *In the online environment, if you don't have a visual you have to be able to read tone and language, both on a verbal oral and written basis and I think that your ability as a communicator and to understand linguistics and all of that stuff.....you know the meaning and language, becomes exponentially more important.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Missed the nuances of direct communication. Non-verbal signs were missed.*

The fifth subtheme, the lack of mutual trust as an online mentoring challenge, will be discussed next.

7.4.5 Lack of mutual trust

The university professor mentor mentioned that gender, together with ethnic affiliation, could play a role in establishing trust. The fact that it takes time to develop a trusting relationship was mentioned by only two mentors (education and small business development). It appears that for mentors providing self-development mentoring for individuals (Mentors D and E), or if the mentor (C) is a business consultant with a contract to mentor corporate employees at a business, trust is not such an issue.

Some global online mentoring programmes also allow mentees to choose their own mentors, which may be the reason trust was not regarded as an issue.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *White males are hesitant at the beginning of the relationship and need time to establish trust in the relationship. They did not trust me...the big challenge was to establish trust and respect.*

Mentor B: *It also takes time to develop trust in this environment.*

It is interesting that none of the female mentees mentioned that trusting their mentors at the inception of receiving online mentoring was a challenge. It may be that they had forgotten how they felt, or that their need to receive mentoring overshadowed any distrust at the commencement of the relationship.

None of the online mentoring field specialists mentioned building a trusting relationship as an online mentoring challenge, although they had indicated how to go about ensuring a trusting relationship to ensure effective online mentoring (see Section 7.5.1.1).

The sixth subtheme, meeting scheduling, frequency and duration as an online mentoring challenge, will be discussed next.

7.4.6 Meeting scheduling, frequency and duration

The mentor's personal schedule, business commitments, and the fact that mentoring is mostly without charge are usually regarded as challenges when mentoring a small business entrepreneur. Time zone differences were mentioned as problematic by only one mentor who participate in a global online mentoring programme, as it influenced the scheduling of online meetings when the medium used was Skype – a synchronous conversation tool. If mentoring corporate employees (Mentors C and E), meeting schedules did not seem problematic. The university professor mentor did not mention time-related issues as a challenge, which may be due to the fact that most of her conversations were asynchronous written emails.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *Time is a big issue for small business mentoring. Finding the time to suit both mentee and mentor; as a business person and conducting the mentoring pro bona, you have to put your business commitments before the free stuff.... most of the sessions take place after-hours as both mentor and mentee are engaged during the day with other commitments.*

Mentor D: *....are unable to connect due totime-zone differences.*

Both the female mentees (C and F) affiliated to a global online mentoring programme mentioned session duration and frequency of meetings as online mentoring challenges. One female mentee (C) found the frequency of meeting sessions time-consuming but admitted that inadequate time is provided to act upon what was discussed. The meeting frequency of this programme required two meetings monthly. If engaging with a mentor in another country, time-zone differences could prove problematic. It was reported that, at times, a mentor may become unavailable, which could influence future meeting frequency in order to recover lost time. Work demands may also influence fitting in time to meet online. Female mentees from Africa (A, B, and E) did not mention any time-related constraints.

As noted by two female mentees:

Mentee C: *I also found that every two weeks was quite sudden and time-consuming, not allowing time for actions.*

Mentee F: *The time-zone difference has been challenging, but we worked around it. My mentor also moved to a new company at the start of the process and was not available for a few weeks. I have also been slack in the last months as I have been so busy! I have to take an effort to prioritise the mentoring, otherwise I forget. I do think that I found the process a lot easier as I am familiar and comfortable with dealing with people from different time zones.*

As meeting scheduling were not mentioned by two of the online mentoring field specialists, it appears that when mentoring an employee (A) and university student (C) this aspect may not pose a challenge. A small business entrepreneur tends to have daily commitments, which require meetings to often take place after business hours. As this impacts on the availability of the mentor, synchronisation of meeting times can become a problem, as mentioned by the small business online mentoring specialist.

As noted by one small business online mentoring specialist:

Online mentoring field specialist B: *Synchronising availability with that of the mentees.*

The seventh subtheme, the impersonal nature of the online medium as an online mentoring challenge and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.4.7 Impersonal nature of online mentoring

Another reported challenge to effective online mentoring, noted by two mentors (C and E) who conduct online mentoring to corporate employees, was the impersonal nature of the online medium. Both these mentors seemed to prefer mentoring face-to-face, even if just for meeting initially with the mentee. However, one of the mentors (E) acknowledged the value of online mentoring in terms of the ability of the mentor to connect regardless of geographical location, and that it was cost-effective and time saving. Mentors (A, B and D) conducted online mentoring globally (for global online mentoring programmes or supervising doctoral students in Africa) and for this reason might not regard it a challenge as there was no other way to engage with their mentees.

As noted by the two mentors:

Mentor C: *...a big difference between online mentoring and face-to-face mentoring. It is less intimate online which is very difficult to overcome if you do not meet the mentee face-to-face initially.*

Mentor E: *I still feel nothing can replace the personal component of face-to-face mentoring, but online mentoring is valuable in terms of geographical reach, time and costs.*

One female mentee who participated in a large programme for young African leaders commented on the impersonality of the online mentoring environment.

As noted by the female mentee:

Mentee A: *Online work can be sometimes a bit cold.*

The online mentoring field specialists did not indicate the impersonal nature of online mentoring as a challenge, but had suggested how to make the online mentoring process less impersonal (see Section 7.5.1.4).

The eighth subtheme combines all the mentee-related challenges, as discussed next.

7.4.8 Mentee-related challenges

As mentioned by Mentor B, some small business mentees lack practical business skills and/or foundational knowledge, which influence their ability to obtain the objectives set for the mentoring programme. According to Mentor E, corporate employee mentees are not always adequately prepared for online meetings as they do not check information sent before the meeting, which may be related to their work demands. It transpired from the response of one mentor that small business mentees may have unrealistic expectations and suffer confusion regarding the role of a mentor.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *I have a very strong mentee in Uganda who has a lot of book knowledge, PhD in Agriculture, but little practical application. She is well read. She needs guidance, but adapts well to the online environment. My mentee in KZN is on another level. She has a derisory knowledge of business, poor numeracy and a poor foundation which has delayed the mentoring process and we run the risk of not reaching our objective with the mentoring programme. If the intent of the mentee is not aligned with the mentoring process and the ultimate intention is not mentoring but, for instance, trying to find access to funding or a wish for you to open doors for them, the relationship can fail....upfront about my role as mentor, otherwise I just become a consultant or business advisor I have gone back to funders of mentoring programmes previously and indicated that a specific mentee rather needs a coach or business advisor. Otherwise it becomes too much of a job for me and it goes beyond my duty as a mentor.*

Mentor E: *Mentees not always checking sent documents before a session and lack of preparation before the session.*

As mentioned by online mentoring field specialist A, corporate employee mentees have a greater responsibility to prepare in advance for online mentoring sessions, especially when session times are pre-booked and the duration of online conversations are limited to fit into a fixed time period. It was also indicated that South African corporate mentees needed a reminder about meeting times, which points to a commitment challenge. The small business online mentoring field specialist noted that more interrelated small business issues have to be covered in a session, which may pose challenges for the mentoring pair if the mentee is not prepared else the objective of the meetings initially set may not be achieved. It further emerged that it is difficult to provide online mentoring based on a corporate mentee's preferences. Additionally, the unethical behavior of student mentees in the USA was problematic since when

using text-based online mentoring methods, the identity of the student cannot be verified. In South Africa this may not be a challenge yet as there are limited use of online mentoring for students.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *One of the big differences between face-to-face mentoring and online mentoring, is that there is a much bigger onus on the mentee to be prepared. It is a challenge to be able to mentor to your mentee's preferences. I think the other challenge that I have found is you have to confirm each and every appointment. You cannot just assume they are going to be there.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *Limitations in respect of what they can cover within a temporal online mentoring slot.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *The online environment can also lead to cheating and dishonesty as the other party is not visible and the identity cannot always be verified. Foreign students have often misused the online environment.*

The ninth sub-theme combines all the mentor-related challenges, as discussed next.

7.4.9 Mentor-related challenges

In SA there seems to be insufficient knowledgeable as well as experienced mentors for small businesses, who should have practical entrepreneurial business experience. As noted by the South African small business online mentoring field specialist (B) regarding unknowledgeable and inexperienced SMME mentors:

It is a problem for SMME mentees to find mentors in the field and connect with multiple mentors who are all specialists in their own fields. Ability to secure online mentors who can address their specific challenges. Would like to challenge the quality of the mentors that we have in the SME space. Because either they've been brought in, or they come from corporate. And the corporate paradigm is not the entrepreneurial paradigm. You have a chartered accountant coming in to mentor a SME and I mean they've got a world of knowledge to bring and a world of expertise and wonderful thinking skills. But the question is, can they ignite those thinking skills in the mentee? SME mentors are not mentors, they are business advisors. And they're not actually going in and working at the level with those entrepreneurs that they should be. I think the other

gap that I see in the SME mentoring space is that there is a lot of volunteer mentoring. You've got people who are giving up of their time and they are wonderful, but they're not qualified.

The third main theme, online mentoring enablers and resulting issues, will be discussed next.

7.5 ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS

Based on the content analysis, the conditions for creating an effective online mentoring environment may address some of the challenges mentioned in the second main theme. The results of the online mentoring enablers can be clustered in three groups: generic, mentee-specific and mentor-specific. The first subtheme, generic online mentoring enablers and resulting issues, are discussed next.

7.5.1 Generic online mentoring enablers

For the purpose of this study, generic online mentoring enablers are those enablers necessary for creating an effective online mentoring environment for the mentoring pair.

7.5.1.1 Establishing a trusting relationship

From the interviews it emerged that in order to establish trust and respect in an online mentoring relationship, there should be clear boundaries and objectives regarding what is intended, and the mentor must show that he or she is reliable, with effective and open communication. It was further indicated that feedback provided after the first meeting could demonstrate that a mentor was reliable, while encouraging the mentee throughout the process and celebrating achievements further contributed toward establishing trust. These comments were made by both the academic supervisor of a doctoral student, and a business consultant for whom interactions may be more frequent, assisting in establishing trust more easily over time. The other mentors involved in online mentoring for global institutions did not specifically mention trust as an online mentoring enabler. It could be that mentee applicants had faith in the well-known global institutions itself and that they regarded the mentor selection process as stringent enough to provide trusted mentors.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *Trust and respect must be established.... usually after first feedback session if they see you are reliable and capable it is easier to earn their trust and respect.*

Mentor C: *The trust relationship is established through clear boundaries and objectives. Effective and open communication and celebration of key milestones through ongoing encouragement plays a key role.*

A female university student mentee suggested that a knowledgeable and problem-solving mentor would be somebody who could be trusted. In addition, the mentor should also consider the mentee's suggestions and ideas. It was interesting to note that only once trust had been established, was there role and responsibility clarification for the mentoring pair. Other female mentees participating in either well-known global online mentoring programmes, or at their workplace, had been allocated a mentor or had self-selected their mentor and therefore trust may not have been an issue and it was therefore not mentioned.

As noted by one female mentee:

Mentee E: *.... learnt to trust my mentor because I found her knowledgeable and she always provided excellent solutions to the challenges experienced. She was very open to my new ideas and information given that my study was about. Creating a relationship of trust clearly defining roles and responsibilities for both the mentor and the mentee.*

Two of the online mentoring field specialists (corporate and university students) identified personality as important in the development of a trusting relationship. The corporate online mentoring specialist (A) emphasised the importance of having skilled mentors as well as the use of face-to-face or Skype conversations from the first meeting to fast track the development of a trusting relationship. With university student mentees, the mentor leadership style had to be considered and mentees should have been afforded the opportunity to provide input into what they expected of the online mentoring process so as to foster a trusting relationship.

As mentioned by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *I think the really good mentor is one who could foster that relationship connection. It depends on the personality and the skill of the mentor. The mentor has to work a lot harder in the beginning stages of an online relationship and if you do the*

additional work, you can establish trust quite quickly. When you first start off, you must use visual so that you create the connection. I think you create a connection a lot faster with visual than you do with any of the other media.

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Must identify the personality style of the mentee that you are going to deal with. A demanding/authoritarian leadership style can clarify roles and set boundaries from the onset. Has found that a bottoms-up collaboration with the mentees and management works best. The developer of a programme must be in consultation with students from the onset.*

Another generic mentoring enabler mentioned by participants was having flexible meeting schedules, as discussed next.

7.5.1.2 Flexible meeting schedules

Some mentors suggested that they were flexible in scheduling meetings. They took into consideration time-zone differences, when mentees had internet access for Skype sessions, and the fact that – if employed – the interactions would take place after business hours. It varied from mentor to mentor, but some mentors were satisfied with planning their work around the scheduled online mentee interactions. The two mentors (A and C) who did not mention time-related online mentoring enablers possibly used more written email interactions where timing is not of the essence.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *Most of the sessions take place after hours as both mentor and mentee are engaged during the day with other commitments.*

Mentor D: *Connect the moment the mentee has access to internet and I do not mind fitting in with their time schedule.*

Mentor E: *.....timing of the sessions to suit both mentor and menteeeven time-zone differences did not present problem.... scheduling of sessions improved my work productivity as I planned everything around the sessions and managed to get more work done.*

Mentees regard meeting flexibility as taking into consideration time zone differences, 24/7 access and fitting in around their work schedules. Corporate female mentees (D and F) indicate that time-zone differences can be overcome and that continual access to the mentor is important. There was some appreciation of meeting reminders from a global online mentoring programme administrator. It was interesting to note that

mentees (A, B and E) from African countries did not mention meeting flexibility as an online mentoring enabler. It may point to living the “Africa time” way, or that perhaps their need for mentoring access was so great that they were more accommodating in fitting in with the global mentors’ time schedule.

As noted by the female mentees:

Mentee C: *Flexibility in terms of the number of sessions per month.*

Mentee D: *To always have access to a mentor.....*

Mentee F: *The time difference has been challenging but we worked around it by taking into account the time zones etcetera. I have also been slack in the last months as I have been so busy but I have to make an effort to prioritise the mentoring. Constant reminders by Cherie Blair help in this regard.*

Only the South African online mentoring field specialists regarded flexible meeting schedules as important for effective online mentoring. The corporate online mentoring specialist (A) suggested meeting flexibility should be mentee-driven with the mentor accommodating mentees’ time schedules, even on an after hours basis. A booking system for small business mentees such as on the South African small business field specialist’s online mentoring platform, where the small business mentee can book a session in the time slot provided, can result in overcoming meeting scheduling problems. The university online mentoring specialist (C) did not make suggestions, but it could be assumed that university students from one institution would be in the same time-zone, making it easier to arrange online meetings.

As noted by the South African online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *I set up specific appointments. My diary is busy so I’ve got to have my diary organised and I work around that. I work flexibly before and after hours, but I think that is the nature of online mentoring. Make sure when appointments get set, they get set in the right time-zones. I was mentored on the Cherie Blair Mentoring Programme and my mentor was in Iceland. It is up to the mentor to make sure that the mentee is comfortable in their time-zone and it is up to the mentor to adapt as the mentor’s supposed to be the more emotionally intelligent.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *We are working on a system to track e-mentee use of the system (for example, track hours of use and lapses to determine trends). This system will also force that all or most e-mentoring transactions/exchanges are done via the portal. Developing a booking system where the online mentee can book a specific slot with an online mentor based on the hours indicated as available by the online mentor.*

Another generic mentoring enabler mentioned by participants was the training offered to the mentoring pair.

7.5.1.3 Training offered

From the interviews, it transpired that training can be offered to assist the mentoring pair to get familiar with the online mentoring process or to assist them in areas of expertise they are lacking. Some training may be attended by mentees alone while other training may be only for mentors. Some global institutions offer extensive orientation training for the mentoring pair to prepare them for the online mentoring process. All the mentors confirmed the importance of training for mentees in the area of expertise in which they wished to develop. Even training for mentors was regarded desirable by two mentors. Training was often provided as part of the global online mentoring institution's programme (small business mentoring) or as part of the internal training courses of the company in which mentoring was provided (mentoring in manufacturing). The content and extent of the training differed for global online mentoring institutions whereby mentees could be required to attend online workshops on specific topics with assignments, or even attend bootcamps organised at an off-site venue. It further transpired that training was compulsory under the programmes offered by the tertiary education institutions, global mentoring institutions, and the manufacturing company, and of a voluntary nature for the mentees from the internationally-accredited business coach and mentor (E) who referred mentees to other reputable mentors and colleagues in his network should they need specific training assistance.

As noted by the mentors:

- Mentor A: *Both mentors and mentees need to be prepared for the online mentoring process by receiving training before and during the relationship and have to attend compulsory research methodology workshops. Mentees are advised to also attend emotional intelligence workshops as they are often academically strong, but lack emotional strength and time-management workshops.*
- Mentor B: *The Tony Elumelo Foundation has an online training portal for mentees and these mentees are given specific dates in which assignments must be completed. Mentees must also attend a bootcamp in Nigeria where training is conducted. They have off-site workshops with the mentees and also some of the mentors attending, to discuss the challenges experiences, etcetera, and how to deal with it during the next cycle.*
- Mentor C: *Throughout the mentoring sessions, recommendations are made to superiors for further development of the mentees. Mentees have to attend compulsory internal courses such as safety and environmental, communication, developing and managing best practices, etcetera.*
- Mentor D: *Mentees receive training under the YALI Programme on academic coursework, leadership training and networking.*
- Mentor E: *If we identify certain areas where training could assist, we would advise the mentee. It's up to the mentee to decide....prefer to refer mentees to other reputable mentors and colleagues in the network to assist them with their needs.*

The female university student mentee referred to the importance of having orientation and training sessions on how to develop online mentoring relationships and overcoming challenges. The other female mentees did not specifically mention the importance of receiving training. It must be noted that these female mentees either participated in a global online mentoring programme that included training as part of the programme orientation (see Mentor D's comment above), or had undergone corporate employee mentoring where they may not be in need of training, but the practical execution of the training they have received.

As noted by one female mentee:

- Mentee E: *Organising orientation and training sessions on techniques to begin and enhance a mentoring relationship and overcoming the challenges is essential.*

One of the South African small business online mentoring specialists (B) regarded formal training for small business mentors as compulsory, especially if the mentor

received payment for it. The mentoring specialist further recommended that mentors continuously develop themselves professionally.

As noted by the small business South African online mentoring specialist:

There needs to be more formal training for mentors and there needs to be continuous professional development. It should become mandatory, especially if you are a paid mentor.

Another generic mentoring enabler mentioned by participants was how to express emotions in the online environment, as discussed next.

7.5.1.4 Expressing emotions online

Both the online mentoring field specialists observed the role that social media platforms can play in expressing emotions in online mentoring. However, the quality of the emoticons differed among the different communication tools used. The corporate online mentoring specialist (A) regarded Skype and BBM as having the most impressive emoticons, but expressed frustration at the WhatsApp emoticons available. The university professor online mentoring specialist (C) referred to the importance of using interactive and social communication media for students as a condition for effective online mentoring.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *From a mentoring point of view, the quality of the emoticons on BBM are far superior than the ones on WhatsApp. I find that Skype and BBM have the most stunning emotion. I get very frustrated with the WhatsApp ones.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Make use of interactive/social communication media for communication.*

Another generic mentoring enabler mentioned by participants was that the technology infrastructure should be in place to ensure effective online mentoring, as discussed next.

7.5.1.5 Technology infrastructure readiness

All female mentees mentioned that access to technology was essential to engage in online mentoring. According to mentees, technology enablers related to the ease of

access to Wi-Fi technology, reliable internet connection, email service connection and the cost of connection. Participating in global online mentoring programmes could allow cheaper telephone connectivity rates in some countries. The use of mobile phones instead of a computer, to assist with connectivity issues, was suggested by one female mentee to ensure wider online mentoring access.

As noted by the female mentees:

Mentee A: *....look for spaces where there is Wi-Fi and a good environment to work.*

Mentee B: *....tried to overcome by using my mobile phone.*

Mentor C: *When we had dicey connections, she would telephonically call me as she had cheap telephone rates.*

Mentee E: *To effectively participate in online mentoring both supervisors and mentees need to have easy access to technology, such as a computer, a reliable internet connection, and email service, among other. Access to technology for the mentor and mentee is very essential.*

Mentee F: *A stable internet connection is essential. I do think that I found the process a lot easier as I am familiar and comfortable with technology. I would imagine that an individual that does not work daily on Skype and with technology would find the process a bit more daunting. I knew that communication could be an issue in this type of mentoring situation, but was well prepared technologically because of my career background.*

Both South African online mentoring field specialists providing platforms for online mentoring agreed on the importance of technology infrastructure readiness for effective online mentoring. The South African-specific technology issues that required attention included the broadband consistency and the availability of efficient technology to enable online connectivity. The corporate online mentoring specialist recommended the use of a technology checklist to ensure that technology was in place and operational prior to the online meeting, especially when using Skype. Online mentors should also confirm that the mentee's technology is functional prior to the meeting time. However, it remains the mentee's responsibility to ensure that technology readiness requirements are met. It was suggested that as SA has few operational online mentoring platforms, effective global online mentoring programmes should be used as a benchmark with regard to technology infrastructure. The small business online mentoring specialist recommended that the online mentoring platform should be available 24/7 but warned that peak online mentoring times occur between 18H00 to 21H00. This could lead to system overload.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *One of the big differences between face-to-face mentoring and online mentoring, is that there is a much bigger onus on the mentee to be prepared. When you have a mentoring conversation, you have a contracting session as part of the mentoring, you almost need to have a pre-contracting conversation, which is about getting technology ready and you need to be prepared with technology checklists and assist to make sure that technology is right.... the technology paradigm in South Africa with broadband not being consistent. We have to look at what the successful online mentoring programmes are doing worldwide. From the communication point of view you've got to make sure that everything is working. With online mentoring, you need to make sure that you are set up with the best technology. I particularly like to have a visual component. We have a technology checklist that we go through. If you are using Skype, you've got to do test scores, you've got to check your video, you've got to check your microphone to make sure the technology is working beforehand and then also, to check in with the mentee to make sure their technology is up-and-running before the session.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *In the absence of any benchmarks to compare to, we have developed a protocol that our e-mentoring platform should be available to our SMME clientele at any time. The only limitation is that the mentoring will not always be live and that live mentoring support will be availed in predefined timeslots. We experience the peak of e-mentoring to happen from 18H00 to 21H00.*

Clear objectives and relationship boundaries were also identified as a specific online mentoring enabler as discussed next.

7.5.1.6 Clear objectives and relationship boundaries

How the mentors set the tone for the online mentoring relationship was considered important for an effective online mentoring relationship. It was suggested by two mentors (B and C) involved in corporate and small business mentoring respectively, that there should be a mentoring plan clearly indicating the intended objectives, meeting session structure, and clarification on the role of the mentor so that no

unrealistic expectations developed. It may be that the other mentors assumed either that online mentoring programmes typically have a clear structure and guidelines regarding roles and boundaries, or that they are involved in global mentoring programmes with these conditions set in place in their online mentoring agreement.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *... the borders of the relationship be established from the onset and a clear structure and a mentoring plan should be in place...upfront about my role as mentor.*

Mentor C: *...always make sure the mentee understands through reinforcing.....established through clear boundaries and objectives.*

Two online mentoring field specialists providing platforms for corporate and student online mentoring (A and C) agreed that the mentees must be clear at the onset of each meeting regarding the intended outcomes. The dedication of the university student mentee seemed essential to the outcome of the mentoring process.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *So discussion at the beginning of the meeting to say what is the focus of the session going to be, is important.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *The mentee must be compliant and dedicated to the outcome intended.*

It was further found that the programme and meeting duration and frequency are influential in effective online mentoring, as discussed next.

7.5.1.7 Desirable programme and meeting duration and frequency

Three mentors (A, B and C) indicated that there were certain time frames set for the duration of the programmes. It was confirmed by the university professor supervisor (A) that for post-doctoral studies such as a PhD degree, the online mentoring programme is usually longer than a face-to-face programme as it is linked to the time necessary for the university study mentee to complete the study. All the non-education online mentoring programmes that these mentors are involved in seemed to vary in length from two to six months for corporate career development, or from six to twelve months for small business development.

It appeared that meeting sessions of approximately one hour was common practice, although could be of a shorter duration (30 minutes) but is generally determined by the needs of the mentee. Monthly meetings seem to be the norm (A, B, C and D) except for one mentor (E) who conducted weekly online mentoring meetings with corporate employees.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *Relationship continued as long as their studies lasted, longer than a face-to-face mentoring relationship - on average about three to four years. Session time depended on the need of the student at the specific time but we chatted on Skype at least once a month for 30 minutes.*

Mentor B: *Twelve month process, but it can be longer due to the lack of basic business skills and knowledge of the mentee which can lead to a delay. We meet once a month for an hour.*

Mentor C: *...try to keep it under an hour....sometimes mentoring goes beyond the job boundaries into life skills and personal discussions..... whole process takes approximately two months, but some types of relationships can be much longer.*

Mentor D: *Six months, one hour long, once per month.*

Mentor E: *Six months, 24 sessions of an hour long. I do periods of 4 months as well.*

All the online mentoring field specialists agreed that the duration of the online mentoring programme and the meeting frequency was important for creating an effective online mentoring environment. The two South African online mentoring field specialists (A and B) suggested that both corporate and small business online mentoring relationships are not locked into a specified duration on their business platforms. They further indicated that the intended objectives drive the duration of the mentoring relationship. It was, however, acknowledged that the duration of online mentoring for corporate employees were shorter in nature than for small business online mentoring. The position of the corporate employee also seemed to determine the duration of the online mentoring relationship with lower level employees having shorter online mentoring relationships.

According to the South African online mentoring field specialists, there is no recommended duration for mentoring conversations as it depends on the needs of the mentee and can vary from 15 to 90 minutes. However, sessions longer than one hour seem to be regarded as unproductive. The university professor emphasised the

importance of having regular meetings, which points to ensuring that the mentor keeps the mentee motivated.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *I am very comfortable with around ten sessions. When you're dealing with a slightly lower level... because at a lower level you are actually dealing with more functional stuff and there it can be from three to six sessions. And then you can have a journey with someone that literally goes years, but I'd say those are probably the two and they are determined by level. I think it also comes down to the style of the mentoring. I use it a lot in-between sessions and normally as a post-mentoring follow-up, because normally during the sessions, we arrange to send links etcetera to mentees. It comes down to a personal approach rather than an organisational structural requirement. My corporate meetings are taking an hour. I find that if you go over an hour, it can get a bit tiring. When you first start, 45 mins seems like a long time but I think I've settled down comfortably into an hour. I like having my sessions every two weeks. I find once a month is too far apart.*

Online mentoring field specialist B: *The relationship is open-ended and could be extended should the mentoring objectives not be met. Typical physical mentoring relationships could last for between 3-6 months depending on the attainment of the mentoring objectives. The same would apply to the online mentoring relationship. The session varies depending on complexity of content covered, but could range from fifteen mins (check in) to ninety mins (detailed content discussion)*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *There must be steady interactions between the mentoring pair.*

Multiple contact methods can contribute to effective online mentoring, as discussed next.

7.5.1.8 Using multiple contact methods

All mentors recommended the use of more than one online communication method. Skype and emails seemed to be favoured by four of the mentors (A, B, D and E). Mentors also suggest using several other voice chat methods such as telephone calls,

telephone conferencing, voice messages, WhatsApp calls and SMS and WhatsApp text messaging.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *WhatsApp, emails and sms. Skype came only a bit later, but no chat rooms and a lot of telephone conferences from Telkom. At first Skype was difficult because of interruptions, but now stable connections.*

Mentor B: *....use emails, telephonic conversations, sms, Skype.*

Mentor C: *Other than the phone calls, also sms, emails or voice messages.... communication not structured in a particular format, but rather focuses on the openness and objectives of the mentoring process.*

Mentor D: *Skype and WhatsApp calls.*

Mentor E: *Mentors should use multiple methods of contact in communicating with mentees as a way to reduce the misinterpretation. Skype and email, but I am exploring video-conferencing as well. More and more of my colleagues are starting to use video-conferencing.*

All the online mentoring field specialists confirmed their preference in using a combination of online communication methods. They further motivated the use of multiple contact methods by indicating the importance of having contingency plans in the case of malfunctioning equipment. The online contact methods favoured seemed to be video-conferencing like Skype, with the additional use of webinar platforms for the South African online mentoring field specialists for corporate employees and small businesses online mentoring. One South African corporate online mentoring field specialist (A) acknowledged the changing role of online mentoring contact methods and mentioned that using mobile apps had become increasingly important and that there was a move toward the use of mobile WhatsApp text messaging, which may eventually replace email conversation.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *I am using two types of video conversation. The first one is Skype which is probably the most popular one and then I use a webinar platform, called Zoom. I do use other webinars, but like Webex. It's a big corporate portal so very often when I'm working with someone in corporate, they like working on Webex. On a text basis, you'd be surprised how much mentoring you can do over WhatsApp. WhatsApp and it used*

to be BBM, but WhatsApp has basically taken over as the platform. I find we are definitely moving more to a WhatsApp conversation rather than email. Mobile apps have got a lot bigger....and then also have alternatives available. Be on top of your technology and ensure you have contingency plans. If your laptop is not working, you've got your iPad and if your iPad is not working, you've got your iPhone. That is where things like your mobile comes in and it's the kind of preparation that you are putting into your mentoring that saysit doesn't matter that I have loadshedding, I am actually set up and I'm ready to go.

Online mentoring field specialist B: *Online mentoring is done via our website www.mentorfind.biz as well as Skype and Zoom webinar sessions.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *One video conference per week and I use Skype and email.*

The importance of using a hybrid mentoring approach, are discussed next.

7.5.1.9 Hybrid mentoring approach

Two mentors (A and C) suggested that for effective online mentoring, an initial face-to-face meeting was required, whereas another mentor (E) recommended using a hybrid model of both face-to-face and online mentoring throughout the duration of the relationship. It was emphasised that face-to-face interactions should be limited, with most interactions taking place online. Two mentors (B and D) seemed to conduct only online mentoring as the global online mentoring programmes they are involved in required no face-to-face interactions. It must be noted that face-to-face mentoring may not be feasible if mentees reside in other countries. Mentor C conducted corporate employee mentoring with easy access to mentees in their work place.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *Initial face-to-face and then regular contact throughout the programme by means of online communication and then meet face-to-face at the conclusion of programme to wrap up.*

Mentor B: *No physical meeting with mentee.*

Mentor C: *....try to visit the mentee workplace to understand the difficulties and challenges. The face-to-face mentoring becomes more personal with some mentee's feeling slightly nervous. There is a big difference in online mentoring and face-to-face mentoring. It is less intimate online which is very difficult to overcome if you do not meet the mentee face-to-face initially.*

Mentor D: *I do not do any face-to-face in my online mentoring programmes with YALI.*

Mentor E: *.... I find more and more a hybrid model to be used ...where face-to-face is supplemented with emails, Skype and video-conferencing.*

Two online mentoring field specialists (B and C) confirmed the need for a hybrid approach with face-to-face mentoring supplementing online mentoring. However, the South African small business online mentoring specialist (B) noted that the value of face-to face interactions should not be underestimated when mentoring small businesses requiring skills transfer and recommended online mentoring for non-financial business support, with face-to-face mentoring when small businesses are in need of technical skills. However, when mentoring university students in the USA, face-to-face interactions are not perceived as necessary. Corporate mentees are usually introduced by management to the contracted mentor, thus having an initial face-to-face meeting.

As noted by online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist B: *I don't believe that e-mentoring will replace traditional mentoring but rather complement it. We still find immense value in personal contact during mentoring as a lot of skills transfer also happens through more in situ interventions. Each of these approaches have their pros and cons. We use a hybrid approach, at present we use e-mentoring mostly for post loan support to enterprises in the rural Eastern Cape. We use traditional mentoring with clientele (SMMEs) who have specific and more technical business development needs which require face to face interactions.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Face-to-face contact plays a small role. Augment online mentoring with face- to-face contact.*

Mentor specific online mentoring enablers were identified by participants, as discussed next.

7.5.2 Mentor-specific online mentoring enablers

The following issues were identified as requirements that mentors must meet to create an effective online mentoring environment for mentees.

7.5.2.1 Having knowledgeable and experienced mentors

It transpired that it was important to have mentors who have the necessary qualifications and practical experience, as well as adequate knowledge, to provide good feedback to mentees. Having previous online experience was also regarded important for effective online mentoring. Two mentors (D and E) did not provide information regarding this enabling condition for effective online mentoring, which could be due to the fact that both had been involved in mentoring for a considerable time.

As noted by some mentors:

Mentor A: *....as a mentor you must have significant knowledge to provide the mentees with good guidance and proper feedback...especially in the online environment. Everybody wants to be involved in online mentoring, but both mentor and mentee need qualifications and experience.*

Mentor B: *My experience helped in overcoming all of these challenges....have extensive knowledge and practical experience.*

Mentor C: *The mentor must know what he is doing and must be experienced.*

The female mentees appreciated mature mentors not related to their work place, who were knowledgeable (wise), inspirational, and had the practical industry experience which they themselves were lacking. Most importantly, mentors had to be able to assist in solving workplace problems. The two female mentees who did not comment on the importance of having knowledgeable and experienced mentors, may have taken it for granted that it was a mentor selection requirement for the youth leadership online mentoring programme they are involved in.

As noted by the female mentees:

Mentee C: *I appreciated tapping into the wisdom of someone unconnected in my world of work, which had experience in a skill that I needed to develop and knew how to overcome the challenges experienced.*

- Mentee D: *To always have access to practical advice. His maturity, experience in the field and insight played a vital role.*
- Mentee E: *Match the mentor's areas of interest with those of the mentee. I found her knowledgeable and she always provided excellent solutions to challenges experienced. She used her own experience to inspire me.*
- Mentee F: *Since my mentor is part of the same industry, she understands the challenges and issues I face.*

It was interesting to note that none of the online mentoring field specialists mention knowledgeable and experienced mentors as a condition for effective online mentoring. The reason for this may be that since the two South African specialists provide online mentoring platforms for corporates and small business mentoring respectively, they have control over the mentor selection process. At the US university, lecturers would be regarded as adequately knowledgeable to mentor students.

7.5.2.2 Having mentors with exceptional personal qualities

Three of the female mentees (A, B and E) considered mentors with personal qualities such as to be approachable, transparent, caring, encouraging in feedback provided, and inspirational, with the same passion and goals as the mentee, to be vital for online mentoring. It was interesting to note that these responses were forthcoming from the female mentees with the least amount of working experience of the six female mentees interviewed. The mentor's commitment and belief in, and continual support of the mentee, were particularly mentioned by the female university student mentee. It was also noted that information clarification prior to engaging with the mentor, reduced misunderstandings. The other female mentees may have wished only to obtain business-related information where the personal qualities of the mentor were not as essential as their business experience. As the female university student mentee had sustained a long online mentoring relationship (at least three years), it may have been more important to her that the mentor possessed these exceptional personal qualities when compared to other female mentees involved in shorter online mentoring relationships.

As noted by the female mentees:

- Mentee A: *Mentors being approachable to assist.*

Mentee B: *I do appreciate my mentor because we have similar goals and passions which help us in overcoming the challenges and developing our relationship.*

Mentee E: *She believed in me and showed commitment to help me finish my studies.... her personal quality (transparency and caring) made me overcome that fear always being available and providing encouraging, informed and concise feedback. She used her own experience to inspire me. Incidences of misunderstanding were reduced as I was provided with information regarding warning signs of this prior to engaging with the mentor.*

The online mentoring field specialists made no reference to this online mentoring enabler. As most mentoring is free of charge, it may be assumed that they believe mentors have these special qualities.

Mentee specific online mentoring enablers as identified by participants, are discussed next.

7.5.3 Mentee specific online mentoring enablers

The following issues were identified as requirements that mentees must meet to create an effective online mentoring environment for them.

7.5.3.1 Continuous mentee commitment

Three mentors (A, D and E) confirmed the importance of continuous mentee commitment for an effective online mentoring relationship. The self-employed corporate mentor (D) emphasised that commitment must be obtained by both parties (mentoring pair), while another mentor suggested that mentees obtain peer support from other mentees located close by. It was also important to explain the mentoring process to mentees so that they are clear regarding why they have opted for online mentoring.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor A: *Two mentees from the same city can also help one another to stay committed.*

Mentor D: *Dedication and commitment from both parties to meet the challenges with innovative solutions.*

Mentor E: *Mentees must understand the process of mentoring and the reason why they are part of the programme. Otherwise they will just go through the motions and a lot of time will be wasted. The mentee must buy into the process.....this is critical.*

Two online mentoring field specialists stressed the importance of ensuring that mentees are committed to the online mentoring process. Commitment is seen by the corporate online mentoring field specialist (A) as mentees who are keen to develop themselves (A), while by the academic university professor (C) it is considered dedication by both parties to achieve the intended outcome. It can be assumed that when university student mentees sign up for online mentoring, it shows their commitment to work towards that which they intend to change.

As noted by the online mentoring field specialists:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *... it is about finding out whether there is common ground and whether the mentee is ready and committed for the journey. I will work with anybody who is committed to their own development. My time is way too valuable to waste on somebody who is not interested.*

Online mentoring field specialist C: *Must get all the participants to buy into the programme.*

The mentors also mentioned that previous mentoring experience can be conducive to effective online mentoring, as discussed next.

7.5.3.2 Previous mentoring experience

The South African corporate online mentors remarked that those mentees with previous mentoring experience found it easier to undergo online mentoring, which indicates that the conventional mentoring experience may better prepare them to become online mentees.

As noted by the corporate South African online mentoring field specialist:

Online mentoring field specialist A: *The previous experience that mentees had with mentoring.*

In addition to the previously mentioned online mentoring enablers, the SA mentors mentioned online mentoring conditions specific to creating an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa, as discussed next.

7.6 SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTRY SPECIFIC ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS

From the interviews with the mentors it emerged that South Africa can learn from other global online mentoring institutions' online mentoring programmes such as the YALI and Tony Elumelo programmes (mentors B and D), which necessitate infrastructure for effective programme delivery. Mentor E mentioned that SA should explore the potential for implementing online mentoring to service rural communities. It is acknowledged by one mentor (B) that South African mentors are utilised for global mentoring while their expertise is most needed in SA for those who cannot access online mentoring. Mentor B recommended private and public partnerships in SA to implement online mentoring programmes, and furthermore suggests that mentees should be provided with constant access to a small business development solutions toolkit such as those provided on the Tony Elumelo programme. The role of the online mentor would subsequently change to guide the mentee in the implementation of the various solutions to small business problems. It is clear that a mentor who participated in this type of programme would need practical experience to assist with the implementation of the various solutions. One mentor (D) acknowledged that there was a need for capital investment in mentoring specific females in SA, but as mentor (E) indicated, there initially needs to be greater awareness of online mentoring through marketing and through promoting the benefits of it to all communities in the country. Unfortunately, marketing and promoting the benefits of online mentoring is of no value if there is no funding available for the necessary infrastructure.

As noted by the mentors:

Mentor B: *We must develop something like the Tony Emulelo Foundation in South Africa. private/public partnership. There is a need. I am a South African woman mentoring other people from other countries while there is such a need in our own country. We do not have the necessary infrastructure in this countrysuch a lot of gaps where a need can be fulfilled. A toolbox of enterprise development solutions and how to's to which the mentee and mentor has access. As in the case of the Tony Elumelo programme; the mentees can access this toolbox and develop themselves and the mentor's role is then to clarify and assist with the understanding and the implementation of the various elements of business.*

Mentor D: *..as we do not have the necessary infrastructure yet to engage in large-scale online mentoring. More capital investment in mentoring for women and making them aware of the advantages associated with this medium.*

Mentor E: *Marketing and promoting the benefits of online mentoring to all communities in South Africa. People do not realise the potential of the online medium, especially to marginalised and rural communities.*

The institutional online mentoring analysis that follows provides insight into how institutions differ regarding the online mentoring process and support offered, as well as what can be regarded as common ground.

7.7 INSTITUTIONAL ONLINE MENTORING ANALYSIS

The process of becoming involved in online mentoring may be the same across institutions, while other processes may differ, with some institutions potentially offering additional support for mentees.

7.7.1 Application procedure

All participants in global online mentoring programmes had to complete an online application (Cherie Blair mentoring programme and Tony Elumelo Foundation). However, the type of information required in the application differed depending on whether for career development or small business development. On the other hand, the YALI programme required mentees to apply for a leadership programme with online mentoring included in the programme. Large businesses that contracted a business consultant to provide online mentoring merely had a meeting to indicate whether or not, and how he or she, could meet the online mentoring needs of the business. These corporate mentees did not need to apply for the programme. The supervisor allocated to a doctoral student automatically became the online mentor for the duration of the study. If a university student mentee, an admission application was completed.

7.7.2 Selection procedure

All institutions required further selection documentation in addition to completing the application form for the selection of potential online mentors or mentees. The reason for this could be linked to the intended outcome of the online mentoring programme, such as whether to undergo mentoring for career advancement or for small business

development. The Cherie Blair Foundation required small business mentors to provide proof of previous mentoring experience (not necessarily online mentoring) while mentees had to provide reasons for participation in the programme as well as their business background information and information about the business performance. The Tony Elumelo Foundation required mentors to present a mentoring case study in a face-to-face manner, or via Skype, clearly outlining the intended outcome. Business consultants had to present their expertise in a meeting with the large business to establish whether the corporate employee mentoring expectations and needs could be met. The corporate employee mentees were merely selected by their managers for participation. Supervisor mentors of doctoral students at academic institutions had to provide proof of their qualifications, previous supervision experience, research field of experience and evidence that they had the capacity to supervise the student before being allocated a student mentee. University student mentees required proof of previous academic achievements which was then considered in relation to the programme requirements applied for.

7.7.3 Matching procedure

It was evident from the interviews, that institutions differed with regard to who completed the matching allocation. The YALI Leadership Programme allowed mentees to choose their mentors from their online data base. The programme administrator of the Cherie Blair global online mentoring institution assigned mentors to mentees. As previously mentioned, there was no matching allocation done for corporate employees when a business consultant was contracted to do the online mentoring, as all selected mentees received mentoring from the same mentor. Qualified and experienced supervisor mentors at academic institutions could express their willingness to supervise a student if they had the capacity. However in the matching allocation, it was acknowledged that there should be sensitivity towards mentee and mentor preferences if possible with regards to age, gender and ethnic affiliation differences, as well as considering the possibility of personality clashes. Some institutions seemed to monitor the online mentoring relationship to effect timeous interventions should any of these problems be experienced.

7.7.4 Conflict resolution process

All institutions to which the participating mentors and female mentees were affiliated through online mentoring had institutional policies, guidelines and procedures guiding conflict resolution in the online mentoring relationship. With some institutions, the conflict resolution process was included in the mentoring agreement signed by both parties at the commencement of the relationship. Although conflict interventions were in place at the educational institution, for this participating mentee it seems more plausible to resolve conflict through timeous self-intervention between the mentoring parties.

7.7.5 Additional support offered

The Tony Elumelo Programme provided small business mentees with access to a small business development solutions toolkit, which could be accessed any time. The role of the online mentor was then to merely guide the mentee in the implementation of the various solutions to small business problems. It was clear that a mentor participating in this type of programme needed practical experience to assist with the implementation of the various solutions.

From the interviews it transpired that all the mentors and one mentee (E) confirmed the importance of training. Some training was a compulsory requirement for becoming involved in the global online mentoring institution, or if an academic doctoral supervisor. The university student mentee referred to the importance of having orientation and training sessions on how to develop a mentoring relationship and overcoming problems experienced. The content and extent of the training differs per institution (see Section 7.5.1.3) but can require attending online workshops on specific topics with assignments, or even bootcamps organised at an off-site venue.

The self-employed internationally-accredited coach and mentor (E) not affiliated to an institution referred mentees to his network of other reputable mentors and colleagues if mentees needed additional assistance.

The global versus South African online mentoring challenges that follows provides insight into which conditions are globally generic and which are specific to South Africa to enable an effective online mentoring environment.

7.8 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL VERSUS SOUTH AFRICAN ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES

The comparative analysis revealed that global challenges could be related to technology in terms of connectivity, access to the internet and the stability of the internet connection. African female mentees may not be familiar with Skype technology, unless working in the IT environment. Working mentors and mentees, in particular females could experience time constraints to conduct the meetings, in addition to time zone differences. However, it could be largely overcome if the communication media chosen for the online environment with a mentee, is conducting email conversations.

Global cultural challenges could be related to the gender and ethnic affiliation of the mentoring pair which may play a role in establishing a trusting relationship. Self-selection of mentors or mentees can assist in overcoming this challenge or by participation in a well-known global online mentoring institution, that operates on an open public platform and is considered as legitimate. This may also be due to the fact that some of the global online mentoring institutions allowed mentees to self-select their mentors.

Other challenges specific to South African mentors are cultural fit challenges if the norms and values are not the same as those of the non-South African female mentees. Additionally, as SA has eleven official languages, mentoring South African female mentees can also be challenging or if a mentee is from Uganda with 32 languages and dialects spoken. It also seems that SA lacks knowledgeable and field specific experienced mentors, both in the online environment and especially for small business mentoring.

7.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative online mentoring interviews with the mentors, mentees and online field specialists were presented in terms of the themes, subthemes and issues that were identified when conducting the content analysis. To begin with information was provided on why mentors and mentees became involved in online mentoring, how the opportunity came about, the type of programme participated in, and the benefits experienced of participation. Three main themes with subthemes transpired from the participant interviews with ensuing issues pertaining to each

subtheme. Based on the content analysis, the three main themes identified were online mentoring processes, online mentoring challenges and online mentoring enablers. In the discussion on the online mentoring processes subthemes identified related to the application-, selection-, matching- and conflict resolution procedures necessary for effective online mentoring. Mentoring challenges related to matching preferences, technology impediments, cultural fit, language differences, lack of mutual trust, meeting scheduling, frequency and duration, the impersonal nature of online mentoring and certain mentee related and mentor-related challenges.

Based on the content analysis, the conditions for creating an effective online mentoring environment addressed some of the challenges alluded to and were clustered in three groups: generic, mentee-specific and mentor-specific enablers. Generic online mentoring enablers were regarded as those enablers necessary for creating an effective online mentoring environment for the mentoring pair and were identified as the establishing of a trusting relationship, having flexible meeting schedules, the offering of training, the expression of emotions online, technology infrastructure readiness, clear objectives and relationship boundaries, desirable programme and meeting duration and frequency, using multiple contact methods and following a hybrid mentoring approach. Mentor specific issues identified as requirements to create an effective online mentoring environment for mentees referred to having knowledgeable and experienced mentors and mentors with exceptional personal qualities. Issues identified as requirements that mentees must meet to create an effective online mentoring environment relate to continuous mentee commitment and previous mentoring experience. In addition to the previously mentioned online mentoring enablers, the online mentoring conditions SA mentors mentioned specifically were referred to. The chapter concluded with the results of the institutional online mentoring analysis using the constant comparative data analysis method which provided insight into how similar or dissimilar institutions approach online mentoring.

The quantitative findings and data analysis of phase three of the study will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 presented the qualitative results of phases one and two of the study. The results of the online mentor and mentee interviews were presented by indicating the emerging themes, subthemes and issues that were identified when conducting the content analysis. A discussion regarding the mentor and mentee involvement in online mentoring, and the benefits achieved, was provided. The three main themes that transpired from the mentors, mentees and online mentoring field specialists' interviews, viz. online mentoring processes, challenges and enablers, were deliberated upon. Using the constant comparative data analysis method, the results of the participants on the online mentoring institutional processes were compared to establish similarities and differences. Furthermore, a comparison was made regarding global versus local (SA) online mentoring challenges.

The purpose of this study was to establish how online mentoring could be used more extensively in South Africa to further the career and small business development of females. Since the results of the qualitative enquiry in Chapter 7 indicate several online mentoring enablers that can assist in increasing the effectiveness of online mentoring, the study further investigates whether these online mentoring enablers can influence mentee achievements, quantitatively. Data analysis for the quantitative phase of this study is presented in the following sections.

The chapter commences with the presentation of the hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements after which the operationalisation of the variables in the hypothesised model is depicted. The response rate to this phase of the enquiry is assessed, followed by the demographic profile of all respondents. Some distinctive demographic information regarding both the corporate employee and small business entrepreneurs, as well as general information pertaining to online mentoring involvement by the respondents, is then presented. This is followed by the results of the EFA and Cronbach's alpha coefficients analysis, employed to determine the validity and reliability of the online measuring instrument. Based on the results of the EFA and reliability tests, the constructs of the hypothesised

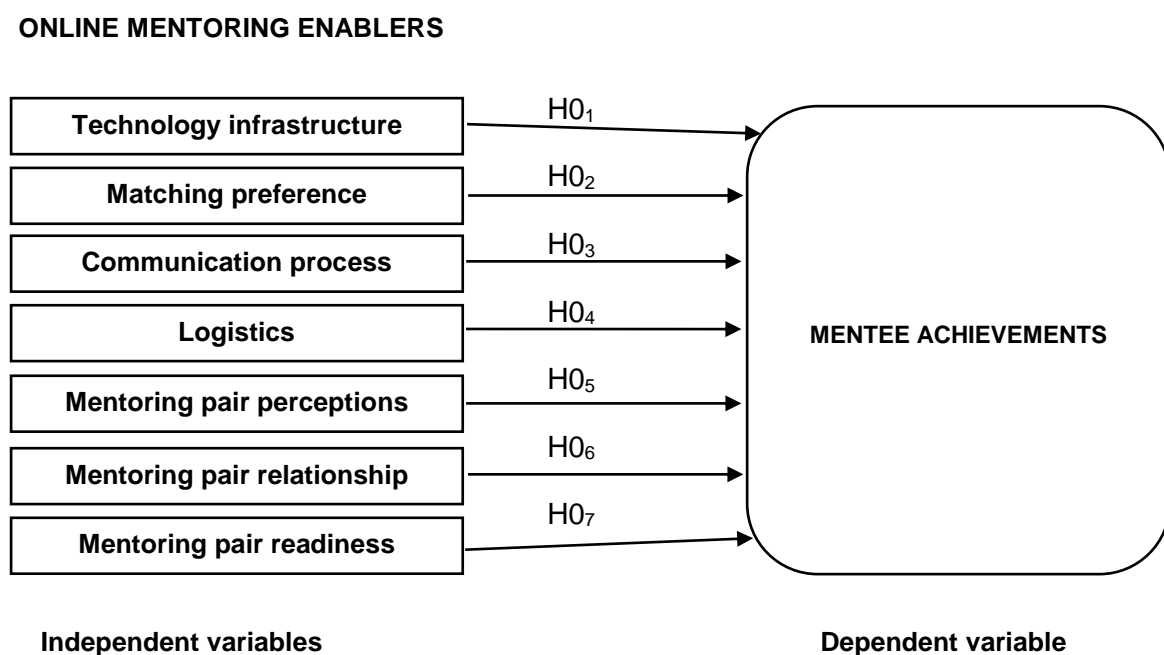
model are re-formulated with particular reference to the re-grouping of items and/or renaming of constructs. Thereafter, the results of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis on the factors that emerged from the EFA and the multi-collinearity diagnostics test are offered to negate high correlations between the independent variables, followed by the results of the multiple regression analysis and the testing of significant relationships. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the results of the descriptive statistics.

The hypothesised model, developed for the purpose of this phase of the study, is presented next.

8.2 HYPOTHESISED MODEL OF ONLINE MENTORING ENABLERS INFLUENCING MENTEE ACHIEVEMENTS

Based on the literature review in Chapter 4, and the results of the qualitative interviews, the following hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements was developed.

Figure 8.1: The proposed hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Based on the hypothesised model, the following null hypotheses were developed:

- H0₁: The technology infrastructure available to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₂: The consideration of the matching preference of the online mentoring pair does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₃: The communication process followed to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₄: The logistics necessary to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₅: The perception of the mentoring pair about online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₆: The ability of the mentoring pair to meet the requirements necessary to develop a relationship during online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.
- H0₇: The readiness of the mentoring pair to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.

Pursuant to the hypothesised model and development of hypotheses, the operationalisation of the variables in the hypothesised model is depicted in Table 8.1 with supporting source references.

Table 8:1: Operationalisation of the variables in the hypothesised model

Constructs	Operationalisation	Sources
Technology infrastructure	The availability of a user-friendly communication interaction channel for online mentoring, accessible through a computer with a quality administrative and technical support system for the storage, retrieval, and maintenance of information and recovery of data as well as fast internet and unreserved email access.	Bierema & Merriam (2002:220-222); Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:280); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:456); Akin & Hilbun (2007: 3,4); Wong & Premkumar (2007:3,6); Williams & Kim (2011:82,83,86); Leck & Wood (2013:104); Pillon & Osmun (2013: 443); Skype (2016a)
Matching preference	The matching of an online mentoring pair, taking into consideration their preference regarding age, gender, ethnic affiliation, and language spoken, while also considering the mentor's extent of previous mentoring experience; educational background; work and career experience; leadership style; personality; and language spoken.	Bierema & Merriam (2002:221); Stokes <i>et al.</i> (2003:12); Cox (2005:403,406); Wong & Premkumar (2007:7,8); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:302); Chun <i>et al.</i> (2012:1071); An & Lipscomb (2013:S32); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:8); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:81); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:1)

Constructs	Operationalisation	Sources
Communication process	The process of choosing an online communication medium with multiple contact methods, which makes it easier for the mentoring pair to convey a logical, detailed clear message (oral or written) on a specific topic, or range of topics, in simple language conveying expression of feelings to avoid misinterpretation or allow elaboration on the meaning of words if necessary, while offering an accurate record-keeping system and a honest reflection on the communication process.	Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:278, 284); Stokes <i>et al.</i> (2003:12); Mueller (2004:58); Dewart <i>et al.</i> (2005:4); Wong & Premkumar (2007:5,7); Homitz & Berge (2008:333); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:292); Fielden & Hunt (2011:346); Williams & Kim (2011:87); Rowland (2012:232); An & Lipscomb (2013:S34,S35); Kyrgidou & Petridou (2013:550); Leck & Wood (2013:104); Panapoulos & Sarri (2013: 217); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:2); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:84)
Logistics	The coordination activity of bringing into contact available mentors and mentees using the same interaction communication method, while taking into consideration available meeting times; time zone differences; frequency of interaction; and response speed, as well as the intended duration of the online mentoring programme.	Samier (2000:92); Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:268); Kasprisin <i>et al.</i> (2003:70); Cull (2006:10); Wong & Premkumar (2007:10); Sarri (2011:723); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:747); Keengwe & Blankson (2013: 263); Leck & Wood (2013:104); Rankhumisi (2013:375, 376); Van der Sijde & Weijam (2013:196); Wood, (2014:12); Weiler <i>et al.</i> (2015:197); Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller (2016:15); MentorNet (2016b)
Mentoring pair perceptions	The perceptions of the mentoring pair regarding cultural differences, the complexity of the online mentoring process, and the challenges and benefits associated with it, as well as how they perceive their similarity in attitude, values and beliefs with regard to developing a close relationship.	Ensher <i>et al.</i> (2003:268); Blunt & Conolly (2006:206); Underhill (2006:303); Wong & Premkumar (2007:7); Allan (2010:606); Allen & Eby (2010:353); Blickle <i>et al.</i> (2010:1902); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:302); Potgieter (2011:58); Fletcher & Mullen (2012:86); Lloyd, Byrne & McCoy (2012:1); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:748); Kent <i>et al.</i> (2015:118)
Mentoring pair relationship	The requirements necessary to fast-track the development of an online mentoring pair relationship through a structured, goal-orientated two-way information exchange within set boundaries, which can bring about mutual trust, agreement on the content of the interactions and offering of emotional support so that the mentoring pair can relate personally to each other.	Headlam-Wells (2004:217); Elkin & Elkin (2008:23); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008: 193); Potgieter (2011:60); Williams & Kim (2011:85,89); Rowland (2012:5); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); Ghosh & Reio (2013:107). Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013: 1,9); Leck & Orser (2013); Leck & Wood (2013:105); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:82)
Mentoring pair readiness	The readiness of the mentoring pair to communicate online by being adequately computer literate and able to use online technology, as well as the willingness of mentees to persevere and implement changes to fast-track their future career or business development.	Bierema & Merriam (2002:221); Stokes <i>et al.</i> (2003:12); Headlam-Wells (2004: :217); Bierema & Hill (2005:557); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:451); Pinho <i>et al.</i> (2005:20); Wong & Premkumar (2007:10); Homitz & Berge (2008:332); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008:193); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:293); Bamford (2011:152); Rowland (2012:3); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); Ghosh & Reio (2013:107); Leck & Wood (2013:101); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014: 80;83); Wood (2014:13); Hu <i>et al.</i> (2016: 110)

Constructs	Operationalisation	Sources
Mentee achievements	The effectiveness of the online mentoring programme, measured by the extent of the fulfilment of the mentee's self-development needs, such as improved self-confidence; interpersonal and workplace skills; innovative thinking; work life control; and increased business performance, as well connections to a professional network to gain real-world knowledge for business application to motivate his/her toward a career path dream or business growth.	Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:446); Ayer (2010:20); Rowland (2012:2); Kyrgidou & Petridou (2013:558); Leck & Wood (2013:101,102,107); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:3); Lee & Mehta (2015:35) Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller (2016:9)

Source: Researcher's own compilation

The following section will discuss the response rate to this phase of the study.

8.3 RESPONSE RATE

As alluded to in Chapter 2 of this study, the analysis and interpretation of data differs for qualitative and quantitative research methods (Struwig & Stead, 2013:155). In Section 2.3.3.4 of the study, it was indicated that 63 respondents completed the online survey; others were not willing to complete the online survey, while yet others were reluctant to divulge information online, which may account for the response rate of 63%.

The demographic profiles of the respondents are presented in the following section together with the distinctive demographic profiles of the corporate employee respondents and small business entrepreneur respondents.

8.4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 8.2 summarises the general demographic profile of the 63 respondents that participated in the online survey on effective online mentoring.

Table 8.2: Summary of the demographic profile of respondents

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	16	25.40
	Female	47	74.60
Age group	26-35	5	7.94
	36-45	23	36.51
	46-55	23	36.51
	56-65	11	17.46
	65+	1	1.58
Highest qualification	Secondary and below	3	4.76
	National certificate	8	12.70
	National diploma	12	19.05
	Bachelor's degree	8	12.70
	Post-graduate degree	32	50.79
Language	English	47	74.60
	Afrikaans	13	20.63
	Xhosa	2	3.17
	German	1	1.60
Ethnicity	Black	2	3.17
	White	55	87.30
	Coloured	2	3.17
	Asian	4	6.36
Management qualifications	Yes	30	47.62
	No	33	52.38
Specific management qualifications	Hospitality	2	3.17
	Marketing and sales	8	12.71
	MBA	8	12.71
	Human resources	3	4.76
	Credit management	2	3.17
	Bank	2	3.17
	Leadership	2	3.17
	Accountant	2	3.17
	Project management	1	1.59
Working experience	6-10 years	5	7.94
	11-15 years	3	4.76
	16+	55	87.30

From Table 8.2 it can be seen that a large proportion of respondents were females (74.6%), which is in line with the objectives of this study. As alluded to in Chapter 2 of this enquiry, information in phase three of the study was canvassed from both female mentees, and mentors (both male and female). Male mentors were included since

they also mentor female mentees and were perceived as able to provide further insight from a male viewpoint. A significant proportion of the sample surveyed was aged between 36-55 years (73.02% cumulatively). A small group of respondents was aged between 26-35 years (7.94%), and 17.46% of respondents were aged between 56-65 years. There were no respondents younger than 25 years. This age distribution may be attributed to the fact that those below the age of 26 years may not have experienced a need for mentoring, or may not have acquired enough experience to be considered for online mentoring in the workplace. With regard to ethnicity, it is evident that most of the respondents were white (87.30%), while English (74.60%) was by far the most dominant home language. Respondents were asked to indicate their highest qualification: more than half (50.79%) held a post-graduate degree, while 12.70%, 19.05% and 12.70% possessed a bachelor's degree, national diploma, or national certificate respectively. A minor percentage (4.76%) of the respondents was educated at secondary school level and below. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents with management qualifications indicated that they had marketing and sales qualifications or a master's degree in business administration (12.7% each respectively). The majority of respondents (87.30%) had more than 16 years working experience while all the respondents reported working at least six years or more.

The demographic profiles of the corporate employee respondents are presented next.

8.4.1 Demographic profile of the corporate employee respondents

Section D of the measuring instrument used in the online survey of this study requested specific demographic information from the corporate employee respondents and is summarised in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3: Summary of demographic profile of corporate employee respondents

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Position in business	Manager	17	65.38
	Employee	6	23.08
	Non-response	3	11.54
Function employed in	Human resources	3	15.78
	Finance	3	15.78
	Administration	3	15.78

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Function employed in	Operations	5	26.32
	Sales	2	10.54
	Legal	2	10.54
	Communications	1	5.26
Number of employees	<5	1	5.26
	6-20	2	10.53
	21-50	1	5.26
	51-200	5	26.32
	>200	10	52.63
Employment sector	Education	3	15.78
	Financial and insurance	6	31.58
	Communication	2	10.54
	Mining	1	5.26
	Transport and travelling	1	5.26
	Construction and engineering	1	5.26
	Social services	1	5.26
	Legal	2	10.54
	Manufacturing	1	5.26
	Marine	1	5.26

From Table 8.3 it can be surmised that most of the corporate respondents (65.3 %) were employed in the position of manager. Respondents were employed across seven business functions, with most of them being in the operations function (26.32%). Some corporate respondents were also employed in the functions of human resources, finance or administration (15.78%) each respectively. The respondents were mostly employed in the financial and insurance industry (31.58%), followed by the education (15.78%), communication and legal profession (10.54% each respectively). More than half (52.63%) of the respondents were employed in large businesses with more than 200 employees or in medium-sized businesses (26,32%) with between 51-200 employees. The demographic profiles of the small business entrepreneur respondents are presented next.

8.4.2 Demographic profile of the small business entrepreneur respondents

Section E of the measuring instrument used in the online survey of this study requested specific demographic information from the small business entrepreneur respondents and is summarised in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4: Summary of demographic profile of small business entrepreneur respondents

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Family business	Yes	13	35.14
	No	24	64.86
Years in existence	<1	1	2.70
	1-5	9	24.32
	6-10	12	32.44
	11-15	9	24.32
	>16	6	16.22
Form of ownership	Sole trader	6	16.67
	Partnership	3	8.33
	Close corporation	10	27.78
	Private company	13	36.11
	Trust	4	11.11
	Non-response	1	1.60
Number of employees	<5	25	67.57
	6-20	7	18.92
	21-50	5	13.51
Business activity	Manufacturing	2	5.41
	Retail	2	5.41
	Service	33	89.18
Business sector	Education	9	25.00
	Health	5	13.88
	Financial and insurance	2	5.56
	Communication	4	11.11
	Tourism	1	2.78
	Construction and engineering	4	11.11
	Social services	1	2.78
	Business consulting	6	16.67
	Legal	2	5.55
	Graphic design	1	2.78
	Arts and crafts	1	2.78
	Non-response	1	1.60
Area located	Central business district	13	35.14
	Residential area	21	56.76
	Small shopping complex	1	2.70
	Industrial	1	2.70
	Farm/agricultural land	1	2.70
Target market	General public	2	5.41
	Businesses	12	32.43
	Both general public and businesses	23	62.16

It is evident from Table 8.4 that most of the small business entrepreneur respondents (64.86%) were not operating as a family business. A significant proportion of the small businesses (72.98%) were well-established for a greater-than-five-year period, while a smaller percentage (24.32%) had been operating for between one and five years, and eleven and fifteen years respectively. Only 16.22% of the small businesses had been in operation for more than sixteen years. The most popular form of ownership was a private company (36.11%), followed by a close corporation (27.78%), sole trader (16.67%), trust (11.11%) and partnership (8.33 %).

Most of the businesses (67.57%) were micro businesses with less than five employees while 18.92% were very small businesses with between six and twenty employees; only 13.51% were small business with between 21-50 employees. Most of the business activity was services orientated (89.18%) and most businesses operated in the education and business consulting sectors. A smaller percentage of small businesses operated in the health (13.88%), communication (11.11%) and construction and engineering (11.11%) sectors respectively. Most of the small businesses were located in residential areas (56.76%) with a smaller percentage located in the central business district (35.1%), a small shopping complex, an industrial area or on a farm (2.70% each respectively). The target markets of the small businesses were largely both the general public and businesses (62.16%), while a smaller percentage (32.43%) selling only to businesses, and only 5.41% selling to the general public.

The following section will present some general information regarding the respondents.

8.5 RESULTS OF GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING RESPONDENTS

Table 8.5 summarises the general information obtained from the sixty-three respondents in the online survey on the mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements. As is evident in Table 8.5, 58.73% of the respondents had been previously involved in mentoring in the role of a mentee, while 39.68% had previously acted as mentors. Only one respondent had previously acted as both a mentor and mentee.

Table 8.5: Results of general information regarding respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Role	Mentor	25	39.68
	Mentee	37	58.73
	Both	1	1.59
Type	Corporate	26	41.27
	Small business	37	58.73
Online communication method used	Skype	43	68.25
	Email	41	65.08
	WhatsApp	26	41.27
	SMS	26	41.27
	Video conferencing	22	34.92
	Telephone	15	23.81
	Face-to-face	7	11.11
	Ms Lync	7	11.11
Type of support	Emotional	31	49.21
	Social	21	33.33
	Business	58	92.06
	Career progress	53	84.13
	Personal development	2	3.17
	Networking	1	1.58

More than half the respondents were small business entrepreneurs (58.7%), while 41.27% were corporate employees. Skype (68.25%) and email (65.08%) received the highest rate of recurrence with regard to the preferred online communication method used followed by WhatsApp and SMS with 41.27%, video conferencing (34.92%), telephone (23.81%) and Ms Lync (11.11%). It was interesting to note that 11.11% of the respondents indicated that face-to-face communication was their preferred method. Most respondents believed online mentoring should provide them with business (92.06%) and career progress support (84.13%) with a smaller percentage also indicating emotional (49.21%) and social support (33.33%). Few respondents expect networking support (1.58%).

The following section discusses the results of the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument used in this phase of the study.

8.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to the data to establish the construct validity of the measuring instrument used in phase three of the study. EFA refers to the procedures for exploring factors underlying observed variables for cases without prior

knowledge of the factors that explain the variables (Adachi, 2016:175). EFA is thus used when a researcher wants to discover the number of factors influencing variables and to analyse which variables ‘go together’ in an attempt to uncover complex patterns by exploring the dataset and testing predictions (Yong & Pearce, 2013:80). Eigenvalues were calculated to determine which of the extracted constructs were to be retained, with those extracts with an Eigenvalue above 1.0 being retained (Solanas, Manolov, Leiva & Richards, 2011:34). Factor loadings of greater than 0.5, as well as those that loaded onto one construct, were viewed as significant for establishing an indication of construct validity.

All constructs should have at least three retained items as a lesser number is generally regarded as a weak and unstable construct and so were disregarded in this study (Costello & Osborne, 2005:5). Items with a factor loading of 0.5 or higher that cross-loaded onto another item, were also disregarded (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:594). The retained constructs were subsequently assessed for reliability by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients (α), and an $\alpha > 0.7$ was deemed to be acceptable for the present study (George & Mallery, 2003:231).

Table 8.6 presents the factor matrix structure for the variables.

Table 8.6: Factor matrix for the variables

Items	READ	DEMO	CHAR	FAC	COMM	PER	REL	ACH
B1	0.364	0.123	0.250	-0.166	0.081	-0.192	-0.213	0.315
B2	0.117	0.232	0.074	-0.105	0.267	-0.101	-0.459	0.106
B3	0.836	0.0386	-0.075	-0.016	0.044	0.009	0.039	0.028
B4	0.740	0.015	0.087	-0.057	0.063	0.083	0.058	0.193
B5	0.352	-0.086	0.122	0.171	0.182	-0.353	-0.240	0.396
B6	0.494	-0.104	0.003	0.014	-0.130	0.20	-0.202	0.426
B7	0.292	-0.180	0.344	-0.016	0.265	-0.012	0.130	0.225
B8	0.529	0.212	0.160	-0.153	0.278	-0.060	-0.027	0.193
B9	0.084	0.754	0.101	0.066	0.013	0.142	-0.056	0.091
B10	0.137	0.665	0.164	-0.007	-0.039	0.0622	-0.064	0.165
B11	0.012	0.705	0.018	0.095	0.162	-0.048	-0.077	-0.110
B12	0.343	0.274	0.537	-0.043	0.094	0.069	0.032	0.103
B13	0.345	0.459	0.411	-0.019	-0.207	0.122	-0.036	0.056
B14	0.080	0.268	0.685	0.229	-0.207	0.087	-0.053	0.086
B15	0.035	0.271	0.472	0.078	0.145	0.026	0.089	-0.113
B16	-0.022	-0.014	0.531	0.328	0.046	0.042	0.124	-0.198
B17	-0.021	-0.005	0.504	0.522	0.277	0.038	-0.061	-0.032
B18	0.069	-0.046	0.330	0.383	0.027	0.086	-0.415	-0.042
B19	0.005	-0.105	0.695	0.041	0.322	-0.009	-0.059	0.238
B20	0.141	0.021	0.366	0.008	0.605	0.001	-0.018	0.153

Items	READ	DEMO	CHAR	FAC	COMM	PER	REL	ACH
B21	0.085	0.098	0.305	-0.255	0.498	0.132	0.056	0.071
B22	0.025	0.074	0.730	-0.069	0.134	0.032	0.062	0.146
B23	0.166	-0.017	0.309	0.132	0.169	0.166	-0.075	0.162
B24	-0.036	0.387	0.208	-0.134	0.291	-0.019	0.243	0.153
B25	0.058	0.150	0.031	-0.098	0.667	-0.010	0.140	0.175
B26	-0.066	0.037	0.464	0.174	0.343	0.134	0.064	0.129
B27	0.378	-0.034	0.020	0.061	0.548	0.142	0.001	0.038
B28	0.232	0.213	0.090	-0.145	-0.023	0.335	0.153	0.462
B29	0.519	0.355	0.137	0.171	0.348	0.289	-0.156	0.048
B30	0.598	0.105	0.179	0.043	0.310	0.224	-0.045	0.079
B31	0.135	0.095	-0.002	0.465	-0.007	-0.010	-0.259	0.272
B32	0.103	0.128	0.302	0.539	0.012	-0.70	0.293	0.179
B33	0.057	-0.002	0.295	-0.067	-0.134	0.110	0.344	0.393
B34	0.101	0.194	0.117	-0.031	-0.002	-0.036	0.410	0.539
B35	0.071	0.106	0.373	-0.098	0.384	0.313	0.024	0.217
B36	0.234	0.072	0.198	0.030	0.573	0.153	0.066	0.104
B37	0.195	0.382	-0.005	0.436	0.112	0.088	0.144	0.105
B38	0.199	0.171	-0.057	0.223	0.062	0.603	-0.095	0.323
B39	0.206	-0.023	-0.018	-0.004	0.111	0.668	-0.184	0.246
B40	0.093	0.208	-0.059	-0.137	0.173	0.661	-0.026	0.264
B41	-0.158	0.187	-0.309	0.160	0.451	0.057	0.075	0.076
B42	0.189	0.307	-0.177	0.027	0.016	0.250	0.557	0.052
B43	0.119	-0.167	0.230	-0.070	-0.113	0.688	0.117	-0.038
B44	-0.125	0.162	0.052	0.248	0.219	0.547	0.211	0.117
B45	0.155	0.192	0.157	0.060	-0.051	0.619	0.17	0.178
B46	0.100	-0.009	0.220	0.030	0.026	-0.015	0.339	0.018
B47	0.019	-0.043	-0.059	-0.202	0.219	0.034	0.573	0.059
B48	0.236	-0.107	-0.115	-0.275	0.203	0.072	0.274	0.134
B49	0.022	-0.184	0.096	0.043	0.404	-0.048	0.663	-0.114
B50	0.150	-0.167	0.033	0.089	0.450	-0.019	0.552	-0.120
B51	-0.068	0.009	0.163	0.0650	0.521	-0.051	0.262	0.028
B52	0.373	-0.056	0.030	-0.059	-0.081	0.023	0.271	0.447
B53	-0.006	0.072	0.039	0.144	-0.028	-0.019	0.572	0.298
B54	0.158	-0.090	0.149	0.104	0.345	0.276	0.427	0.132
B55	-0.002	-0.064	0.072	0.263	0.392	0.140	0.349	0.253
B56	0.055	0.002	0.017	0.116	0.609	-0.082	0.251	0.1467
B57	-0.034	0.450	-0.154	0.373	0.169	0.297	0.209	0.135
B58	0.361	0.168	0.135	0.288	-0.005	0.350	0.064	-0.020
B59	0.251	-0.305	0.269	0.314	0.300	0.403	-0.043	0.155
B60	0.477	-0.236	0.368	0.131	0.245	0.288	0.085	-0.047
B61	0.675	0.106	-0.024	0.329	-0.049	0.237	0.205	0.096
B62	0.355	0.073	0.054	0.284	0.367	0.046	0.247	0.331
B63	0.342	0.112	0.047	0.306	0.371	0.314	0.109	0.211
B64	0.374	0.089	0.123	0.313	0.376	0.131	0.181	0.269
B65	0.351	0.221	0.221	0.287	0.047	-0.163	0.226	0.238
B66	0.003	0.012	0.228	0.489	-0.123	0.168	-0.009	0.537
B67	-0.030	-0.195	0.117	0.367	0.402	0.189	0.056	0.418
B68	0.229	-0.056	-0.120	0.266	0.413	0.095	-0.190	0.424
B69	0.034	0.056	-0.028	0.221	0.016	0.054	-0.016	0.750
B70	0.095	0.101	0.105	0.474	-0.079	-0.115	-0.024	0.605
B71	0.109	0.126	-0.090	0.507	0.208	-0.028	-0.015	0.546
B72	0.370	0.293	0.090	0.026	0.043	-0.004	0.001	0.681
B73	0.151	0.289	0.022	0.143	0.427	0.257	0.177	0.351
B74	0.237	0.079	0.271	-0.053	0.091	0.093	0.057	0.678
B75	-0.123	-0.046	-0.084	-0.105	0.228	0.297	0.090	0.676

Items	READ	DEMO	CHAR	FAC	COMM	PER	REL	ACH
B76	-0.019	-0.001	-0.012	-0.091	0.324	0.220	0.192	0.568
B77	0.018	-0.198	0.137	0.050	0.207	0.244	-0.039	0.743
B78	0.201	0.191	0.095	0.107	0.433	0.282	-0.068	0.571
Explained variance	5.628	3.897	4.981	3.860	6.205	4.446	4.136	7.384

Key: READ = Infrastructure readiness; DEMO = Demographic matching preference; CHAR = Mentor characteristics; FAC = Factor; COMM = Communication process; PER = Mentoring pair perceptions; REL = Mentoring pair relationship; ACH = Mentee achievements

In this study, an EFA was undertaken to assess the validity of the scales measuring the dependent variable (mentee achievements) and independent variables (online mentoring enablers). From Table 8.6 it is evident that eight constructs emerged from the EFA. Based on the items loading onto these constructs, two constructs required renaming to *infrastructure readiness* and *demographic matching preference*. As is evident in Table 8.6, a construct *factor* emerged comprising three items with factor loadings above the threshold of 0.5. However, two items – B17 and B71 – cross-loaded onto other factors and thus the construct was not regarded as valid for further analysis, as advised by Zikmund *et al.* (2009:594) and by Costello and Osborne (2005:5), whereby they conclude that at least three distinct items should be retained for a construct to be regarded valid. A total of seven constructs were thus considered for further analysis, as discussed in the following sections. Based on the principle component extraction these seven usable constructs explained a cumulative 40,54% of the variance in the data.

8.6.1 Mentee achievements

From Table 8.7, it is evident that nine of the thirteen items (B66 to B78) loaded together as intended to measure *mentee achievements*, while one item (B34) intended to measure *logistics* also loaded onto the construct. It seems that respondents regarded length of the mentoring process as important in realising their intended outcome of the online mentoring process as was confirmed by several authors (Allen & Eby, 2010:339; Godwin, 2011:1; De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:747).

Table 8.7 indicates that ten items were retained for *mentee achievements* with factor loadings ranging from 0.537 to 0.750. Sufficient evidence of validity for this construct was thus provided. The reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.884, indicating

that the items measuring the construct can be regarded as highly reliable. *Mentee achievements* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (15.73) and explained 20.16% of the variance in the data.

Table 8.7: Validity and reliability for the mentee achievements construct

Eigenvalue = 15.73		% of variance = 20.16		Cronbach's alpha = 0.884	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B34	Length of mentoring process	0.539	0.498	0.880	
B66	Improve the self-confidence of a mentee to pursue her dream(s)	0.537	0.497	0.881	
B69	Improve interpersonal skills of a mentee	0.750	0.640	0.871	
B70	Teach a mentee how to take control of her work life	0.605	0.523	0.880	
B72	Fast-track a mentee's career path/business growth progress	0.681	0.721	0.865	
B74	Significantly increase a mentee's network of professional contacts	0.678	0.688	0.868	
B75	Help a mentee gain real-world knowledge	0.676	0.615	0.873	
B76	Assist a mentee in applying theory to practice	0.568	0.584	0.875	
B77	Build a mentee's morale	0.743	0.738	0.864	
B78	Motivate a mentee to pursue career/business opportunities	0.571	0.661	0.869	

As a result of the EFA, *mentee achievements* are reformulated for the purpose of this enquiry as the *measurement of the effectiveness of the online mentoring programme related to the length of the mentoring process to fulfil the mentee's self-development needs, such as improved self-confidence, building morale, interpersonal skills, and work life control, as well as connections to a professional network to gain real-world knowledge for business application to fast-track career development or accelerate business growth.*

8.6.2 Infrastructure readiness

From Table 8.8, it is evident that only three (B3, B4 and B8) of the eight items (B1-B8) intended to measure *technology infrastructure* loaded together with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50. Two items (B29 and B30) intended to measure *communication process*, as well as one item (B61) intended to measure *mentoring pair readiness* also loaded onto the construct. As items of different constructs loaded onto this construct, it was renamed to *infrastructure readiness* to reflect the new items added. Literature affirms that the mentor's familiarity with the

specific topic, or range of, topics and the mentee’s certainty about where she/he wants to be in the future with career or business, reflects on the infrastructure readiness to effectively engage in online mentoring (Mueller, 2004:58; Dewart *et al.*, 2005:4; Akin & Hilbun, 2007:2; Rowland, 2012:232; Leck & Wood, 2013:101; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:2).

Table 8.8 indicates that six items were thus retained for *infrastructure readiness* with factor loadings ranging from 0.519 to 0.836. Sufficient evidence of validity for this construct was therefore provided. The reported Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was 0.842 indicating that the items measuring the construct could be regarded as highly reliable. *Infrastructure readiness* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (3.59) and explained 4.60% of the variance in the data.

Table 8.8: Validity and reliability for the infrastructure readiness construct

Eigenvalue: 3.59		% of variance = 4.60		Cronbach’s alpha = 0.842	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach’s alpha after deletion	
B3	Availability of an administrative system	0.836	0.784	0.909	
B4	Quality of administrative system support for the storage, retrieval and maintenance of information	0.740	0.796	0.907	
B8	User-friendliness of the communication channel used for interaction	0.529	0.459	0.844	
B29	Mentor’s familiarity with the specific topic discussed in the message	0.519	0.799	0.907	
B30	Mentor’s familiarity with the range of topics to be discussed in messages	0.598	0.850	0.900	
B61	Certainty of the mentee regarding where she wants to be in her future career/business	0.675	0.748	0.914	

As a result of the EFA, *infrastructure readiness* is reformulated for the purpose of this enquiry as *the availability of a user-friendly communication channel, quality administrative and technical support system for the storage, retrieval, and maintenance of information necessary for online mentoring conversations by a knowledgeable mentor on a specific, or a range of, topics with a mentee with a clear career/business vision.*

8.6.3 Demographic matching preference

Table 8.9 indicates that three (B9 to B11) of the ten items (B9 to B18) loaded together as intended, to measure *matching preference* with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50. The items in this construct are related to demographics of the mentoring pair and were thus renamed *demographic matching preference*. Factor loadings for this construct range between 0.665 and 0.754 and thus, sufficient evidence of construct validity is provided. Table 8.9 shows the reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.781 indicating that the items measuring the construct could be regarded as reliable. *Demographic matching preference* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (3.33) and explained 4.27% of the variance in the data.

Table 8.9: Validity and reliability for the demographic matching preference construct

Eigenvalue = 3.33		% of variance = 4.27		Cronbach's alpha = 0.781	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B9	That mentor is of similar age as mentee	0.754	0.720	0.592	
B10	That mentor is of similar gender as mentee	0.665	0.644	0.673	
B11	That mentor is of similar ethnic affiliation as mentee	0.705	0.502	0.815	

As a result of the EFA, *demographic matching preference* is defined for the purpose of this enquiry as taking into consideration the *preference of an online mentoring pair to be match based on demographics such as age, gender and ethnic affiliation*.

8.6.4 Mentor characteristics

As is evident in Table 8.10, three items (B12, B14, B16) intended to measure *matching preference* loaded together onto the new construct, *mentor characteristics*. Two items (B19 and B22) intended to measure *communication process* with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50 also loaded onto this construct. All these items seem to be characteristics of the mentor (previous mentoring experience, educational background, leadership style, ability to convey a detailed message and easily express feelings in an online communication medium) as confirmed in the literature (Cox, 2005:406; Cull, 2006:10; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7,8; DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:292; Sarri, 2011:723; St Jean & Audet, 2012:119).

As can be seen in Table 8.10, factor loadings for *mentor characteristics* range between 0.531 and 0.730, therefore sufficient evidence of construct validity is provided. The reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.752 indicating that the items measuring the construct could be regarded as reliable. *Mentor characteristics* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (4.20) and explained 5.48% of the variance in the data.

Table 8:10: Validity and reliability for the mentor characteristics construct

Eigenvalue = 4.20		% of variance = 5.48		Cronbach's alpha = 0.752	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B12	Mentor's extent of previous mentoring experience	0.537	0.494	0.699	
B14	Nature of educational background of mentor	0.685	0.625	0.648	
B16	Leadership style of mentor	0.531	0.381	0.735	
B19	Communication richness (extent of detail conveyed) during interaction	0.695	0.574	0.685	
B22	Ease of expressing feelings in writing using an online communication medium	0.730	0.520	0.691	

As a result of the EFA, *mentor characteristics* are reformulated for the purpose of this enquiry as the *mentor characteristics (mentor's extent of previous mentoring experience, educational background, leadership style, ability to convey a detailed message reflecting expression of feelings) necessary for an effective online mentoring experience*.

8.6.5 Communication process

As is evident in Table 8.11, three (B20, B25, B27) of the twelve items (B19 to B30), intended to measure *communication process*, loaded together with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50. One item (B36), intended to measure *logistics*, also loaded onto the construct as well as two items (B51 and B56), intended to measure *mentoring pair relationship*. However, the availability of using the same communication method for interaction, agreement on what to share in correspondence, and setting of boundaries for the relationship at inception of the mentoring programme are all items related to the communication process as confirmed in the literature (Headlam-Wells, 2004:217; Martin, 2012:223; An & Lipscomb, 2013:S34).

Table 8:11: Validity and reliability for the communication process construct

Eigenvalue = 4.83		% of variance = 6.20		Cronbach's alpha = 0.773	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B20	Clarity of message conveyed by both parties	0.605	0.514225	0.727	
B25	Honesty of both mentor and mentee on reflecting on communication process	0.667	0.496	0.738	
B27	Accuracy of record-keeping of all communications by mentee and mentor	0.548	0.463	0.747	
B36	Availability of the same communication method for interaction, for example Skype, between the mentoring pair	0.573	0.560	0.713	
B51	Clear boundaries for depth of relationship from inception	0.521	0.465	0.740	
B56	Agreement on what is and what is not appropriate to share in correspondence	0.609	0.598	0.703	

Factor loadings for this construct range between 0.521 and 0.667. Therefore, sufficient evidence of construct validity for *communication process* is provided. The reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.773 indicating that the items measuring this construct could be regarded as reliable. *Communication process* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (4.83) and explained 6.20% of the variance in the data.

As a result of the EFA, *communication process* can be defined for the purpose of this enquiry as the *mentoring pair using the same interaction communication method to convey a clear message within set boundaries on agreed mentoring content, while keeping an accurate record of communication and reflecting honestly on the communication process.*

8.6.6 Mentoring pair perceptions

As is evident in Table 8.12, six items (B38 to B40, B43 to B45), intended to measure *mentoring pair perceptions*, loaded together with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50, ranging between 0.547 and 0.688. Therefore, sufficient evidence of construct validity for *mentoring pair perceptions* is provided. The reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.808 indicating that the items measuring the construct could be regarded as highly reliable. *Mentoring pair perceptions* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (3.07) and explained 3.94% of the variance in the data.

Table 8.12: Validity and reliability for the mentoring pair perceptions construct

Eigenvalue = 3.07		% of variance = 3.94		Cronbach's alpha = 0.808	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B38	Extent to which the mentee's values are aligned to those of mentor	0.603	0.550	0.782	
B39	Your perception of the challenges associated with online mentoring	0.668	0.605	0.769	
B40	Your perception of the perceived benefits associated with online mentoring	0.661	0.628	0.765	
B43	How complex you perceive the online mentoring process to be	0.688	0.478	0.797	
B44	Perceived similarity of attitude between mentee and mentor	0.547	0.507	0.793	
B45	Perceived similarity of beliefs between mentee and mentor	0.619	0.640	0.761	

As a result of the EFA, *mentoring pair perceptions* is reformulated for the purpose of this enquiry as the *perceptions that the mentoring pair have regarding the complexity of the online mentoring process, the challenges and benefits associated with it, and how the mentoring pair perceive their similarity in attitude, values and beliefs.*

8.6.7 Mentoring pair relationship

As is evident in Table 8.13, four items (B47, B49, B50, B53), intended to measure *mentoring pair relationship*, loaded together with factor loadings above the minimum factor loading coefficient of 0.50.

Table 8.13: Validity and reliability for the mentoring pair relationship construct

Eigenvalue = 2.96		% of variance = 3.79		Cronbach's alpha = 0.704	
Items	Statements	Factor loading	Item correlation	Cronbach's alpha after deletion	
B42	The closeness and camaraderie in the relationship	0.557	0.370	0.685	
B47	Two-way information exchange between mentee and mentor	0.573	0.428	0.630	
B49	Clear expectations of relationship from inception	0.663	0.534	0.592	
B50	Clear goals of relationship from inception	0.552	0.512	0.600	
B53	Swiftness by which mentoring relationship can develop	0.572	0.405	0.639	

One item (B42), intended to measure *mentoring pair perceptions*, also loaded onto this construct. The closeness and camaraderie between mentor and mentee is a

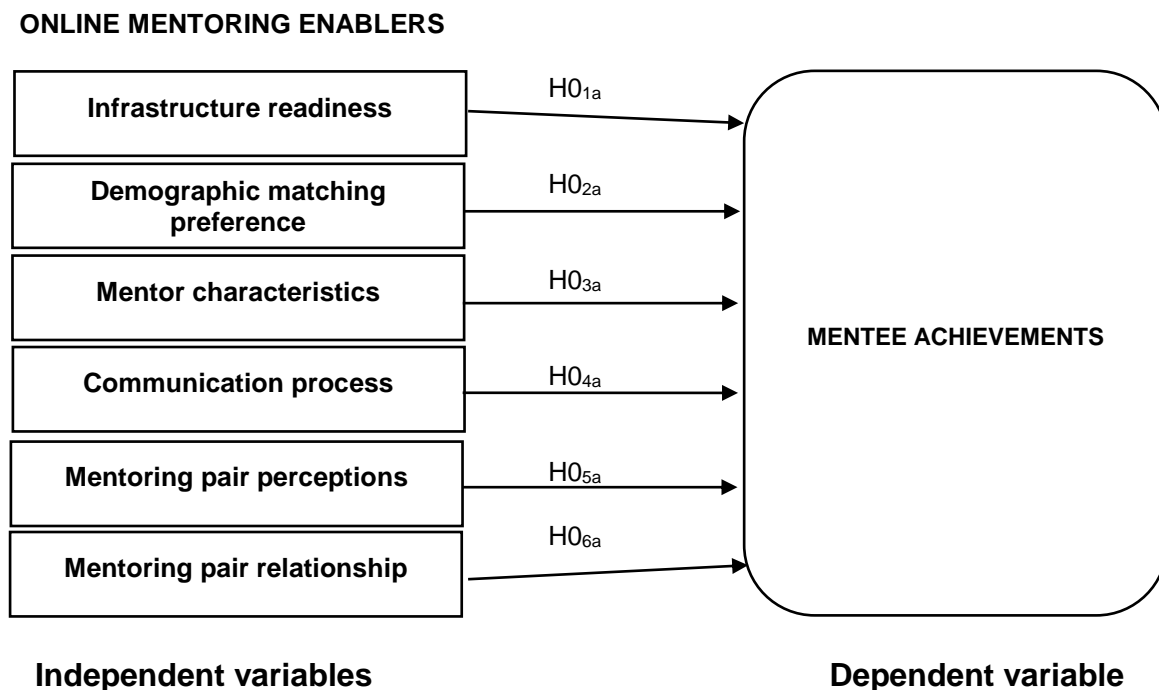
relationship issue. Factor loadings for *mentoring pair relationship* range between 0.552 and 0.663. Therefore, sufficient evidence of construct validity for *mentoring pair relationship* is provided. The reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.704 indicating that the items measuring the construct could be regarded as reliable. *Mentoring pair perceptions* had an Eigenvalue of more than 1 (2.96) and explained 3.79% of the variance in the data.

As a result of the EFA, *mentoring pair relationship* is reformulated for the purpose of this enquiry as *the requirements necessary to fast-track the development of an online mentoring pair relationship through setting of clear goals and expectations at inception using a two-way information exchange so that a close relationship can develop*.

8.7 REVISED HYPOTHESISED MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the outcome of the EFA, Figure 8.2 indicates the revised hypothesised model.

Figure 8.2: The revised hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements



Source: Researcher's own compilation

Based on the revised hypothesised model, the null hypotheses were reformulated:

H0_{1a}: The infrastructure readiness to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.

H0_{2a}: The consideration of demographic matching preference of the online mentoring pair does not influence mentee achievements.

H0_{3a}: The characteristics of the mentor necessary for engaging in online mentoring, does not influence mentee achievements.

H0_{4a}: The communication process followed to engage in online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.

H0_{5a}: The perception of the mentoring pair about online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.

H0_{6a}: The ability of the mentoring pair to meet the requirements necessary to develop a relationship during online mentoring does not influence mentee achievements.

The re-operationalisation of the variables in the revised hypothesised model is depicted in Table 8.14.

Table 8:14: Re-operationalisation of the variables in the revised hypothesised model

Constructs	Operationalisation	Sources
Mentee achievements	The measurement of the effectiveness of the online mentoring programme is related to the length of the mentoring process to fulfil the mentee's self-development needs, such as improved self-confidence, building morale, interpersonal skills, work life control, and connections to a professional network to gain real-world knowledge for business application to fast-track career development or accelerate business growth.	Samier (2000:92); Headlam-Wells <i>et al.</i> (2005:446); Allen & Eby (2010:339,360); Ayer (2010:20); Godwin (2011:1); Rowland (2012:2); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:747); Kyrgidou & Petridou (2013:558); Leck & Wood (2013: 101,102,107); Rankhumise (2013:376); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:3); Weiler <i>et al.</i> (2015: 197); Clutterbuck & Haddock-Miller (2016:9); Sanyal & Rigby (2016:5)
Infrastructure readiness	The availability of a user-friendly communication channel, quality administrative and technical support system for the storage, retrieval, and maintenance of information necessary for online mentoring conversations by a knowledgeable mentor on a specific, or a range of, topics with a mentee with a clear career/business vision.	Mueller (2004:58); Akin & Hilbun (2007:3); Cull (2006:10); Building effective mentoring partnerships (2009); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:296); Sarri (2011:723); Williams & Kim (2011:86); Rowland (2012:232); Leck & Wood (2013:101); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:2)

Constructs	Operationalisation	Sources
Demographic matching preference	The consideration of the preference of an online mentoring pair to be matched, based on demographics such as age, gender and ethnic affiliation.	Cox (2005:403,406); Wong & Premkumar (2007:8); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:302); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:8); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2014:1)
Mentor characteristics	The mentor characteristics (mentor's extent of previous mentoring experience, educational background, leadership style, ability to convey a detailed message reflecting expression of feelings) necessary for an effective online mentoring experience.	Cull (2006:10); Wong & Premkumar (2007:5,7,8); Ayer (2010:25); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:292); Sarri (2011:723); Potgieter (2011:3); St Jean & Audet (2012:12); Leck & Wood (2013:105)
Communication process	The mentoring pair using the same interaction communication method to convey a clear message within set boundaries on agreed mentoring content, while keeping an accurate record of communication and reflecting honestly on the communication process.	Headlam-Wells (2004:217); Homitz & Berge (2008:330); Williams & Kim (2011:82); Martin (2012:223); Sphigelman & Gill (2012:471); An & Liscomb (2013:S34); Panapoulos & Sarri (2013:217); Rockwell <i>et al.</i> (2013:2)
Mentoring pair perceptions	Perceptions that the mentoring pair have regarding the complexity of the online mentoring process, the challenges and benefits associated with it, and how the mentoring pair perceive their similarity in attitude, values and beliefs.	Ensher <i>et al.</i> , (2003:268); Wong & Premkumar (2007:7); Allen & Eby (2010:353); Blicke <i>et al.</i> (2010:1902); DiRenzo <i>et al.</i> (2010:302); Potgieter (2011:58); Lloyd, Byrne, McCoy (2012:1); De Janasz & Godshalk (2013:748); Kent <i>et al.</i> (2015:118)
Mentoring pair relationship	The purpose of this enquiry as the requirements necessary to fast-track the development of an online mentoring pair relationship through setting of clear goals and expectations at inception using a two-way information exchange so that a close relationship can develop.	Headlam-Wells (2004:217); Wong & Premkumar (2007:7); Elkin & Elkin (2008:19); Kim <i>et al.</i> (2012:113); Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr (2014:82); Smith-Jentsch <i>et al.</i> (2008:203)

The results of the validity and reliability tests have guided the revised hypotheses and hypothesised model for the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was conducted on the constructs that emerged from the EFA and the results thereof will be discussed next.

8.8 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients denote values between -1 and 1 (Zikmund *et al.*, 2009:559). According to Bryman and Bell (2014:323), the strength of the correlation relationship is guided by the following measures:

- Very strong relationship less than 0.7;
- Moderately strong relationship between 0.5 and 0.69;
- Average relationship between 0.3 and 0.49;
- Weak relationship between 0.1 and 0.29; and
- Slight relationship less than 0.09.

Table 8.15 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients that were calculated for this study.

Table 8.15: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of variables

Variables	ACH	COMM	CHAR	READ	DEMO	PER	REL
Mentee achievements (ACH)	1.000						
Communication process (COMM)	0.380	1.000					
Mentor characteristics (CHAR)	0.291	0.288	1.000				
Infrastructure readiness (READ)	0.386	0.430	0.286	1.000			
Demographic matching preference (DEMO)	0.196	0.143	0.267	0.281	1.000		
Mentoring pair perceptions (PER)	0.435	0.257	0.211	0.377	0.232	1.000	
Mentoring pair relationship (REL)	0.182	0.381	0.056	0.198	-0.002	0.183	1.000

p < .05

As can be seen in Table 8.15, no strong relationships were found between the variables and therefore no elaborate discussion on the results followed. *Mentee achievements* reported average positive correlations with *communication process* ($r=0.380$), *infrastructure readiness* ($r=0.386$) and *mentoring pair perceptions* ($r=0.435$) and weak positive relationships with *mentor characteristics* ($r=0.291$), *demographic matching preference* ($r=0.196$) and *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=0.182$). It seems respondents in this study regard the mentoring enablers (*communication process, infrastructure readiness and mentoring pair perceptions*) as contributing to some extent to the achievements of mentees after engaging in online mentoring.

From Table 8.15 it is furthermore evident that *communication process* reported average positive correlations with *infrastructure readiness* ($r=0.430$) and *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=0.381$), and weak positive relationships with *mentor characteristics* ($r=0.288$), *demographic matching preference* ($r=0.143$) and *mentoring pair perceptions* ($r=0.257$). It makes sense that the quality of the communication process is related to

whether the mentor has the necessary experience to assist a mentee, who in turn, needs clarity regarding what is to be achieved through the process, and that if computer administrative infrastructure support is available it can enable a meaningful relationship between the mentoring pair.

It is evident from Table 8.15 that *mentor characteristics* reported weak positive correlations with *infrastructure readiness* ($r=0.286$), *demographic matching preference* ($r=0.267$), *mentoring pair perceptions* ($r=0.211$) and a slight correlation with *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=0.056$).

From Table 8.15, it is furthermore evident that *infrastructure readiness* reported an average positive correlation with *mentoring pair perception* ($r=0.377$), and weak positive relationships with *demographic matching preference* ($r=0.281$) and *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=0.198$). It appears that if an experienced mentor is available and the mentee has clear intended outcomes in mind resulting from the online mentoring experience, the perceptions of online mentoring may be positive.

It is evident from Table 8.15 that *demographic matching preference* reported one weak positive correlation with *mentoring perceptions* ($r=0.232$) and one slight negative correlation with *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=-0.002$). Worth noting from these correlations is that it appears that although a weak relationship, matching is influenced by demographics, whereby mentors and mentees should be of the same age, gender or ethnic affiliation, otherwise it may influence the relationship negatively.

It is also evident from Table 8.15 that *mentoring pair perceptions* reported a weak positive relationship with *mentoring pair relationship* ($r=0.183$). It is important to conduct multi-collinearity diagnostic tests to determine if collinearity exists between the variables prior to conducting multiple regression analysis. The following section presents the results of the multi-collinearity diagnostics test.

8.9 RESULTS OF THE MULTI-COLLINEARITY DIAGNOSTICS TESTING

Multi-collinearity is a statistical phenomenon in which there exists an exact relationship between the predictor variables (Joshi, 2012). When there is an exact relationship

between the predictor variables, it is difficult to come up with reliable estimates of their individual coefficients. Multi-collinearity diagnostics testing is concerned with measuring the correlation between variables meant to measure the same theoretical construct (Nimon, Henson & Gates, 2010:707). The existence of multi-collinearity suggests a high correlation – a tolerance value of less than 0.1 is a cause for concern. Table 8.16 summarises the results for the multi-collinearity diagnostics for the variables.

Table 8.16: Multi-collinearity diagnostics for the variables

Variables	Tolerance value (R ²)	Variance inflation factor (VIF)
Infrastructure readiness	0.300	1.429
Demographic matching preference	0.136	1.157
Mentor characteristics	0.158	1.188
Communication process	0.307	1.443
Mentoring pair perceptions	0.183	1.224
Mentoring pair relationship	0.163	1.195

Based on the results shown in Table 8.16, the tolerance values for the independent variables were more than 0.1, ranging between 0.136 and 0.307. The VIF values of the independent variables were below the threshold of 10, ranging between 1.157 and 1.443. These results suggest that the independent variables were free from collinearity and therefore multiple regression analysis could be conducted.

The following section discusses the results of the multiple regression analysis and testing of significant relationships thereafter.

8.10 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

An outlier is a point of observation that is distant from other observations and should be recognised in data analysis and removed (Schmee, 2012:1; Bryman & Bell, 2014:319). Normality of a set of data refers to the normal distribution of the data (Norusis, 2007:54). A residual analysis was employed to assess normality as a pre-requisite for multiple regression analysis (Stat Trek, 2017). According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012:486), regression and analysis of variance are some of the parametric statistical analysis requiring tests for normality, to ensure accurate interpretation of results.

To avoid misleading results, the assumptions of multiple regression were adhered to as follows:

- Outliers were removed during data cleaning;
- There is no multi-collinearity between the independent variables, and
- The probability distribution of the residuals is a normal distribution for the model fitted.

The results of the residual analysis conducted on the six valid and reliable online mentoring enablers and the dependent variable *mentee achievements* are depicted in Tables 8.17 and 8.18.

Table 8.17: Analysis of variance for mentee achievements

Dependent variable: mentee achievement	Sums of squares	df	Mean squares	F	p-value
Regress.	4.934	6	0.822	4.053	0.002
Residual	11.362	56	0.203		
Total	16.296				

As can be seen in Table 8.17, the model is adequate for prediction purposes as the F-test p-value <0.05. Table 8.18 summarises the regression statistics for the *mentee achievements* dependent variable.

Table 8.18: Summary of regression statistics for mentee achievements

Dependent variable: mentee achievements	Value
Multiple R	0.550
Multiple R ²	0.303
Adjusted R ²	0.228
F(6,56)	4.053
P	0.002
Std.Err. of estimate	0.450

As can be seen in Table 8.18, approximately 22.8% of the variation observed in *mentee achievements* can be explained by the online mentoring enablers. Given that the residual analysis validates the fitted model, the estimates could be used to assess variable significance in the fitted model. Table 8.19 presents the results of the multiple

regression analysis for the online mentoring enablers influencing *mentee achievements*.

Table 8.19: Multiple regression results of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements

Dependent variable: mentee achievements Adjusted R ² = 0.228				Hypothesis number	Hypotheses
Independent variables	β	T-value	Sig. (p)		
Infrastructure readiness	0.145	1.084	0.283	H0 _{1a}	Accepted
Demographic matching preference	0.026	0.216	0.830	H0 _{2a}	Accepted
Mentor characteristics	0.124	1.019	0.312	H0 _{3a}	Accepted
Communication process	0.196	1.464	0.149	H0 _{4a}	Accepted
Mentoring pair perceptions	0.294	2.382	0.021	H0 _{5a}	Rejected
Mentoring pair relationship	0.018	0.151	0.881	H0 _{6a}	Accepted

p<0.05

From Table 8.19, it is clear that approximately 23% of the variance in mentee achievements can be explained by the variances in the independent variables. Evidence of statistical relationships was found between the dependent variable, *mentee achievements*, and the independent variable, *mentoring pair perceptions*. This is evident from the t-value, which exceeded the critical value of 1.96 at p<0.05 significance level. As a result, hypotheses H0_{5a} is rejected. No statistically significant (p<0.05) relationships were reported between the independent variables, *infrastructure readiness* (0.283), *demographic matching preferences* (0.830), *mentor characteristics* (p=0.312), *communication process* (p=0.149), and *mentoring pair relationship* (0.881) and the dependent variable, *mentee achievements*. Consequently, hypotheses H0_{1a}, H0_{2a}, H0_{3a}, H0_{4a} and H0_{6a} were accepted. These results suggest that these online mentoring enablers were not perceived by mentors and mentees as influential to the achievements of mentees undergoing online mentoring.

In the preceding chapters, it was alluded to that perceived similarity in values, attitude and beliefs between the mentor and mentee may have a positive influence on creating a trusting or prolonged mentoring relationship (Ensher *et al.*, 2003:268). A broad range of personal and professional achievements can be experienced by the mentee with the guidance, encouragement and support of a trusted and experienced mentor if the mentee perceives that there is an alignment of his or her values and attitude, with those of the mentor (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:748). If the online mentoring process is

perceived as not challenging and regarded as beneficial to the mentee, the mentee will gain self-confidence to pursue her dream and build her morale, which will ultimately lead to an improved performance in the workplace (Leck *et al.*, 2014:3; Page, 2014) and may consequently lead to achieving career goals (Potgieter 2011:13). With the mentor changing the perception of the mentee regarding the challenges associated with online mentoring, the mentee may regard it as an opportunity to take control of her life, and to not be afraid to apply the knowledge she has gained in practice. Furthermore, if the online mentoring process is not perceived as complex, the mentee may be more open to gain real world knowledge, develop her interpersonal skills and increase her network of professional contacts. It was confirmed by several authors (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:292; Leck & Wood, 2013:105) that the perception of the mentoring pair of the challenges associated with, and the complexity of, the online mentoring process furthermore influences the outcome of the relationship and subsequently, the achievements of the mentee.

The following section presents the results of the descriptive statistics.

8.11 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Bryman and Bell (2014:318) view descriptive statistics as related to percentages and the measurement of fundamental tendencies such as mode, median and mean, and standard deviations from the mean. The descriptive statistics for the factors are summarised in Table 8.20.

Table 8.20: Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Mentee achievement (ACH)	4.14	0.51
Infrastructure readiness (READ)	4.14	0.54
Demographic matching preference (DEMO)	2.25	0.72
Mentor characteristics (CHAR)	3.94	0.62
Communication process (COMM)	4.47	0.36
Mentoring pair perceptions (PER)	3.79	0.56
Mentoring pair relationship (REL)	4.34	0.39

Table 8.20 reports an interesting result with respect to what respondents regard as important online mentoring enablers. Respondents disagree (tend towards rating 2)

that *demographic matching preferences* plays a role in online mentoring. However, respondents appear to regard *mentor characteristics*, *mentoring pair perceptions*, *mentoring pair relationship* and the *communication process* as quite influential (tend towards rating 4) in effective online mentoring. All the standard deviations were relatively low (varying from 0.36 to 0.72), which indicates low response variances.

8.12 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the empirical results of phase three of this study. The data analysed was synthesised from 63 online survey questionnaire responses – a sample deemed adequate for the generalisability of the findings to the total population. The responses represented a response rate of 63%, which was also deemed acceptable for an online survey. The data generated from the online survey was analysed using STATISTICA 12.

The demographic profiles of all the respondents were presented and it was found that most respondents were white, English-speaking females aged between 36-55 years, with a management qualification. It was surmised that most of the corporate respondents were employed in the position of manager, in the operations function of the business, operating mostly in the financial and insurance industry and having in excess of 200 employees. It was noted that most of the business owner respondents operated as services-orientated private companies that had been in existence for between six to ten years in the education and business consulting sectors, and located mostly in residential areas.

Most of the respondents had been previously involved in mentoring in the role of mentee. Skype and email received the highest rate of recurrence with regard to the preferred online communication method and most respondents indicated business and career progress support as the type of support they believe online mentoring should provide.

An EFA was employed to extract the factors considered to be valid and influential regarding online mentoring. Items loading below 0.5 and/or cross-loading, were disregarded. Subsequently, all the extracted factors were subjected to Cronbach's alpha coefficients testing for reliability, with factors falling below 0.7 being considered

unreliable and disregarded from further statistical analysis. Eigenvalues and percentage of variance were also considered in this assessment. As a result, seven constructs from the original eight were retained and some were subsequently renamed.

The retained factors were presented in a correlation matrix based on the calculation of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Most of the correlation results exhibited weak-to-moderate positive correlation. Relatedly, multi-collinearity diagnostics testing was conducted and found no evidence of collinearity between the independent variables. One statistically significant relationship was found between mentoring pair perceptions and mentee achievements. The descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables were then presented, based on mean scores and standard deviations.

The following chapter summarises the present study and presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 presented the results of the quantitative research conducted during phase three of this enquiry. The hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements and the operationalisation of the variables in the hypothesised model were discussed. A demographic profile of all the respondents was provided. The results of the EFA and Cronbach's alpha coefficients analysis confirmed the validity and reliability of seven constructs in the measuring instrument. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis indicated low to moderate correlations between the constructs that emerged from the EFA, while the multi-collinearity diagnostics testing confirmed the data was free from collinearity to conduct a multiple regression analysis. Only one statistically significant relationship was confirmed in the testing of significant relationships. The chapter concluded with the presentation of the results of the descriptive statistics from the self-administered online questionnaire.

This study researched the uncharted world of online mentoring and attempted to understand the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring, as well as how it can be effectively used to assist SA females (both corporate employees and small business entrepreneurs) for career- and business development. Chapter 9 commences with a summary of the chapters contained in the study, followed by a presentation of how the objectives of the study were met. The conclusions and recommendations regarding the online mentoring processes follow. The online mentoring challenges for which participants did not provide possible solutions were firstly concluded. Those challenges that participants provided solutions for were discussed under online mentoring enablers. The last section on conclusions and recommendations focused on online mentoring challenges in SA and what is necessary to create an effective online mentoring environment based on the information obtained from the SA participants only. The contributions of this study to the field of online mentoring, especially for females and in SA are highlighted, after which the limitations of the research are discussed. Recommendations for future research are made, and the chapter is concluded.

9.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study comprised of the following nine chapters.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and background to the study and the problem statement along with an outline of the research objectives. The terminology and concepts used in the study were clarified. A brief research methodology was provided and thereafter the structure of the study was presented.

Chapter 2 presented the research methodology followed in the study. The research design was discussed and the primary research paradigms available while the use of a mixed research approach in this study was justified. The population, sample size and sample selection for each of the three phases of the study was discussed, together with the justification for the 14 qualitative interviews and 63 quantitative responses obtained from the online questionnaire. How secondary and primary data were collected was described in greater detail. The primary data collection procedure included a comprehensive description of the three phases (two qualitative and one quantitative) with detail regarding the measuring instruments used. The data analysis methods used in both the qualitative and quantitative phases, were clearly indicated. The chapter concluded with how the trustworthiness of the interview schedule used in phases one and two (qualitative phases), and the validity and reliability of the online questionnaire used in phase three (quantitative phase), were ensured.

Chapter 3 comprised a literature study on conventional mentoring as an understanding of conventional mentoring was required to fully comprehend online mentoring and to contextualise the many issues relating to conventional mentoring, which also apply to the online mentoring environment. The development of mentoring and difference between informal and formal mentoring programmes were presented. Different conventional and non-conventional mentoring development approaches were referred to. Although the positive outcome of mentoring was acknowledged, the process seems to be not without challenges and could be mentor or mentee related, while being different for a corporate business or a small businesses. These challenges may inhibit the development of successful mentoring relationships. It was indicated how the many identified challenges could be overcome. The benefits of mentoring for mentees, mentors, the corporate business and small business entrepreneurs were presented.

Chapter 4 provided a review of online mentoring and distinct differences between conventional and online mentoring were noted. Technological growth led to a change in the effective models in mentoring and provided methods to expand the possibilities of conventional mentoring. Different communication tools used in online mentoring were discussed. The key challenges associated with online mentoring were deliberated on and the benefits that online mentoring programmes offer in comparison to face-to-face mentoring programmes were expanded upon. A discussion on the guidelines and pre-requisites for the implementation of effective online mentoring programmes were presented.

In preparation of the results of this study, **Chapter 5** presented a summary of the global online mentoring landscape. Different fields of online mentoring and the target markets which it serves were considered. An overview was provided of several global online mentoring institutions and a distinction was made between those global online mentoring institutions with an affiliation to South Africa and those unique to South Africa. It was acknowledged that this was not an exhaustive discussion of global mentoring institutions, but that these were the institutions listed and which appeared most often in online searches. For each of the identified global mentoring institutions, the specific programmes offered and the target markets served in the respective online mentoring fields were referred to.

Chapter 6 presented the biographical profiles of the interviews conducted with the online participants who participated in phases one and two of this study. The biographical profile of the five SA mentors was each presented as a case study with an indication of the development focus of their online mentoring, as well as the specific sector in which they provide online mentoring. The online mentors were comprised of both males and females. However, as the focus of this study is on female mentees, the mentee sample consisted of only females, either corporate mentees or small business entrepreneurs. The biographical profiles of the participating online mentees were presented in case studies and the reason for mentoring was also indicated. Online mentoring took place for personal development to develop within the current job (career development) or for business development. The biographical profiles of the interviews with the three online mentoring field specialists – of which two were from

South Africa and the third from the United States of America (USA), were also presented.

Chapter 7 presented the results of the online mentoring interviews with the five selected online SA mentors and six female mentees of Africa in phase one of the study by indicating the emerging themes, sub themes and issues that emerged when conducting content analysis. The results of the online mentoring field specialists were incorporated within the identified themes and sub themes with specific reference to those issues pertaining to SA. Using the constant comparative data analysis method insight was provided on the online mentoring processes followed in the different institutions where after the global versus SA challenges of online mentoring were compared and deliberated on.

Chapter 8 presented the results from the self-administered online questionnaire in the third phase on the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring and the resultant intended outcomes (mentee achievements). The hypothesised model of the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements was presented. The response rate to this phase of the enquiry was assessed and the demographic profile of all the respondents were presented. An EFA and Cronbach's alpha coefficients analysis was employed to confirm the validity and reliability of the items and seven constructs were deemed valid and reliable. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis were conducted to establish correlation between the constructs and multi-collinearity diagnostics testing to confirm the data was free from collinearity. As a result, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test significant relationships. The chapter concluded with the presentation of the results of the descriptive statistics from the self-administered online questionnaire.

This concluded the chapter summaries. How the objectives of the study were met, are discussed in the following section.

9.3 HOW THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES WERE MET IN THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring and how it can be used as a transformative tool to develop SA females (both corporate and small business entrepreneurs) for

career and small business development. This objective was achieved with the findings of the mentoring enablers indicated by the participants in phases one and two of the study. The results of the quantitative phase three confirm which online mentoring enabling conditions are regarded as important for effective online mentoring in South Africa and that it can assist with female mentees' career and business development in South Africa.

Table 9.1 illustrates how the secondary objectives in this study were met.

Table 9.1: How the secondary objectives in this study were met

Secondary objective	How objective was met
To conduct a literature review on conventional and online mentoring	This objective has been achieved in Chapters 3 and 4. The review on conventional mentoring in Chapter three included a discussion on the development of mentoring, and the degree of formality of the mentoring relationship. Non-conventional traditional mentoring development approaches were also presented. It was clear that the psychosocial functions of mentor-mentee relationships (confirmation and acceptance, counselling, friendship and role modelling) are particularly crucial for the career development of females and minorities in the workforce. The challenges which can constrain the development of effective conventional mentoring relationships, ways to overcome these challenges and numerous benefits thereof for mentees, mentors, the corporate business and small business entrepreneurs were elaborated on. The literature review in Chapter 4 offered a discussion of online mentoring as opposed to conventional mentoring, and the different communication tools that can be used in online mentoring were identified. It was contended that when participants have time to exchange information, form impressions, relate values, and provide appropriate feedback, online mentoring allows for a quality relationship to develop. The key challenges associated with online mentoring and the benefits that online mentoring programmes offer in comparison to conventional face-to-face mentoring programmes were expanded upon. Three sets of guidelines to ensure effective online mentoring implementation were supplied.
To provide an overview of the global online mentoring landscape with reference to online mentoring institutions operating in South Africa	In Chapter 5 a global perspective of the online mentoring landscape was provided. It was acknowledged that although most of the online mentoring activity that exists is directed towards primary, secondary and tertiary education, fields of online mentoring have been extended to include the healthcare and construction industries. An overview of several global online mentoring programmes was given. It seems as if most South African online mentoring programmes are offered by global institutions. These global institutions either offer funding for the programme to run in SA or are open for SA participation. Online mentoring has been implemented globally to a great extent, but the presence of online mentoring programmes unique to South Africa, is limited.

Secondary objective	How objective was met
<p>To identify and implement an appropriate research methodology for this study in order to assist the achievement of the overall primary objective</p>	<p>This objective has been achieved in Chapter 2 where the mixed method research was identified as the most appropriate research methodology for the study. Non-probability sampling techniques were employed in the study whereby participants were selected based on their willingness, convenience or being referred by other participants (snowball sampling). The preferred data collection method for phases one and two of the enquiry was deemed interviews with the use of a semi structured interview schedule and for phase three, a survey via a structured online questionnaire.</p> <p>For the qualitative phases of the research, data was analysed utilising the case study method, content analysis, constant comparative method and grounded theory. It was explained how trustworthiness of phases one and two of the research process was ensured.</p> <p>In phase three, descriptive statistics were employed to analyse and describe the quantitative results and the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument were confirmed in the EFA and Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis. Inferential statistics such as Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis, multi-collinearity testing and a multiple regression analysis were also performed for phase three.</p>
<p>To empirically establish what female employees and small business entrepreneurs regard as enabling conditions for effective online mentoring</p>	<p>This objective has been achieved in Chapters 7 and 8 from the results of phases one and two of the qualitative research study and results of the quantitative research in phase three. Chapter 7 presented the results of the online mentoring enablers and sub themes identified from the content analysis. SA mentors, female mentees from Africa of which three were from SA and online mentoring field specialists (two from SA and one from the USA) provided insight into several conditions necessary for effective online mentoring.</p> <p>Chapter 8 presented the empirical results from the 63 online survey online questionnaire responses with female mentees and female and male mentors. Six online mentoring enabling conditions were identified from the EFA. Mentee achievements were confirmed as the outcome of effective online mentoring.</p>
<p>To suggest ways in which online mentoring can be effectively utilised for females to advance their corporate careers and develop their small businesses in South Africa</p>	<p>This objective has been achieved in Chapter 9. Conclusions and recommendations were made based on the findings in Chapters 7 and 8. These suggestions were provided by the participants (SA mentors, female mentees and online mentoring field specialists) interviewed in Chapter 7 or from the findings of the respondent online survey (mentors and female mentees) in Chapter 8.</p> <p>The hypothesis testing in Chapter 8 revealed evidence of a statistical relationship between the dependent variable, <i>mentee achievements</i> and independent variable <i>mentoring pair perceptions</i> and it was surmised that perceived similarity in values, beliefs and attitude between the SA mentoring pair may have a positive influence on the female mentee achievements such as resulting in career advancement or business development. The study draw further conclusions and recommendations based on the literature of Chapters 3 to 5.</p>

Source: Researcher's own compilation

As the empirical results of the study was quite extensive with both a qualitative and quantitative component, the conclusions and recommendations were structured as follows. The first section concluded the results of the essential processes necessary for online mentoring. From the results in Chapter 7 it was clear that participants provided challenges which can be solved and some that they are not clear on how it may be solved. For this reason, the online mentoring challenges for which participants did not provide solutions are first concluded with recommendations made as found in literature. The remaining challenges were incorporated into the conclusions and recommendations made on the online mentoring enablers identified by all the participants (SA mentors, female mentees from Africa and online mentoring field specialists – two from SA and one from the USA) and from literature findings. Lastly, the conditions to create an effective South African online mentoring environment as indicated specifically by South African participants and in literature provide further suggestions. In this discussion, the conclusions and recommendations of the online mentoring findings of the multiple regression results on the perceptions of South Africans on online mentoring enablers and how it can influence female mentee achievements, are also included.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ESSENTIAL ONLINE MENTORING PROCESSES

The conclusions and recommendations offered on essential online mentoring processes (application-, selection-, matching and conflict resolution) are presented next.

9.4.1 Conclusions and recommendations on the application process

All the empirical findings from the participant interviews concur with literature (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2016; Tony Elumelo Foundation, 2016a) that participants in global online mentoring programmes such as Cherie Blair and Tony Elumelo are required to complete an online application, while with some programmes such as YALI requiring an application for a leadership programme with online mentoring included in the programme. The completion of an admission form is required for post graduate doctoral studies. Business consultants with a contract to conduct online mentoring for corporate employees do not complete any forms. It was confirmed by Smith-Jentsch

et al. (2008:194) that mentors can be sanctioned by a business to reinforce mentees' confidence in their ability to perform new roles.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- have a formal online application process in place, and
- customise the application forms for both mentors and mentees to obtain the most useful information necessary to guide selection for participation.

9.4.2 Conclusions and recommendations on the selection procedure

From the participant interviews, it is clear that supplementary documentation is required to screen and select online mentors and mentees for participation if offered by an institution. Mentors have to provide supplementary documentation depending on the development needs of the mentee, such as proof of previous experience (not necessarily online mentoring) if mentoring a small business entrepreneur, while business consultants have to present their suitability to providing online staff mentoring in a meeting with the corporate client and post-graduate academic university supervisors are required to have proof of previous supervision experience and field experience. It was confirmed in literature (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, 2015a; Tony Elumelo Foundation, 2016a) that most online mentoring programmes such as the Cherie Blair Foundation and youth leadership programme (YALI) has a publically available written statement outlining specific eligibility requirements for programme participation.

Literature (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:20; Allen & Eby, 2010:353; Rankhumise, 2013:377; Polikoff *et al.*, 2015:77) confirmed that the selection of mentees should be based on their willingness to participate in the mentoring programme and that mentees' development needs must be taken into consideration before recommending them for a mentoring programme. For academic post-graduate mentees, only proof of previous academic achievements is required for admission, and corporate mentees are selected by their managers for participation.

From the preceding discussion it is thus suggested that all online mentoring institutions should on their websites:

- have publically available written statements that is accessible which outlines eligibility requirements for mentors and mentees regarding programme participation;
- include in their eligibility requirements the purpose and goals of the programme to ensure adequate screening;
- provide clear instructions for mentors as to which supporting documentation must accompany the application for screening and selection for example if a small business mentor, proof of previous mentoring experience in the field, while if a university supervisor for post-graduate doctoral studies evidence of qualifications, research supervision and field specific experience and if a corporate mentor, field experience; and
- specify that mentees should provide a clear motivation for participation indicating their development needs, talent, eagerness to learn and willingness to participate in the mentoring programme which can then serve as selection criteria for programme participation.

9.4.3 Conclusions and recommendations on the matching procedure

It was clear from the participant interviews that the matching of mentors and mentees can take place either through self-selection or self-pairing from a database or through a programme administrator or selected by their manager if a corporate employee. These types of matching procedures were confirmed by several researchers (Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83; iCouldBe, 2016a; Virgin Unite, 2016). According to participants, mentors are selected or chosen based on their knowledge and/or field work experience while matching of academic research supervisors also consider staff availability and whether being adequately qualified. As confirmed in literature, online mentors should be matched based on their experience field and/or preference to mentor within a field since the effectiveness of mentorship depends on knowledge, attitude and competence of the mentor (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21; Cull, 2006:10; Spigelman & Gill, 2012:464; Rankhumisi, 2013:375).

Of interest is that according to the empirical findings, matching preferences based on demographics may be forthcoming from both mentors and mentees. Several researchers (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8; Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 2016) mentioned that matching preferences based on demographics may be taken into consideration. However, how beneficial demographic matching is based on the mentor's gender, ethnic affiliation, the country residing in, working and business experience, personality and power relations level, has been much debated in literature (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:221; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7; Shreshta *et al.*, 2009:117; DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:302; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:8; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:81).

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- clearly establish the female mentee's needs to pair her with a female if in need of personal affirmation (building self-esteem and self-worth) or with a male if for career advancement;
- recruit knowledgeable and experienced mentors from all business fields;
- allow mentees to self-select a mentor from a database of knowledgeable and experienced mentors from all business fields. Doing so, will take care of possible female matching preferences regarding gender, age, race, language, availability, needs, interest, geography, personality, power relations and other individual mentee preferences; and
- appoint a programme administrator to oversee the finalisation of the matching process to confirm optimal pairing choices to increase the possibility of mentoring pair compatibility.

It is further suggested that to ensure effective corporate female online mentoring, the business should assign a strong mentor (male or female) with the necessary knowledge and experience to provide the necessary guidance for advancement in their careers to break the glass ceiling barriers still prevalent in many businesses. For a small business entrepreneur mentee, mentors that are knowledgeable and having practical business experience can result in a good match and effective outcome.

9.4.4 Conclusions and recommendations on the conflict resolution procedure

The participants confirm that all online mentoring institutions they are involved in have institutional policies, guidelines and procedures guiding conflict resolution in general or specific to an online mentoring relationship. If a corporate mentor, it is included in the online mentoring agreement. According to participants, the body responsible for the conflict resolution could be either local or if involved globally, be head office based. Several researchers (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:9; Williams & Kim, 2011:84; Mowes, 2012:85; Hudson, 2014:5) acknowledged the importance of having a conflict resolution procedure if engaging in online mentoring. Participants suggested that institutions can also appoint a mentoring mediator to resolve mentoring pair conflict if the institution cannot resolve it amicably. Williams and Kim (2011:90) is of the opinion that it should be the duty of the online mentoring programme coordinator to manage grievances or other issues that might occur during the execution of the online mentoring programme.

From the above it can thus be suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- compile a set of institutional policies, guidelines and procedures to manage conflict, grievances, re-matching, interpersonal problem-solving and crisis management to support mentoring pairs. These policies, guidelines and procedures should be revised on an annual basis;
- include the conflict resolution process in the mentoring agreement to be signed by both parties prior to the commencement of the relationship;
- clearly indicate the location of the conflict resolution governing body and try and establish a local office, if feasible; and
- include in the programme administrator's duties, the management of mentoring pair conflict to ensure successful completion of the programme.

In addition, the participants strongly recommended that the mentoring pair should rather make an attempt to resolve potential conflict amongst themselves amicably, and as a last resort, contact the governing body.

In analysing the results of the qualitative interviews it became clear that although many challenges were mentioned, most of these challenges could be overcome. This points to enabling conditions for creating an effective online mentoring environment.

However, for some of the challenges, no solutions to overcome the challenges was provided and are discussed in the following section. It must be mentioned that although matching preferences were indicated as a challenge, it was mostly forthcoming from the SA participants. For this reason, it will not be discussed in the following section, but rather under SA specific challenges (see Section 9.7.1).

9.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ONLINE MENTORING CHALLENGES

Three online mentoring challenges were identified by participants which would be difficult to overcome. The conclusions and recommendations of these three online mentoring challenges are provided next.

9.5.1 Language differences

Communication challenges mentioned by participants related to written and spoken language differences for post graduate supervision, small business and corporate mentoring. All online mentoring participants should be skilled in the English language and be good readers with an elevated writing ability as an above average degree of especially written communication skills can result in superior online mentoring experiences (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:5; Bosch, 2009:193). For this reason, global online mentoring programmes such as Cherie Blair and YALI require a good command of written and spoken English as a prerequisite for programme participation. In spite of this, the online mentoring field specialists interviewed mentioned that in written communication where there is no verbal signs and nuances, the meaning of words or sentences is open to misinterpretation.

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- require an Intermediate level of English for programme participation for both mentors and mentees;
- develop measures to test the English writing skills of prospective participants to ensure they have an accepted command of English; and
- encourage the use of synchronous visuals such as in Skype conversations to avoid misinterpretation of verbal tone and language nuances.

9.5.2 Cultural fit

Although culture is related to ethnic affiliation, it is much broader than mere ethnic affiliation and can include norms values, respect, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society. Cultural challenges according to the online mentoring field specialists could be related to age, race and gender. The international field specialist from the USA also related cultural fit problems to the resentment of using technology instead of the conventional face-to-face mentoring. Fletcher and Mullen (2012:86) emphasise that the mentoring relationship can be negatively influenced if the mentor does not recognise how his or her own background impacts on the mentoring pair's relationship and mentors must be careful not to suppress the mentee's cultural heritage. The mentor participants in this study foresee cultural challenges when utilising online mentoring in education and for small businesses development. Kent *et al.* (2015:118) noted that, particularly in higher education settings, the mentoring pair should be culturally aware and sensitive for successful mentoring relationship development. Furthermore, when global institutions offer online mentoring for business development, culture can be challenging as it may influence respect for each other.

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- propose that in event of a cross-cultural online mentoring match, the mentoring pair should become more self-aware and speak openly about their fears to conquer it at the inception of the online mentoring relationship;
- confirm that online technology is viewed positively in the culture of the mentoring pair;
- consider as an alternative to one-on-one online mentoring is to engage in group mentoring as the communal nature of group mentors may be better suitable for members of groups from inclusive cultures;
- take care to advise both mentors and mentees to be culturally aware and sensitive, search for similarities in norms and values and accept each other's cultural identity;
- encourage mentoring pairs to familiarise themselves about each other's country prior to engaging in online mentoring;

- consider meeting face-to-face for the first meeting to lessen potential misperceptions about certain cultures; and
- hold online seminars and provide access to digital resources on issues such as appropriate cultural relations and ethnic issues.

9.5.3 Unethical mentee behaviour

According to the USA education field specialist, the behaviour of student mentees may become unethical when using text-based online mentoring methods, as the identity of the student cannot be verified. Pina, Bohn and Lyons (2011:1) confirm that online student identity verification can be a great challenge in the university online mentoring environment.

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that online mentoring institutions should:

- have a verification system with a secure login and pass code for the participant whether student, small business entrepreneur or corporate employee;
- develop policies and processes to define, identify and report ethics online mentoring violations;
- appoint only ethical mentors that will have the values and intended outcome of the mentee at heart;
- incorporate ethical mentoring as part of the online mentoring programme for all participants to explain amongst others the importance of mutual respect of the mentoring pair; and
- take into consideration that the online mentoring system must be able to accommodate a large number of students if for tertiary education purposes while minimising student cheating and abuse of the online mentoring system.

Although the participants did not offer solutions to the above mentioned online mentoring challenges, it is clear that there are ways to overcome these challenges. The conclusions and recommendations of what the participants regard as enabling online mentoring conditions are discussed in the following sections. It must be noted that some challenges were indicated in the empirical results, but were then addressed in the empirical results of the online mentoring enablers. For this reason, it was

decided to group them together in the discussion of the conclusions and recommendations to avoid repetition. These enabling online mentoring conditions were forthcoming from the real experiences of the participants who are actively engaged in online mentoring.

9.6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENABLING ONLINE MENTORING CONDITIONS

The challenges will first be indicated as observed by the participants followed by suggestions on how the challenges can be overcome. Literature support for possible suggestions will also be provided where possible. It was noted by the researcher that many of these enabling conditions applied to all online mentors and mentees, not necessarily female mentees, neither may it be country specific. An attempt was made to indicate which of these enabling online mentoring conditions is specific to female mentees. In Section 9.7, the South African specific challenges and enabling online mentoring conditions are discussed.

9.6.1 Technology readiness

The participants revealed technology reported challenges are mostly related to access to the Internet for connectivity, connectivity stability and the use of Skype, while mentees may have insufficient data to connect. The importance of regular, easy, and cheap computer and Internet access in the online mentoring environment is confirmed by several researchers (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:456; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:6; Global risk insight, 2016). Of essence is internet connection speed to allow for uninterrupted online conversations with session flow on Skype and video conferencing (Pillon & Osmun, 2013:443; Skype, 2016b).

It was noted that technology inaccessibility can be location related, and is more common amongst the less educated and low-income communities (Bierema & Hill, 2005:557). In addition, the SA participants found that the mentee's typing skills, reliable email service, internet cost, and perceptions about security issues regarding privacy and hacking of passwords and other information influence effective online mentoring, especially if involved in a global programme. Several researchers (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445; Bierema & Hill, 2005:557; Homitz & Berge, 2008:332) stressed the importance of a definite level of computer literacy and internet knowledge

for online communication to be effective. The same applies for knowledge of mobile technology as users must be acquainted with how to use the mobile device, as well as how and when to use specific functions (Keengwe & Blankson, 2013:6). With the costs of using mobiles varying significantly between countries (Khokhar, 2016:1), participants in this study indicated that those in countries with the cheapest cost contact the other party. However, the price of the mobile devices may also be a challenge as prices vary based on power and features. However, mobiles are cheaper and more portable than any computer.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions should as eligibility requirements for programme participation insist that the mentoring pair are:

- computer literate and have typing skills for text messaging;
- knowledgeable of computer, mobile and internet technology; and
- having access to regular, easy and cheap internet access via a computer or mobile device.

With regard to the communication tools used, it is suggested that if:

- using Skype technology, the mentoring pair be familiar with the use of it, in particular for video conferencing, is able to afford to set it up and use a technology checklist to be ready for the online conversation;
- mentees are located in rural areas with poor internet access, they must use alternative technology to Skype such as mobile WhatsApp or Google Hangouts; and
- mentees have limited finances, make use of public WiFi hotspots or telephone conversations as a cheaper connection alternative.

9.6.2 Mutual trust

From the results of the participant interviews, it seems that mutual trust can be influenced by the gender, ethnic affiliation or personality of participants in the online mentoring relationship. It was further indicated that the mentee may develop a trusting relationship if there are clear boundaries and objectives, there is a positive perception of the mentor's, knowledge, skills and problem solving ability, and consideration of the

mentee's suggestions and ideas set and encouragement by celebrating small achievements. Also important was prompt feedback by the mentor after the first meeting as it can contribute to the development of building a trusting relationship. Several researchers (Holland, 2009:14; Allen & Eby, 2010:339; Ragins, 2012:531; Leck & Wood, 2013:107) contend that trust is determined by the frequency of meetings, length of the relationship, amount of personal information provided and the feedback of others. Additionally, using face-to-face or Skype conversations for the first meeting can clarify potential perceptions on the mentor's leadership style and personality. However, Leck and Wood (2013:105) warned that online mentoring relationships take longer to develop than face-to-face mentoring.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- encourage open communication and honest dialogue between the mentoring pairs to develop a trusting relationship;
- only select knowledgeable mentors and ensure that mentors in all fields are available on their database;
- encourage frequent communication exchanges by specifying a minimum number of meeting interactions between the mentoring pair; and
- alert the female mentee to not become over dependent on the male mentor as it may be considered as inappropriate and could lead to resentment.

It is furthermore suggested that all online mentors should build a trusting online mentoring relationship by:

- from the onset set clear boundaries and objectives of the intended mentee achievement;
- avoid taking the leading role, but rather one of counselling and guiding so that mentees can be provided with insight;
- keeping the relationship formal especially if they are employed within the same workplace to avoid office gossip or resentment of co-workers;
- considering the mentee's input before guiding the mentee;
- keeping conversation details confidential and restrict sharing personal information;

- providing timeous feedback as soon as possible after a communication exchange and in event of not able to respond, inform the mentee thereof;
- encouraging the mentee throughout the process and celebrate small achievements; and
- where possible, organise a face-to-face first meeting to share a little about themselves and so speed up getting to know each other. If impossible to meet face-to-face, make use of Skype and online chatting or voice thread where the mentoring pair can see each other.

9.6.3 Meeting time frequency and flexibility

The participants in this study revealed that the mentor's personal schedule, business commitments and the fact that mentoring are mostly for free can pose a challenge for effective online mentoring. Several researchers (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:3; Godwin, 2011:1; Van der Sijde & Weijam, 2013:196; Bullock & Ferreir-Kerr, 2014:80) confirm that the mentor's own commitments can place pressure on the mentor/mentee relationship. Mentee participants on the other hand reported that the frequency of meeting sessions are time-consuming and that action time to effect what was discussed and their own demanding work schedules are a challenge and can prevent them from benefiting fully from online mentoring. In addition, if using Skype, time zone differences may cause synchronisation of meeting times problems as also confirmed by Keengwe and Blankson (2013:263). Literature (Headlam-Wells *et al.*, 2005:445; Petridou, 2009:526) added that females due to work responsibilities and family commitments, often diminish, if not discontinue, with mentoring. The participants noted that mentors should be flexible regarding meeting times and connect after work hours and when mentees have internet access for Skype sessions. It was noted that global online mentoring programmes can implement a booking system where mentees can book a session in the time slot with available mentors. Participants suggest that reminders of meeting times should be sent by the programme coordinator to confirm meeting times and take care of potential time zone difference challenges prior to meeting times.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- determine a realistic number of meetings to accommodate mentees' work demands;
- provide adequate action time of at least two weeks for mentees to effect suggestions by mentors;
- arrange for reminders about meeting times to be send out by the programme administrator to the mentoring pair;
- warn the mentoring pair on possible time zone differences and urge them to be flexible in meeting times;
- warn the mentoring pair to confirm with each other about 24 hours prior to the set meeting time as it is easy to make a mistake measuring the time differences; and
- implement a booking system where the mentee can book a session in the available time slot that mentors indicate to avoid time zone problems.

It is further suggested that all online mentors should:

- remind mentees to schedule meetings at regular intervals;
- accommodate mentees with limited Internet access for video conferencing and Skype sessions by trying to fit into their time availability, even if it is after hours;
- confirm meeting times while also taking into consideration that the cycle of emails will be slower, especially when crossing time zones; and
- take special care to consider female mentees family commitments when possible.

9.6.4 Mentee unpreparedness and unrealistic expectations

From the participant interviews, it seems that mentors regard mentees as being unprepared for online meetings and having unrealistic expectations of the process. As noted by several researchers (DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:296; Rockwell *et al.*, 2013:7), unprepared mentees without the necessary background and experience can experience difficulties with the overall effectiveness of the online mentoring relationship. Participants in this study seems to associate unpreparedness of mentees with lack of clarity of the mentor's intended role, a small business mentee's lack of practical business skills and/or foundational knowledge, or a corporate mentee not reading through information sent before the online conversation which was meant to guide the meeting discussion. Due to this the mentors interviewed agreed that having

a prepared plan for each session and providing mentees with a clear structure, objectives and relationship boundaries clarifying their role as mentor are of great value for engaging in online mentoring as also confirmed as important by Sarri (2011:722). As mentioned by Sphigelman and Gill (2012:471), because mentees are caught up in other assignments and fail to follow through on meeting commitments or are unprepared for sessions, mentors do not invest the time or energy needed to provide a mentee with worthwhile support and encouragement.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- establish the online mentoring training needs of participants and then provide them with the necessary training to ensure effective online meetings; and
- confirm with small business mentees that they have a certain level of practical business knowledge and skills to achieve the intended programme objectives before selection for participation in the programme.

It is further suggested that the mentoring pair should at the first meeting:

- set goals, objectives and timelines for progress;
- clarify the mentor's role and establish the mentee's expectations to avoid it being unrealistic;
- determine clear mentee intended outcomes, whether it be for career or business development; and
- emphasise the accountability of the mentee regarding being prepared for online meetings by reading information sent as well as confirmation of the receipt of a message.

9.6.5 Impersonal nature of online mentoring

From the participant interviews, it was clear that some mentors prefer having some face-to-face meetings, even if just for the first meeting as they regard the online medium as impersonal and influencing the building of a trusting relationship. Several researchers (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:3; Sanyal & Rigby, 2016:14) acknowledge that the word-based aspect of online communication can be impersonal and sterile and that cultivating an online mentoring relationship may pose a challenge if reliant on only non-visual modes of communication. The lack of non-verbal cues such as pitch of voice,

flow of speech, facial expression, and body language, which would normally reflect interpersonal warmth in face-to-face conversations, may lead both mentors and mentees to feel that statements of psychosocial support provided online do not convey the same degree of emotion (Elkin & Elkin, 2008:23; Smith-Jentsch *et al.*, 2008:195).

The online mentoring field specialists observed that online mentoring can be made less impersonal using interactive social media platforms where using emoticons can assist in expressing emotions in the online mentoring environment, but recommend rather using BBM than WhatsApp that has less impressive emoticons. Wong and Premkumar (2007:5) confirm that emoticons and abbreviations are helpful in online communication to compensate for the lack of body language. Sphigelman and Gill (2012:470) observed that successful online mentors tended to use a colloquial conversational style, including emoticons, slang, nicknames, and humour.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that the online mentor could make the online environment more personalised by:

- having an initial in-person face-to-face or Skype meeting;
- asking direct questions and provide additional information in attached files or via suggested links to websites to demonstrate interest in the mentee's progress;
- encouraging online messages in an informal conversational style, and
- using a colloquial conversation style which include the use of emoticons and humour as provided on Skype and WhatsApp to compensate for the lack of observed body language and to help interpret communications.

In addition, it is suggested that the online mentoring institution should incorporate training in netiquette for the mentoring pair to become aware of how to show respect and display common courtesy in the online mentoring environment.

9.6.6 Having knowledgeable and experienced mentors

The participants in this study regard knowledgeable matured mentors that have practical industry experience, online experience and provide good feedback to mentees as essential for effective online mentoring. They further indicated that preference should be given to appoint mentors unrelated to their workplace. Several

researchers (Cull, 2006:10; Sarri, 2010:723; Thulo, 2014) affirmed that knowledgeable and experienced mentors have faced similar situations and can therefore better assist mentees to achieve the desired results and overcome the challenges experienced. It is especially beneficial to use mentors who have had previous experience in business mentoring (St Jean & Audet, 2012:119) and/or career advancement (Potgieter, 2011:3).

From the preceding discussion it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- recruit and select knowledgeable mature mentors with practical field experience if for small business mentoring, or with a proven record of leadership or accomplishment in public service if for corporate mentoring;
- give preference to mentors that have previous online or conventional mentoring experience;
- provide training for mentors on how to use online communication tools;
- after the conclusion of the mentoring relationship evaluate the online mentoring experience in a closure survey to determine whether the mentors have met expectations regarding knowledge levels and practical field experiences and at the same time establish the contributions made to the mentees' career and business development. This can ensure that only knowledgeable mentors that perform satisfactory remain in the programme and are used for future online mentoring; and
- match mentees with knowledgeable mentors which possess practical industry experience, but are unrelated to the corporate mentees' workplace as not all senior managers are necessarily good mentors or have the patience to find time to mentor their employees.

It is further suggested that all online mentors should show their knowledge and experience through:

- asking insightful questions which will provide ways for the mentee to challenge her own thinking;
- their ability to provide good detailed feedback which can provide focus and guidance to mentees; and

- practical business experience when providing small business mentoring and assist the mentee in assessing competition, identifying potential opportunities and threats in the environment and suggest viable solutions to overcome these.

9.6.7 Training offered

Mentor participants in this study agreed on the importance of mentee training in their areas of expertise, but differ whether this training should be voluntary or made compulsory and be incorporated in the online mentoring programme or as a stand-alone programme. The mentee's field of employment will influence the type of training required such as for small business development (business skills), corporate employees (leadership or business skills) and for post-graduate university students, research skills while for their supervisors supervision skills training. It is confirmed in literature (Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:119; DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:303; Williams & Kim 2011:86; Bullock-Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83) that pre-programme training for both mentors and mentees is important and it should be driven by the needs of the target group. The SA small business online mentoring specialists regarded formal training for small business mentors as compulsory, especially if the mentor receive payment for it and furthermore recommended continuous professional development for mentors.

Orientation training for the mentoring pair on online mentoring was also suggested by participants. Previous research on online mentoring strongly underlines the importance of online mentor training (Bierema & Merriam, 2002:214; Shrestha *et al.*, 2009:119). Literature (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8; Williams & Kim 2011:86; Bullock-Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:80) affirms that training is necessary to provide relevant information regarding the technology to be used and the means with which to build a meaningful online relationship.

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- offer pre-programme training for mentors and mentees either in a face-to-face manner with all online mentors being present or online at a time convenient to the mentoring pair via webinars or video tutorials;

- share in the training information regarding programme objectives, programme guidelines and procedures; a detailed description of assignments, what mentees can expect, online communication options available and how to use online technology, how to build an online relationship, the level of dedication required in terms of meeting times and depth of feedback supplied, and the benefits and rewards of participation;
- offer work-related content training taking into consideration the needs of the mentoring pair and the field in which the online mentoring is taking place;
- insist on small business mentors to develop themselves continuously by attending formal training programmes to provide them with further practical business insight. This training could be offered for a fee via the online institution's digital resource library;
- sponsor and have online discussions of topics relevant to mentoring, such as professional standards, ethical values, and balancing career and personal life which the mentoring pair can access at a time convenient for them; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of their online mentoring programme through feedback from the mentoring pair and then suggest training to the individuals based on the feedback provided.

9.6.8 Having mentors with exceptional personal qualities

Mentee participants viewed mentors with exceptional qualities such as being transparent, caring, providing prompt feedback and inspiration as essential for effective online mentoring. The approachability of the mentor and sharing of the same passion and goals as the mentee were regarded as vital for online mentoring. Literature (Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:471; Strauss, Johnson, Marquez & Feldman, 2013:84) affirms that successful mentoring relationships are characterised by reciprocity and personal connection. Mentors supporting mentees regardless of subject areas result in positive and productive relationships but requires mentors to exhibit characteristics such as enthusiasm, professionalism, sharing practices and resources and collaborative problem solving (Hudson, 2016:39). De Janasz and Godshalk *et al.* (2013:763) noted that online relationships often begin and continue due to the closeness of values and ideas.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- when matching mentors take into consideration similarity in passion and goals;
- compile an introduction manual for orientation of new mentors outlining the essential qualities needed for being a good mentor such as being approachable, always professional, enthusiastic, transparent, caring, providing speedy feedback and inspiration to enable effective online mentoring;
- emphasise in the introduction manual that successful mentoring relationships are characterised by reciprocity, clear expectations and personal connection with a clear description on how to go about it; and
- encourage mentors regardless of field of mentoring to share practices and resources and engage in collaborative problem solving with other mentors if asked.

9.6.9 Continuous commitment

The participants noted that continuous commitment of both the mentor and the mentee is essential in developing an effective online mentoring relationship. Mentors would not appreciate setting time aside from their busy work schedules to conduct online mentoring, if there is no mentee commitment. Some researchers (Stokes *et al.*, 2003:12; Sphigelman & Gill 2012:464; Leck & Wood, 2013:105) warned that there appears to be less commitment in the online environment and the mentoring pair thus needs to make a concerted effort to remain committed. It was further noted by the participants in this study that to foster commitment, mentees could use peer support if residing in the same geographical area and working in the same business industry. The importance of the role of the mentee in a successful online mentoring relationship has been highlighted in that mentees should be motivated to plan, record and give feedback to their mentors (Bamford, 2011:152; Rankhumise, 2013:377). Several researchers (Leppisaari & Tenhunen, 2009:191; Sphigelman & Gill, 2012:469; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:83) endorsed the importance of the mentoring pair understanding that should both bring value to the online mentoring relationship.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- remind the mentoring pair that the online mentoring agreement signed signifies commitment to the online mentoring process;

- clearly specify in the online mentoring agreement the mentoring pair's roles so that they can fully understand commitment expectations prior to the commencement of the programme;
- appoint an online mentoring programme administrator to offer pre-programme orientation training to assist and motivate mentees on how to plan, record and give feedback to their mentors after each formal meeting;
- in the pre-programme orientation training inform mentees that they can request to be re-assigned with another mentor if they experience incompatibility or commitment problems with their mentor; and
- make it the duty of the programme administrator to monitor meeting times and request feedback from the mentoring pair for timeous intervention if there appears to be less commitment to the process;
- supply mentees with names of other mentees in the same geographical area and/or same business industry that can provide peer support and motivate them to remain in the programme, but advise that it should merely be regarded as a support network and not replace the online mentoring relationship; and
- request progress reports from the mentor to be send to the workplace for the purpose of promotion or if a university student for financial assistance for registration for the following year, which could then further encourage continual commitment.

9.6.10 Duration of programme and meeting times

Mentor participants agreed about the importance of a reasonable programme duration for effective online mentoring. The duration depends on the field of mentoring, such as a university post-graduate student who may have a four-year relationship linked to the period of study, or for business development between six and twelve months and for career development only between two and six months. These mentor participants further noted that the duration of the online programme is driven by the intended objectives to be achieved, as well as the position of the corporate employee as lower hierarchical level employees normally have shorter online mentoring relationships. Several researchers (Samier, 2000:92; Allen & Eby, 2010:339,360; Rankhumise, 2013:376; Weiler *et al.*, 2015:197; Sanyal & Rigby, 2016:5) affirm that no best practice is evident regarding the exact duration of the relationship (whether six months or three

to four years), but endorse that the optimal duration is a critical aspect to consider and that online mentoring relationships normally takes longer to develop than face-to-face.

Participants in this study confirmed that the time period for each meeting session should not exceed one hour as it may influence the effectiveness thereof. However, if participants are involved in online mentoring offered by global institutions, the duration and frequency of the meetings are predetermined. Stokes *et al.* (2003:5) and Van der Sijde and Weijam (2013:196) note that unlike a face-to-face meeting which may last a couple of hours, an online mentoring discussion can be broken down into shorter, on-going exchanges, spread over several days or more.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- decide on a feasible optimal time duration for the online mentoring programme linked to the intended outcome of the online mentoring programme. For example, university post-graduate students' duration of their study should serve as a guideline for the programme duration, for corporate employees about six months and for small business development a longer period of approximately one year;
- bear in mind when setting meeting duration that it should not be too short to prevent the participants to achieve their desired goals and objectives, but not too long to lose the attention of the mentee;
- should, however allow mentors to be flexible in setting meeting duration based on the mentee's availability and needs, but warned not to exceed meeting time of one hour. More frequent short meetings may then contribute to remain committed and complete the programme;
- encourage programme administrators to be frequently in contact with mentees to establish if meeting sessions take place according to plan or to determine how they can assist in managing meeting times; and
- inform mentoring pairs that the relationship can continue beyond the formal programme duration if both parties are willing to do so.

9.6.11 Multiple contact methods

The participants in this study suggested that the online mentor pair use more than one online contact method to provide for eventualities such as mal-functioning of

equipment used. Several researchers (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:763; Bullock & Ferrier-Kerr, 2014:80) affirm that using multiple contact methods can assist in the development of an effective online mentoring relationship. The participants in this study use mostly Skype and email conversations. Other voice chat methods such as telephone calls, telephone conferencing, voice messages or Whats app calls and text messaging (SMS and Whats app) are also utilised at times. De Janasz and Godshalk (2013:763) advise mentoring pairs to incorporate Skype FaceTime, Google Hangouts as well as telephone conversations into their mentoring partnership as talking to someone in real time enables more efficient communication and allows for a deeper, more meaningful conversation to occur. One of the online mentoring field specialist participants indicates that some SA institutions provide webinar platforms.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- provide online mentoring participants with a list of the various contact methods options available;
- encourage the use of both synchronous and asynchronous communication methods for effective dialogue such as email, instant messaging, chat rooms and online voice and video chat as preferred contact methods;
- promote the use of real time conversations using Skype, Google Hangouts and FaceTime, as well as telephone conversations to enable more efficient communication and which allow for a deeper, more meaningful conversation to occur;
- encourage the mentoring pair to use written communication such as email for information clarity which may occur due to language differences or to confirm what was said in conversations if disrupted by an unreliable internet connection; and
- advise the mentoring pair to send a follow-up email after each online mentoring session to recap key information to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretation of actions required.

9.6.12 Hybrid online mentoring approach

Participants in this study seems to prefer a hybrid model consisting of limited face-to-face meetings complimenting online mentoring meetings. The online mentoring field

specialists indicated that face-to-face sessions is particularly valuable for small business mentoring which requires technical skills transfer while online sessions are more suitable for non-financial business support. The hybrid online mentoring approach is recommended by several authors (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:763; Sanyal & Rigby, 2016:14) who regard at least one face-to-face meeting desirable as it can strengthen the online relationship. Some researchers (De Janasz & Godshalk, 2013:744) warn though that online mentoring should consist of less face-time as when engaged in conventional mentoring.

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that all online mentoring institutions:

- propose the use of at least one face-to-face meeting during the duration of the programme to strengthen the online relationship where this face-to-face meeting could be in person or, if not possible, via online Skype sessions; and
- emphasise that face-to-face interactions should be limited as it can influence the stereotype perceptions that the mentoring pair may have of each other based on their demographics. Limited face-to-face interactions could also negate the perceptions of male mentors that females lack the skills to grasp complex problems and prevent them from becoming too acquainted with female mentees which could interfere with the mentoring relationship.

The conclusions and recommendations on South African specific enabling conditions necessary to implement effective online mentoring, will be discussed in the following sections.

9.7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOUTH AFRICAN ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE MENTORING

The SA participants (five mentors, three mentees and two online mentoring field specialists) noted enabling online mentoring conditions specific to South Africa. These enabling online mentoring conditions include: matching perceptions, technology infrastructure requirements, availability of knowledgeable and experienced mentors, the provision of small business support material, access to funding to implement online mentoring and promoting online mentoring programmes, which are presented in the following sections.

9.7.1 Matching perceptions

The participants noted that demographics such as age, gender, ethnic affiliation and personality compatibility may influence matching preference in SA. However, there are differences in the opinions between researchers from other countries regarding the influence of demographics in matching preference. Blunt and Conolly (2006:206) and Allen and Eby (2010:353) confirmed the role that demographics play in matching while other researchers (Cox, 2005:406; Single & Single, 2005:307; Wong & Premkumar, 2007:8) contested it.

The SA participants noted that in education, *age* may present problems for academic post-graduate supervision where the supervisor may be younger than the student. However, this challenge could be overcome if the student can trust the supervisor, respect her/him for knowledge and the quality of the feedback provided by the supervisor. In the research of Leck *et al.* (2014:1), it was acknowledged that females and other minorities face significant challenges if having a preference to be mentored by an older more experienced female as there is not a large enough online female mentor pool available that is knowledgeable and experienced in all fields.

The SA participants noted that in mentoring small businesses, *ethnic affiliation* may present problems as there are not a large enough pool of small business experts with practical experience available. Once again, the research of Leck *et al.* (2014:1) acknowledged that females and other minorities face significant challenges if having a preference to be mentored by a female mentor from the same race due to unavailability of access to a large enough online female mentor pool available that is knowledgeable and experienced in all fields (Wong & Premkumar, 2007:7; DiRenzo *et al.*, 2010:302).

The SA participants noted that in mentoring corporate employees, *personality* compatibility plays a role. It was further noted that matching preference problems for small businesses should be managed, and based on feedback, a decision should be made whether to continue or discontinue the relationship as confirmed by Sphigelman and Gill (2012:464).

In addition, in South Africa, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) may play a role in matching preferences. The intentions of the SA government

with B-BBEE was noble as it was supposed to transform the economy so that it was representative of the country's racial demographics (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013:123; Mehta & Ward, 2016:1). However, it is a particularly sensitive issue in cross-gender and cross-race relationships in SA, where mentoring programmes are seen as being remedial for females and blacks (Brondyk & Searby, 2013:193). Rankhumise (2013:371) claims that some of the perceived fears associated with mentoring relationships in South Africa are that the mentees (black or female) could – in future – take their mentors' jobs, resulting in retrenchments and fewer job opportunities. The mentoring relationship could also be viewed as unfair because colleagues and peers may see it as a means of getting ahead (Pinho *et al.*, 2005:21).

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that all online mentoring institutions should:

- bear in mind the effect of B-BBEE when selecting cross gender/race mentors and carefully consider the mentor's profile as an open, supportive, flexible and approachable leadership style is required,
- appoint mentors with an openness to cultural differences, especially if mentoring small business entrepreneurs;
- if offering corporate online mentoring, have an initial face-to-face meeting to confront attitudes, behaviours and fears that might exist about B-BBEE;
- consider appointing more than one mentor to provide corporate mentees an alternative if personality incompatibility is experienced;
- in education, allocate if possible a supervisor older than the mature post graduate doctoral student to enable a trusting and respectful relationship;
- consider matching a female mentee with a female mentor for increased psychosocial support and satisfaction with the mentoring relationship;
- consider the education level, as mentees with a higher education may be more open to explore their culture differences and enhance knowledge and social development; and
- encourage feedback from the mentoring pairs to intervene before relationships are irreconcilable or to enable rematching, so that the mentee can continue with the programme.

9.7.2 Technology infrastructure requirements

The SA participants noted the importance of technology infrastructure readiness for effective online mentoring. It was suggested that SA should benchmark its few online mentoring platforms with successful global online mentoring programmes to determine technology infrastructural needs. For effective online mentoring to occur, technology infrastructural requirements, such as the physical devices (specialised software and hardware) and networks required for the online mentoring relationship should be in place (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212; Rowland, 2012:3; Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013:223).

The participants also mentioned that SA's broadband consistency is problematic which influence 24/7 online connectivity. Further to this, when connection is available, there is the possibility of system overload. One of the online mentoring specialists recommended the use of a technology checklist to ensure that technology is in place and operational prior to the online meeting, especially when using Skype. Bullock and Ferrier-Kerr (2014:80:83) confirmed that for an online mentoring programme to be sustainable and successful, the knowledge and proficiency needed, the computer and technical support required, and how the interface will be presented so that it is functional and user-friendly, must be considered prior to initiating a mentoring programme.

One of the SA online mentoring field specialists recommended the use of mobile apps as an alternative to computer technology. Many experts argue that the future of computer technology rests in mobile computing with wireless networking (Techopedia, 2016). Literature contend that most corporate employees, managers, entrepreneurs and trainees tend to interact with their mentors via WhatsApp message, rather than emails to mentor professionals across the world (Hariharan, 2016; Walker, 2016; BizWiz Learning, 2016). It was confirmed that in the first decade of the new millennium, mobile text messaging, surpass face-to-face communication, email and voice calling, to become the preferred method for communication, especially amongst the youth (Lenhart *et al.*, 2010).

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that South African online mentoring institutions should:

- conduct an investigative analysis of successful global online mentoring programmes such as Cherie Blair, Tony Elumelo and YALI in order to establish the technology infrastructure systems and procedures necessary to operate successfully;
- ensure a safe and secure online system for online conversations to guarantee privacy protection, confidentiality and avoidance of hacking of passwords;
- ensure 24/7 mentoring platform availability and consider how to deal with system overload during peak hours by implementing a booking system where the mentee can choose a mentor within an available time slot convenient for both;
- encourage the use of mobile technology as an alternative for computer technology, especially in the rural areas as it is a cheaper means of communication;
- promote the use of WhatsApp calls and messages for 24/7 access anywhere; and
- offer a platform for videos and webinars on business topics when providing small business mentoring to connect the mentoring pair to a global community of committed, ambitious entrepreneurs who share knowledge.

9.7.3 Knowledgable and experienced mentors

The SA participants noted the importance of having access to corporate mentors with fieldwork experience and small business mentors with previous mentoring experience (conventional or online), business management qualifications and practical entrepreneurial experience. It is confirmed by Potgieter (2011:3) that for career advancement, females with some of the difficulties they experience in a male-dominated corporate environment, needs a male mentor with the necessary knowledge and experience to guide them. Research (Martin-Cairncross, 2009; Daft, 2010; Howe-Walsh *et al.*, 2016) in the domain of females in management, attributes the under-representation of females at executive level to a multitude of barriers inhibiting females' progress beyond an apparent 'glass ceiling', and confirm that females who have a mentor perform at greater levels as they gain reflected power, advice and the right to use essential resources and senior managers through their mentorship relationship (Headlam-Wells, 2004:212). However, one of the most prominent issues identified is lack of female mentors with whom females can identify (Bilimoria & Piderit, 2007:306; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016:306).

The SA mentors suggested that SA should explore the potential of implementing small business online mentoring to service rural communities as it was acknowledged that SA mentors are utilised for global small business mentoring while their expertise is most needed in SA for those in rural areas that cannot access conventional mentoring. St Jean and Audet (2012:12) affirm that the purpose of online small business mentoring is to learn from the experience of other entrepreneurs and, it is thus beneficial to use mentors who have had previous small business mentoring experience.

From the preceding it is suggested that South African online mentoring institutions should:

- embark on a recruitment drive for knowledgeable mentors with practical field experience, and if possible with conventional and/or online mentoring experience;
- build a database for small business mentoring consisting of knowledgeable and entrepreneurial industry experienced mentors;
- build a database of female mentors in all business fields for both corporate and small business mentoring to overcome gender/race/age challenges. These online mentoring institutions can partner with existing conventional mentoring programmes such as BWA in SA and even with some of the global online mentoring institutions as benefits will accrue to both;
- conduct a feasibility analysis for the development of a small business online mentoring programme to service the SA rural communities and present their findings to the SA government with a request for implementation funding;
- offer online mentoring training to interested mentors. The government can be approached to sponsor these online mentoring training sessions, as well as assist to promote it; and
- arrange online networking events by means of webinars and videoconferencing where aspiring businesswomen can gain valuable wisdom and support from experienced female entrepreneurs and corporate managers.

9.7.4 Additional small business support

One of the SA participants recommended that small business mentees should be provided with access to a small business development solutions toolkit such as those provided on the Tony Elumelo programme, which can be accessed 24/7. The role of

the online mentor then changes to merely guide the mentee in the implementation of the various solutions to small business problems (Tony Elumelo, 2016c).

From the preceding discussion, it is thus suggested that South African online mentoring institutions should:

- conduct an investigation into the best practices of global online mentoring institutions on the type of support they provide to the mentoring pair;
- as there are not at present a large enough pool of knowledgeable and experienced mentors in the online mentoring environment, consider partnering or negotiating with Tony Elumelo Foundation to make this small business toolkit also available to SA mentors and mentees;
- call upon various small business support institutions to assist in compiling a small business toolkit which can be used in the online mentoring environment;
- in addition to offering online mentoring, consider compiling an online tool to help start-up female entrepreneurs to assess their business skills and source skills from training providers to overcome skills challenges. The chance of business will then be greater with access to both online mentoring and skills training; and
- establish an online network platform, where female entrepreneurs can share experiences, opportunities and how to overcome business challenges.

9.7.5 Access to programme implementation funding

The SA participants noted that small business mentors referred to the importance of creating private and public partnerships in South Africa to fund the implementation of online mentoring programmes. It was also acknowledged that there is a need for funding in SA to implement an online mentoring programme for specifically females. Mueller (2004:59) underlines that creating and maintaining an online mentoring programme requires sufficient resources, not only for the development of a technical infrastructure, but also for the labour-intensive work of programme co-ordination, training and on-going communications with mentors and mentees. Single and Single (2005:306) report that online mentoring activities require setting up and maintaining websites, monitoring the internet and supporting two-way communication. These challenges lead to significant up-front and operational costs, which are hard to coordinate and manage (Panapoulos & Sarri, 2013:217).

From the above it can thus be suggested that South African online mentoring institutions should:

- consider establishing an online mentoring programme just for females;
- actively pursue private and public partnerships for funding, both in SA and internationally, to put in place the infrastructure necessary for the development of online mentoring platforms; and
- source cost effective IT support services to set up and maintain websites, and make provision for the most functional way for two-way communication between the mentoring pair.

9.7.6 Promotion of online mentoring

The participants recommended that a greater awareness of online mentoring should be created by marketing and promoting the benefits of online mentoring to all SA communities. Marketing and promoting the benefits of online mentoring is however, pointless if no funding is in place for the infrastructure necessary to implement the online mentoring programme (Ballantyne, 2015).

From the preceding discussion, it is suggested that existing South African online mentoring institutions should:

- create a greater awareness of online mentoring by marketing it on social media as it is more cost effective;
- clearly specify in advertisements their intended target market for the online mentoring;
- request sponsorship from government to go on a road show to create awareness amongst rural communities of the possibility of mobile online mentoring;
- announce the acceptance of programme applications in free local newspapers with a short article informing prospective participants of the opportunities and benefits of participating in an online mentoring programme and the commencement date;
- use webinars in large businesses to constantly remind employees of the opportunity and benefits associated with online mentoring;
- on their website use testimonials and success stories to communicate the achievements of mentees to stimulate a desire in prospective participants to join

the programme. This success story or testimonial could be as brief as including a quote of the success achieved in an email, or a short video of a successful small business case;

- simplify the application process to make it easier for applicants to apply without feeling intimidated about the online mentoring process or discouraging them from completing the application; and
- in their promotion drive, clearly outline the benefits of online versus conventional face-to-face mentoring and specify how it can be in particular beneficial to females as it allow flexibility while coping with family commitments.

It should be mentioned that while the qualitative interviews were most informative about the conditions necessary for the online mentoring environment in South Africa, as experienced by those female participants actively engaging in online mentoring, it still remains a question how those not participating in online mentoring, regard it. For this reason, an online questionnaire was administered in phase three to female mentees and mentors (males and females) employed in a business, or a small business entrepreneur in South Africa who had undergone conventional mentoring to establish the enabling conditions necessary for the online mentoring environment, as well as the benefits to mentees (achievements).

9.7.7 Conclusions and recommendations on the enabling conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa

From the EFA, six online mentoring enablers were perceived as necessary conditions in the online mentoring environment in SA viz. infrastructure readiness, demographic matching preference, mentor characteristics, communication process, mentoring pair perceptions and the mentoring pair relationship as concluded on in the following section. In addition, various mentee achievements for females who intend undergoing online mentoring, were noted. A discussion of the conclusions follow where after recommendations will be made.

9.7.7.1 Conclusions on the enabling conditions necessary for the online mentoring environment in South Africa

Six conditions were identified in the EFA as necessary for creating a favourable online mentoring environment in South Africa, as discussed below.

(a) Infrastructure readiness

It seems SA respondents associated *infrastructure readiness* as an important condition for the online mentoring environment. It appears that online mentoring institutions should have a user-friendly communication channel for conducting online mentoring conversations, as well as an administrative system that provide technical support for the effective storage, retrieval and maintenance of information to offer online mentoring. In addition to technology readiness, the availability of knowledgeable mentors specialising in certain topics, as well as those generalists with insight into a wide range of topics are deemed necessary conditions in the online mentoring environment. However, the importance of a mentee with a clear career or business vision for effective online mentoring should not be underestimated (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

(b) Demographic matching preferences

It further appears that SA respondents have *demographic matching preferences* regarding age, gender and ethnic affiliation and regard the similarity of the mentoring pair based on these three demographics as key conditions for the online mentoring environment (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

(c) Mentor characteristics

Moreover, SA respondents regard a *mentor* that possess *characteristics* such as an appropriate educational background, previous mentoring experience and conducive leadership style as necessary in the online mentoring environment. In addition, the ability of the mentor to use an online communication medium and convey a detailed written message while expressing feelings with relative ease, were perceived as vital in the online mentoring environment (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

(d) Communication process

SA respondents furthermore viewed the *communication process* followed pivotal to engaging in online mentoring. For effective online mentoring, it appears that the mentoring pair should ensure that the same communication method for conversations is available, such as Skype. The boundaries of the relationship must be set from the inception of programme participation. It seems also necessary to convey a clear message on which information to share and to keep an accurate record of the communication to enable an honest reflection by both parties of the communication process (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

(e) Mentoring pair perceptions

SA respondents regard the *perceptions the mentoring pair* has of the online mentoring process as an important condition in the online mentoring environment. It seems that if the mentoring pair perceived the online mentoring process as complex and challenging, they may not regard it as a worthwhile option to consider. On the other hand, if the mentoring pair perceives online mentoring to have many benefits, they would be keener to engage in online mentoring. The similarity in attitude, values and beliefs of the mentoring pair appears to be of utmost importance in online mentoring, as if dissimilar they may have negative perceptions about it (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

(f) Mentoring pair relationship

SA respondents regard the *relationship between the mentoring pair* as a vital condition for online mentoring. It appears that a mentoring pair that quickly develop a close relationship that portray camaraderie is necessary for effective online mentoring. However, it is deemed as important that the mentoring pair set clear goals and expectations at the commencement of the relationship. The use of two-way information exchange between the mentor and mentee were furthermore regarded as an important condition to accelerate the development of a close online mentoring pair relationship (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

9.7.7.2 Conclusions of the mentee achievements

According to the SA respondents, the effectiveness of the online mentoring process can lead to several *mentee achievements*. Online mentoring seems to be able to

provide female mentees with personal growth benefits by improving their self-development needs to pursue their dreams, improve their self-confidence, and build their morale. There appears to be also work-related benefits for female mentees undergoing online mentoring such as learning how to take control of their work life, gaining real-world knowledge, learning how to apply theory into practice, improving their interpersonal skills and access to a professional network of business contacts. It furthermore appears as if female mentees engaging in online mentoring can be motivated to pursue career/business opportunities, fast-track their career or accelerate the growth of their businesses. However, these benefits can be accrued depending on the length of the online mentoring relationship (see Table 8.14 for literature support).

9.7.7.3 Conclusions of the statistically significant relationship between mentoring pair perceptions and mentee achievements

Although the outcome of the EFA identified six factors viz. infrastructure readiness, demographic matching preference, mentor characteristics, communication process, mentoring pair perceptions and the mentoring pair relationship as necessary for an enabling online mentoring environment, the multiple regression analysis performed for the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements, provided evidence of only one statistically significant relationship between *mentoring pair perceptions* and *mentee achievements*. This indicates that respondents seem to regard the perceptions that the mentoring pair have as influential in the mentee's achievements. A detailed discussion of this significant relationship with literature support was provided in Section 8.10 of Chapter 8.

9.7.7.4 Recommendations on the enabling conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa

It is acknowledged that most conditions for an enabling online mentoring environment are generic and not gender specific as was indicated in this study. Although an attempt has been made in South Africa to create an enabling environment for effective online mentoring to take place, there is still much to learn from global mentoring institutions as the South Africa environment has its own challenges. Taking into consideration the previous conclusions made regarding the enabling conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa, it is therefore recommended that online mentoring institutions in SA should:

- ensure that they have a user-friendly communication channel available, as well as an administration and technical support system to store, retrieve and maintain information to simplify the process;
- recruit knowledgeable mentors specialising on certain topics, as well as those able to cover a variety of topics;
- as a first choice recruit mentors with previous mentoring experience;
- when recruiting mentors consider their educational background, leadership style and written communication ability to express themselves ;
- provide the mentoring pair with advice on which communication method to use, such as for written communication, emails, and for more personal communication, Skype;
- Make it a rule that the pair mentoring pair should keep a record of conversations for message reference purposes, or that in event of complaints lodged, it can be investigated;
- Get feedback after the conclusion of the online mentoring process and the general challenges experienced, as well as the benefits of participating; and
- Determine optimal programme durations based on the intended outcomes of the programme.

Specific to female mentees in South Africa, it is recommended that online mentoring institutions in SA should:

- ensure that female mentees in their application already indicate their intended vision regarding the progress they want to make in their career or within their small business to determine the type of support needed such as psycho-social support in addition to career advancement support; and
- consider demographics such as age, gender and ethnic affiliation when matching females as B-BBEE and culture can influence the online mentoring relationship as well as their perceptions regarding gender similarity of the mentoring pair as it influence their attitude, values and beliefs.

9.8 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO THEORY AND PRACTICE

This research is important because it provided evidence on online mentoring and how it can influence the career or small business development of females in South Africa as limited research has been conducted in this field. The research study has:

- built a body of knowledge by identifying the conditions necessary for online mentoring globally, as well as in South Africa;
- verified that although many South African institutions claim on their website to offer online mentoring, it is not necessarily true as they only utilise emails for setting meeting times, and no actual online mentoring is taking place;
- shown that South Africa has knowledgeable mentors who are involved in global online mentoring programmes and due to their participation in these programmes are experienced enough to further extend online mentoring to South African communities in need of assistance;
- confirmed that very few online mentoring programmes are specifically focusing on female career advancement, either in the corporate workplace or for small business business development;
- ascertained the different online mentoring processes and infrastructure that should be in place prior to commencement of the online mentoring programmes in South Africa;
- identified the various challenges associated with online mentoring globally, and those specific to South Africa;
- established that most online mentoring programmes encourage a hybrid mentoring approach, with limited face-to-face conversations and that Skype could be considered as a substitute for an in-person face-to-face meeting;
- distinguished between the real experiences and perceptions regarding online mentoring enablers;
- confirmed the benefits of online mentoring for females to transform their business career or to develop their small businesses in South Africa, or beyond;
- merged the strengths of the mixed method research paradigm to better understand the uncharted field of effective online mentoring. The exploratory sequential method used in this study made it possible to follow up on initial exploratory findings of online mentoring in general and to generalise the results to some extent

to the perceptions of South Africans as well as to females on what influences effective online mentoring;

- developed and tested a hypothesised model identifying the online mentoring enablers which may influence mentee achievements from the qualitative results;
- designed a measuring instrument suitable for determining the online mentoring enablers influencing mentee achievements in South Africa. With some contextual adjustments, or rewording, this research instrument can be used in both developing and developed countries;
- confirmed that the perceptions of the mentoring pair regarding online mentoring influence mentee achievements;
- shown that mobile technology is a cheaper alternative to engage in online mentoring, thereby increasing the accessibility thereof; and
- provided guidance to online mentoring institutions in South Africa on the infrastructure and conditions necessary to implement effective online mentoring.

9.9 SELF REFLECTION AND LEARNING

My experience as a PhD student has been rewarding and I experienced academic enrichment. As a result of this study, I have a greater understanding of the most appropriate way to structure a research project. Knowledge gained and lessons learned included improved scholarly writing skills and experience gained in conducting scientific research. Knowledge was gained of mixed method research as the qualitative research approach applied in phases one and two of this study exposed me to a number of valuable data collection methods which I have not previously used.

A further lesson learnt was to read widely and with insight and apply the knowledge to the study in question to reflect sufficient depth of understanding. The importance of keeping the research purpose and objectives in focus when writing the different chapters was yet another lesson as it assisted not to divert from the core purpose and objectives of the study. The expertise attained in ensuring that there was coherence and that the chapters flowed well, was a fundamental and much appreciated lesson which will assist in future research.

Online mentoring seems to be gaining momentum globally, and completing this study has awoken a desire in me to remain abreast of new developments in this field. Furthermore, the research enriched and broadened my view of global online mentoring and more importantly, the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring to occur in South Africa, and in particular for females who wish to further their career or develop their small businesses.

9.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study, all the objectives outlined in Chapter 1 were met. The present study has attempted to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring to occur in South Africa. However, a few limitations should be considered when making interpretations and conclusions relating to the findings of this study. These limitations are as follows:

- Although a mixed method approach was followed which provided a more complete investigation of the topic, the quantitative findings in this study are based on the mentoring perceptions and experiences of only 63 mentors and mentees involved with conventional mentoring in South Africa. A larger sample may have provided different results.
- As not all participants were from South Africa, but also from other African countries, it may have influenced some of the challenges and online mentoring enablers noted, although an attempt was made to reflect the views of only South African mentors and online mentoring field specialists (see conclusions and recommendations Section 9.7).
- As most mentors were involved in online mentoring for global institutions and not just mentoring South African mentees, their views may not just reflect the South African situation. An attempt was therefore made to provide conclusions and recommendations on the South African specific enabling conditions as emanated from the empirical results (see Section 9.7).

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge of enabling conditions necessary for effective online mentoring in SA. Online mentoring is an under-researched field, not just in SA but globally. For this reason, promising future research possibilities exist as indicated in the following section.

9.11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the outcomes of this research, the following specific recommendations are made for future research:

- Expand the study globally into Africa and rest of the world to identify similarities and differences in the online mentoring experiences of mentees of Africa to the rest of the world.
- Test the enabling conditions identified as important for effective online mentoring in this study on a larger sample of South African mentors and/or mentees using the same online structured questionnaire developed for phase three.
- Further explore the technology and infrastructure needed in South Africa to develop effective online mentoring platforms in a quantitative study.
- Explore the enabling conditions specific only to small business online mentoring.
- Explore the enabling conditions specific only to corporate employee online mentoring.

9.12 FINAL CONCLUSION

Mentoring is considered a means that could potentially assist females to overcome the business and career development growth barriers they face. Females at executive level face a multitude of barriers inhibiting their progress beyond an apparent glass ceiling and female small business entrepreneurs face many barriers when considering developing their businesses. Female family commitments, a career break due to child bearing, lack of workplace exposure and subsequent business skills shortage, and cultural restrictions influencing females' ability to access finance, can restrict females in career advancement. The importance of conventional mentoring has been recognised globally, however, due to family commitments, females may not always be able to fit into the structured time schedule of conventional mentoring. For this reason, online mentoring can provide females, which would otherwise not been able to access mentoring, a chance to do so.

Although mentoring has been part of the workplace for centuries, it is even more important in today's complex business environment. Due to the changes brought about by internet, and specifically social media, there is great scope to engage in online

mentoring. Online mentoring increases the geographic reach of conventional mentoring to even reach rural communities, especially if using mobile technology. The benefits of online mentoring are considerable, whether for personal gain, career advancement, to fast-track a start-up or grow a small business. The benefits of online mentoring is not just for mentees, but the business in which the mentee is employed also benefit with higher job satisfaction, increased performance, creating a more loyal workforce and even reducing employees' stress levels if receiving social support from the mentor. It can also assist new employees to fit into their new job role faster. For small businesses it has different benefits, in that the entrepreneurs could access a wide range of networks, increase business turnover and profit. However, all these benefits could only be reaped if having knowledgeable and experienced mentors and by matching the right mentee with the right mentor. This matching process requires taking into consideration personality, field knowledge, demographics and intended outcome of programme participation. Unfortunately, the perception of the challenges associated with online mentoring and how complex the mentee perceives the process, influence whether they become involve in online mentoring.

The commitment by both parties of the mentoring pair is essential in the effectiveness of the online mentoring programme. The minimum required length of the formal mentoring relationship may be determined by the online mentoring institution, but could be extended beyond this period in an informal relationship, if agreed upon by the mentoring pair. These extended relationships normally occur if it turns into a reciprocal relationship where mentors benefit too by building their own network or having the personal satisfaction of making a difference in the life of an individual. These extended online mentoring relationships provide further opportunities for female mentees to build an extended professional network of contacts, gaining real world knowledge and learning to apply theory in practice.

To conclude, it is clear that online mentoring could transform the lives of especially females as it is less time bound and can fit in-between work and family commitments. With access to online mentoring, females can use this support to break the glass ceiling or to gain confidence to develop their small businesses. However, the perceptions of female mentees regarding the similarity of their values, attitude and beliefs compared to the mentor plays a role in the achievements of the female mentee in the workplace,

whether for personal reasons such as building self-confidence, morale or to take control of her life, or for career advancement or growing her small business.

REFERENCE LIST

- Aaker, D.A., Day, G.S. & Kumar, V. 2007. *Marketing Research*. 9th Edition. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Ability Online. 2016. *History*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.abilityonline.org/>. [Accessed: 22 August 2016].
- ACE Mentor Programme. 2016. *Mentors*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.acementor.org/mentors-volunteers>. [Accessed: 20 August 2016].
- Adachi, K. 2016. *Matrix-Based Introduction to Multivariate Data Analysis*. Singapore: Springer Publishers.
- Ahl, H. 2006. Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5): 595-621.
- Akin, L. & Hilbun, J. 2007. *E-mentoring in three voices*. [Online]. Available: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1065639>. [Accessed: 12 December 2016].
- Aldemir, J. & Ardley, J. 2014. Using videoconferencing mediated mentoring to support an adjunct faculty. *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, 3(1): 59-71.
- Allan, H. 2010. Mentoring overseas nurses: barriers to effective and non-discriminatory mentoring practices. *Nursing Ethics*, 17(5): 603-613.
- Allen, T.D, Eby, L.T, O'Brien, K.E. & Lentz, E. 2008. The state of mentoring research: a qualitative review of current research methods and future research implications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73: 343-357.
- Allen, T.D. & Eby, L.T. 2010. *The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: A multiple perspective approach*. 1st Edition. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.
- Allen, T.D., Day, R. & Lentz, E. 2005. The Role of Interpersonal Comfort in Mentoring Relationships. *Journal of Career Development*, 31(3):155-169.
- Alleyne, S.D., Horner, M.S., Walter, G., Fleisher, S.H., Arzubi, E. & Martin, A. 2009. Mentors' perspectives on group mentorship: a descriptive study of two programs in child and adolescent psychiatry. *Academic Psychiatry*, 33(5): 377-382.
- Amellink, C.T. 2008. *Overview mentoring and women in engineering*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.engr.psu.edu/awe/misc/ARPs/ARPMentoringoverview120408.pdf>. [Accessed: 1 December 2016].

- An, S. & Lipscomb, R. 2013. Instant mentoring: sharing wisdom and getting advice online with e-mentoring. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 5: S32-S34.
- Anney, V.N. 2014. Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2): 272-281.
- Antwi, S.K. & Hamza, K. 2015. Johnson qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in business research: a philosophical reflection. *European Journal of Business Management*, 7(3): 217-225.
- Aosa, E. 2006. Management involvement, training and company effectiveness in an African context. *Journal of African Finance and Economic Development*, 6(3): 123-127.
- Atterton, J. Thompson, N. & Carroll, T. 2009. Mentoring as a mechanism for improvement in local government. *Public Money & Management Journal*, 29(1): 51-57.
- Augar, N., Raitman, R. & Zhou, W. 2004. *Teaching and learning online with Wikis: Beyond the comfort zone*. Proceedings of the 21st ASCILITE Conference, Perth, 5-8 December 2004:95-104.
- Australian Women in Resource Alliance. 2016a. *AWRA e-mentoring program*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.awra.org.au/programs/awra-e-mentoring-program>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- Australian Women in Resource Alliance. 2016b. *AWRA Program Information Kit for Mentees*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.awra.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Program-Information-Kit-for-Mentees-2016.pdf>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- Ayer, N. 2010. *Learning from mentors: Perspectives of South African entrepreneurs*. Master of Business Administration, Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2012. *The practice of social research*. Oxford University Press, Southern Africa.

- Ballantyne, B. 2015. *Invest in mentoring for female engineers urges Women's Engineering Society*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.infrastructure-intelligence.com/article/jun-2015/invest-mentoring-female-engineers-urges-womens-engineering-society>. [Accessed: on 12 January 2017].
- Bamford, C. 2011. Mentoring in the twenty-first century. *Leadership in health services*, 24(2): 150-163.
- Barrett, E. 2007. Experiential learning in practice as research: context, method, knowledge. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6(2): 115-124.
- Barton, S. 2016. *How mobile access drive more productive mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://chronus.com/blog/how-mobile-access-drives-more-productive-mentoring>. [Accessed: on 12 December 2016].
- Baugh, S.G. & Sullivan, S.E. 2005. Mentoring and career development. *Career Development International*, 10(6/7): 425-428.
- The Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship. 2016. *Get involved Mentors*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bransoncentre.co.za/south-africa/home/get-involved/>. [Accessed: 2 December 2016]
- Beacon Foundation. 2015. *Become a Beacon School*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.beaconfoundation.com.au/what-we-do/beacon-model/school-application>. [Accessed: 14 October 2016].
- Beck, C.T. 2005. Benefits of participating in Internet interviews. *Journal of Qualitative Health Research*, 15(5): 411-422.
- Beddoes-Jones, F. & Miller, J. 2006. Virtual mentoring: Can the principle of cognitive pairing increase its effectiveness? *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 4(2): 54-60.
- Beebom. 2016. *12 Best Skype alternatives for VoIP*. [Online]. Available: <http://beebom.com/skype-alternatives-2014>. [Accessed: 22 August 2016].
- Berg, S. 2006. *Encyclopaedia of Statistical Sciences*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.
- Berge, Z. & Kendrick, A.A. 2005. Can interest in distance training be sustained in corporate organizations? *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 2(2).

- Bierema, L.L. & Hill, J.R. 2005. Virtual mentoring and HRD. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7(4): 556-568.
- Bierema, L.L. & Merriam, S.B. 2002. Electronic mentoring: using computer mediated communication to enhance the mentoring process. *Innovative Higher Education*, 26(3): 211-227.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. 2015. *Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia announces launch of OurSpace online e-mentoring program*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.au/get-involved-2/e-mentoring>. [Accessed: 17 October 2016].
- Bilimoria, D. & Piderit, S.K. 2007. *Handbook on women in business and management*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- BizWiz Learning. 2016. *Whatsapp'ng to better mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bizwizlearning.com/%20blogs/details/whatsapp%E2%80%99ng-to-better-mentoring>. [Accessed: 30 November 2016].
- Black, K. 2004. *Business statistics for contemporary decision making*. 4th Edition. India: Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Blickle G., Schneider P.B., Meurs J.A. & Perrewé, P.L. 2010. Antecedents and consequences of perceived barriers to obtaining mentoring: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 40(8): 1897-1920.
- Block, B.A. & Tietjen-Smith, T. 2016. *The case for women mentoring women*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2016.1190285?src=recsys>. [Accessed: 5 October 2016].
- Bloomberg, L.D. & Volpe, M. 2008. *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. California: Sage Publishing.
- Blum, S.D. 2005. Buzzing and writing the day away instant messaging: Studying a new form of communication. *Anthropology News*, 46(2): 29-30.
- Blunt, R.J.S. & Conolly, J. 2006. Perceptions of mentoring: expectations of a key resource for higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 20(9): 195-208.
- Bosch, T.E. 2009. Using online social networking for teaching and learning: Facebook use at the University of Cape Town, *Communication*, 35(2): 185-200.

- Bottomley, L. 2013. *Using technology to enhance mentoring relationships*. [Online]. Available: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/using_technology_to_enhance_mentoring_relationships. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Bourke, L., Waite, C. & Wright, J. 2014. Mentoring as a retention strategy to sustain the rural and remote health force. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 22: 2-7.
- Brightside Online Mentoring. 2016a. [Online]. Available: <http://www.thebrightsidetrust.org/why-it-matters/testimonials/mentoring-awards/>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- Brightside Online Mentoring. 2016b. [Online]. Available: <https://www.brightsideonline-mentoring.org>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Brondyk, S. & Searby, L. 2013. Best practices in mentoring: complexities and possibilities. *International Journal of mentoring and coaching education*, 2(3): 189-203.
- Broughton, A., Higgins, T., Hicks, B. & Cox, A. 2010. *Workplaces and social networking*. Institute for Employment Studies. Brighton: Sovereign House.
- Bryant, S.E. 2005. The impact of peer mentoring on organizational knowledge creation and sharing. An empirical study in software firm. *Group & Organization Management*, 30(13): 319-338.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. 2014. *Research methodology*. South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Buche, M. 2008. Development of trust in electronic mentoring relationships. *International Journal of Networking and Virtual Organizations*, 5(1): 35-50.
- Bullock, T. & Ferrier-Kerr, J. 2014. The potential of e-coaching and e-mentoring: Making a case for the introduction of sustainable e-Coaching and e-Mentoring programmes in New Zealand schools. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, 11(1): 77-92.
- Burke, L. & Miller, M. 2007. Phone interviewing as a means of data collection: Lessons learned and practical recommendations. *Journal of Qualitative Social Research*, 5(4): 32-66.
- Burnham, E.L., Schiro, S. & Fleming, M. 2013. Mentoring K Scholars. *Strategies to Support Research Mentors*, 4(3): 139-226.

- Burns, R.P. & Burns, R. 2008. *Business Research Methods and Statistics Using SPSS*. London: Sage Publications.
- Business Dictionary. 2016a. *What is a chat room?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/chat-room.html>. [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
- Business Dictionary. 2016b. *Myspace*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/Myspace.html>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Business Partners. 2014. *About us*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.businesspartners.co.za/>. [Accessed: 15 December 2016].
- Businesswomen's Association of South Africa 2016. *About the Businesswomen's Association*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bwasa.co.za/about>. [Accessed: 18 August 2016].
- Cakir, H. & Bichelmeyer, B.A. 2005. Effects of cultural differences on e-mail communication in multicultural environments. *The Electronic Journal of Communication*, 15(1 & 2): 1-6.
- Campbell, D.T. & Stanley, J.C. 2006. *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Massachusetts, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company
- Campbell, J., Aragon, C., Davis, K., Evans, S., Evans, A. & Randall, D. 2016. *Thousands of positive reviews: Distributed mentoring in online fan communities*. Proceedings of the 19th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing Companion. San Francisco, California, United States of America.
- Career Development Association of Alberta. 2012. *What is career development?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/whatiscd>. [Accessed: 14 August 2016].
- Carraher, S.M., Sullivan, S.E. & Crocitto, M. 2008. Mentoring across global boundaries: An empirical examination of home- and host-country mentors on expatriate career outcomes. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 39: 1310-1326.

- Carroll, M. & Barnes, E.F. 2015. Strategies for enhancing diverse mentoring relationships in STEM fields. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 13(1): 58-69.
- Carvin, B.N. 2011. The hows and whys of group mentoring. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43(1): 49-52.
- Cascio, T. & Gasker, J. 2001. Everyone has a shining side: Computer-mediated mentoring in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(2): 283-293.
- Catalyst. 2007. *The bottom line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards*. [Online]. Available: http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The_Bottom_Line_Corporate_Performance_and_Womens_Representation_on_Boards.pdf. [Accessed: 10 January 2015].
- Catalyst. 2010. *Fortune 500 Women Board Directors*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/2013-catalyst-census-fortune-500-women-board-directors>. [Accessed: 26 October 2016].
- Chaudhuri, S. & Ghosh, R. 2012. Reverse mentoring: A social exchange tool for keeping the boomers engaged and millennials committed. *Human Resource Development Review*, 11(1): 55-76.
- Cheng, H.G. & Phillips, M.R. 2014. Secondary analysis of existing data: opportunities and implementation. *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry*, 26(6): 371-375.
- Cheong, J., Lee, S., Crooks, S.M. & Song, J. 2012. An investigation of mobile learning readiness in higher education based on the theory of planned behavior. *Computers & Education*, 59: 1054-1064.
- Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. 2015a. *Cherie Blair Enterprise Development programme*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/programmes/enterprise>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. 2015b. *Mentor application and selection process*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/mentor-application-and-selection-process>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. 2015c. *Mentee application and selection process*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/mentee-application-and-selection-process/>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].

- Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. 2016. *About the Cherie Blair Foundation for women*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/about/>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Chun, J.U., Sosik, J.J. & Yun, N.Y. 2012. A longitudinal study of mentor and protégé outcomes in formal mentoring relationships. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 33(8) :1071–1094.
- Chun, J., Litzky, B., Sosik, J., Bechtold, D. & Godshalk, V. 2010. Emotional intelligence and trust in formal mentoring programs. *Group and Organization Management*, 35(4): 421-455.
- Clarke, L. 2013. *Is 'speed mentoring' what construction needs?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.building.co.uk/is-speed-mentoring-what-construction-needs/?/5065507>. [Accessed: 10 October 2016].
- Clutterbuck, D. & Cox, T. 2005. Mentoring by wire. *Training Journal*. 20(3): 35-39.
- Clutterbuck, D. & Haddock-Miller, J. 2016. *Empowering women, broadening horizons: An independent evaluation of the Mentoring Women in Business programme*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cherieblairfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Em-powering-Women-Broadening-Horizons.pdf>. [Accessed: 2 November 2016].
- Clutterbuck, D. & Hussain, Z. 2010. *Virtual coach, virtual mentor*. Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.
- Clutterbuck, D. & Ragins, B.R. 2002. *Mentoring and diversity: An international perspective*. Butterworth-Heinemann: London.
- Clutterbuck, D. & Sweeney, J. 1997. *Coaching and mentoring*. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Gower Publishing.
- Clutterbuck, D. 1998. *Learning alliances: Tapping into talent*. London: Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Clutterbuck, D. 2006. *Everyone needs a mentor - fostering talent in your organisation*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Clutterbuck, D. 2008. What's happening in coaching and mentoring? And what is the difference between them? *Development and Learning in Organizations: An International Journal*, 22(4): 8-10.

- Clutterbuck, D. & Lane, G. 2016. *The Situational mentor: An international review of competences and capabilities in mentoring*. London: Gower Publishing.
- CocaCola Journey. 2016a. *What we're doing*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.coca-cola.com/company/our-company/5by20-what-were-doing>. [Accessed: 24 October 2016].
- CocaCola Journey. 2016b. *The road to 2020: How Coca Cola aims to empower five million women around the world*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.coca-cola-journey.com.au/stories/the-road-to-2020-how-coca-cola-aims-to-empower-five-million-women-around-the-world>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- Collis, J. & Hussey, R. 2003. *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. 2nd Edition. Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Collis, J. & Hussey, R. 2014. *A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. 4th Edition. Great Britain: Palgrave.
- Colomo-Palacios, R., Casado-Lumbreras, C., Soto-Acosta, P. & Misra, S. 2014. Providing knowledge recommendations: an approach for informal electronic mentoring. *Interactive Learning Environment*, 22(2): 221-240.
- Coaching and Mentors of South Africa. 2015a. *What is mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.comensa.org.za/Information/Mentoring>. [Accessed: 6 January 2017].
- Coaching and Mentors of South Africa. 2015b. *What is coaching*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.comensa.org.za/Information/Coaching>. [Accessed: 6 January 2017].
- Coaching and Mentors of South Africa. 2015c. *Coaches and Mentors of South Africa*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.comensa.org.za>. [Accessed: 22 October 2016].
- Cooper, D.R. & Schindler, P.S. 2008. *Business research methods*. 10th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cornell University for teaching excellence. 2016. *Teaching with technology*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/teaching-with-technology/index.html>. [Accessed: 22 August 2016].
- Corporate Image. 2016. *SA chapter of Mara Foundation Mentorship Programme now largest in Sub-Sahara Africa*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.corporateimage.co.za/sa-chapter-of-mara-foundation-mentorship-programme-now-largest-in-sub-sahara-africa/>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].

- Costello, A. B. & Osborne, J.W. 2005. Best practices in Exploratory Factor Analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment and Evaluation*, 10(7): 1-9.
- Cothran, D., McCaughtry, N., Faust, R., Garn, A., Kulinna, P.H. & Martin, J. 2009. E-mentoring in physical education: promises and pitfalls. *Resource Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 80(3): 552-562.
- Cox, E. 2005. For better, for worse: The matching process in formal mentoring schemes. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 13(3): 403-414.
- Creswell, J.W. 2008. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W., 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Crotty, M. 1998. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishing.
- CUHK Communications and public relations office. 2016. *CUHK Faculty of Law launches Hong Kong's first online mentoring platform for law students*. [Online]. Available: http://www.cpr.cuhk.edu.hk/en/press_detail.php?id=2211. [Accessed: 10 October 2016].
- Cull, J. 2006. Mentoring young entrepreneurs: What leads to success? *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 4(2): 8-18.
- DAD Fund. 2016a. *Shaping the leaders of the future*. [Online]. Available: http://www.dadfund.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=15. [Accessed: 28 September 2016].
- DAD Fund. 2016b. Dreamgirls Outreach and mentoring programme. [Online]. Available: http://www.dadfund.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56&Itemid=50. [Accessed: 28 September 2016].
- Daft, R.L. 2010. *New era of management*. 9th Edition. Canada: South Western.
- Dames, R.S. 2012. *Best practices to create an enabling environment for SME incubation in South Africa*. Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctorate in Business Administration. Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

- Day, L. 2006. *Designing and conducting health surveys*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- De Janasz, S. C., Ensher, E. A. & Heun, C. 2008. Using e-mentoring to connect business students with practicing managers: Virtual relationships and real benefits. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 16: 394-411.
- De Janasz, S. & Godshalk, V.M. 2013. The role of e-mentoring in protégés learning and satisfaction. *Group and Organization Management*, 38(6): 743-774.
- Dedman. 2016. *Welcome to Mustang Exchange*. [Online]. Available: <https://mustangexchange.chronus.com/p/p1/about>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Denscombe, M. 2008. *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. 3rd Edition. New York: Open University Press.
- Department of Education. 2008. *Mentor school managers and manage mentoring programmes in schools. A module of the Advanced Certificate Education (School Management and Leadership)*. [Online]. Available: http://www.oer africa.org/system/files/8815/mentor-school-managers-and-manage-mentoring-programmes-schools_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=8815. [Accessed: 23 October 2016].
- Department of Labour. 2014. *Work force distribution*. [Online]. Available: http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/downloads/documents/annual-reports/employment-equity/2013-2014/14ceereport_part3.pdf. [Accessed: 26 October 2016].
- Dewart, H., Drees, D., Hixenbaugh, P. & Thorn, L. 2005. *Engaging first year students at a metropolitan university: is electronic mentoring an effective strategy?* [Online]. Available: http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/2006/Papers/Dewart.pdf. [Accessed: 2 September 2016].
- DiRenzo, M.S., Linnehan, F., Shao, P. & Rosenberg, W.L. 2010. A moderated mediation model of e-mentoring. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76: 292-305.
- Driscoll, D.L. 2011. *Introduction to primary research: Observations, surveys, and interviews*. [Online]. Available: <http://writingspaces.org/driscoll--introduction-to-primary-research>. [Accessed: 3 July 2016].
- Eby, L.T. & Lockwood, A. 2005. Protégés and mentors' reactions to participating in formal mentoring programs: a qualitative investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67: 441-458.

- Education Alliance. 2016. *WV E-mentoring*. 2016. [Online]. Available: http://educationalliance.org/default/assets/File/WV%20eMentoring_Facilitator%E2%80%99s%20Guide%202012b.pdf. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- Education Innovations. 2015. *Unlocking your business potential*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/sites/default/files/Mara%20Mentor%20-%20Men%20tee%20Briefing.pdf>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Educause. 2016. *Learning Initiative*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.educause.edu/eli>. [Accessed: 6 November 2016].
- Ehrich, L., Hansford, B. & Tennent, L. 2004. Formal mentoring programs in education and other professions: A review of the literature. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(4): 518-540.
- Ehrich, L.C. 2008. Mentoring and women managers: another look at the field, *Gender in Management. An International Journal*, 23(7):469-483.
- Elements of effective practice for mentoring. 2016. *Research-informed and practitioner-approved best practices for creating and sustaining impactful mentoring relationships and strong program services*. [Online]. Available: http://www.mentoring.org/images/uploads/Final_Elements_Publication_Fourth.pdf. [Accessed: 12 August 2016].
- Elkin, J. & Elkin, G. 2008. *E-mentoring: improving mentoring to reduce expatriate failure*. Oxford Business and Economics Conference Program. United Kingdom: Oxford.
- Emelo, R. 2011. Group mentoring: a rapid multiplication of learning. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43: 136-145.
- Endeavor (SA). 2016. *Collaboration builds momentum in South Africa*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.endeavor.co.za/index.php/blog2/item/437-collaboration-builds-momentum-in-south-africa>. [Accessed: 2 November 2016].
- Ensher, E.A., Heun, C. & Blanchard, A. 2003. Online mentoring and computer-mediated communication: New directions in research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63: 264-288.
- Ensher, E.A. & Murphy, S.E. 1997. Effect of race, gender, perceived similarity, and contact on mentor relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50(3): 460-481.

- Ensher, E.A. & Murphy, S.E. 2007. *E-mentoring: Next-generation research strategies and suggestions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publishing.
- Ensher, E.A. & Murphy, S.E. 2011. The mentoring relationship challenges scale: The impact of mentoring stage, type, and gender. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79: 253-266.
- Federal communications commission. 2016. *Voice Over Internet Protocol Exchange*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/voiceover-internet-protocol-voip>. [Accessed: 22 August 2016].
- FETOLA. 2016a. *The Old Mutual Legends programme, then and now*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.fetola.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Legends-Programme.pdf>. [Accessed: 9 December 2016].
- FETOLA. 2016b. *Overview*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.fetola.co.za/overview/>. [Accessed: 9 December 2016].
- FETOLA. 2016c. *Mentor hotline*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.fetola.co.za/projects/mentor-hotline/>. [Accessed: 9 December 2016].
- Fielden, S. & Hunt, C. 2011. Online coaching: An alternative source of social support for female entrepreneurs during venture creation. *International Small Business Journal*, 29(4): 345-359.
- Fletcher, S. & Mullen, C.A. 2012. *Handbook of mentoring and coaching in education*. United Kingdom, London: SAGE Publications.
- Flinders University. 2016. *Inspire mentor programme*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.flinders.edu.au/careers-files/SAU/Images/Inspire%20Brochure%20for%20Schools.pdf>. [Accessed: 15 October 2016].
- ForGood. 2016. *The character, functions, and styles of instant messaging in the workplace*. [Online]. Available: <https://forgood.co.za/cause/index/infinite-family-gauteng>. [Accessed: 15 October 2016].
- Fullick-Jagiela, J.M., Verbos, A.K. & Wiese, C.W. 2015. Relationship mentoring episodes as a catalyst for empowering protégés: A conceptual model. *Human Resources Development Review*, 14(4): 486-508.

- Gabriel, A. & Kaufield, K.J. 2008. Reciprocal mentorship: an effective support for online instructors. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership In Learning*, 16(3): 311-327.
- Galli, L. 2013. Demand for mentoring among SMEs. *BIS Research Paper*, 158: 1-73.
- Garvey, B. 2011. *Coaching and mentoring*. United Kingdom, London. Sage Publications.
- Gayomali, C. 2015. *How MentorNet plan to bring diversity to tech and science – with LinkedIn's help*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.fastcompany.com/3027635/tech-forecast/how-mentornet-plans-to-bring-diversity-to-tech-and-science-with-linkedins-help>. [Accessed: 14 October 2016].
- Gentry, R. 2011. *The content of electronic mentoring: A study of special educators participating in an online mentoring program*. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Virginia, United States of America: Virginia Commonwealth University.
- George, D. & Mallery, P. 2003. *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference*. 4th Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ghasemi, A & Zahediasl, S. 2012. Normality tests for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*. 10(2): 486-489.
- Ghuri, P. & Gronhaug, K. 2005. *Research methods in business studies*. 3rd Edition. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Ghosh, R. & Reio, T. 2013. Career benefits associated with mentoring for mentors: A meta-analysis. *Journal of vocational behaviour*, 83: 106-116.
- Gibson, S.K. 2004. Mentoring in business and industry: The need for a phenomenological perspective. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 12(2): 259-275.
- Given, L. 2008. *Qualitative Research Methods Volumes 1 and 2*. Alberta: Sage Publications.
- Gliem, J.A. & Gliem, R. 2003. *Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales*. [Online]. Available: <https://peel=scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/344/Gliem+&+Gliem.pdf?sequence=1>. [Accessed: 24 November 2014].

- Global Risk Insight. 2016. *How technology empowers women around the World*. [Online]. Available: <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/11/how-technology-empowers-women-around-the-world/>. [Accessed: 6 January 2017].
- Global South Africans. 2016. *Khulisa Mentorship Movement*. [Online]. Available: <http://globalsouthafricans.com/latest/767-khulisa-mentorship-movement.html>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Godwin, S.G. 2011. *E-mentoring: technology, trust, and frequency in corporate e-mentoring relationships*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Capella University, Washington.
- Godwin-Jones, R. 2003. Emerging technologies. Blogs and wikis: Environments for on-line collaboration, *Language Learning and Technology*, 7(2): 12-16.
- Government Gazette. 2015. *South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)*. [Online]. Available: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/38689_gon316.pdf. [Accessed: 3 January 2017].
- Greenwald, S.W., Khan, M. & Vazquez & Maes, C.D. 2015. *Tagalong: informal learning from a remote companion with mobile perspective sharing*. Conference Proceeding. [Online]. Available: <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/100242>. [Accessed: 7 October 2016].
- Griffith University. 2016. *Griffith global-mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <https://app.secure.griffith.edu.au/global-ementoring>. [Accessed: 16 October 2016].
- Grima, F., Paille, P., Mejia, J.H. & Prod'homme, L. 2014. Exploring the benefits of mentoring activities for the mentor. *Career Development International*, 19: 469-490.
- Gross, D. 2011. *The emergence of e-mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.edition.cnn.com/2011/10/25/tech/web/online-mentoring/>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Guha, N. 2014. *Tutoring from the desktop: Facilitating learning through Google+ Hangouts*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.conference.org/proceedings/www2014/companion/p1087.pdf>. [Accessed: 14 November 2016].
- Haindl, S. 2016. *Cherie Blair and her foundation take full advantage of technology*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.justmeans.com/blogs/cherie-blair-and-the-work-of-her-foundation-is-taking-full-advantage-of-technology>. [Accessed: 1 September 2016].

- Hall, J.C. 2003. *Mentoring and young people. A literature review*. University of Glasgow: The SCRE Centre.
- Hamburg, I. 2013. *Facilitating learning and knowledge transfer through mentoring*. Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Computer Supported Education. Aachen, Germany.
- Hamilton, B.A. & Scandura, T.A. 2003. Implications for organizational learning and development in a wired world. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(4): 388-402.
- Harding, J. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis from start to finish*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hariharan, L. 2016. *Supply management: How I mentored procurement professionals worldwide using WhatsApp*. [Online]. Available: [https://www.cips.org/supply-management/opinion/2015/october/how-i-mentored-procurement-professionals-world wide-using-whatsapp/](https://www.cips.org/supply-management/opinion/2015/october/how-i-mentored-procurement-professionals-world-wide-using-whatsapp/). [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Harrell, M.C. & Bradley, M.A. 2009. *Data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. National Defense Research Institute. [Online]. Available: http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR718.html. [Accessed: 3 August 2016].
- Harrington, A. 1999. *E-mentoring: The advantages and disadvantages of using email to support distant mentoring*. Hertfordshire, United Kingdom: TEC Publisher.
- Harwell, M. R. 2011. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods: Pursuing ideas as the keystone of exemplary inquiry*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishing.
- Headlam-Wells, J. 2004. E-mentoring for aspiring women managers. *Women in Management Review*, 19(4): 212-218.
- Headlam-Wells, J., Gosland, J. & Craig, J. 2005. There's magic in the web: E-mentoring for women's career development. *Career Development International*, 10(6/7): 444-459.
- Headlam-Wells, J., Gosland, J. & Craig, J. 2006. Beyond the organisation: The design and management of E-mentoring systems. *International Journal of Information Management*, 26: 372-385.

- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smit, B. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. South Africa, Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Hew, K.F., Cheung, W.S. & Ng, C.S.L. 2010. Student contribution in asynchronous online discussion: A review of the research and empirical exploration. *Instructional Science*. 38: 571-606.
- Hezlett, S.A. & Gibson, S.K. 2005. Mentoring and Human Resource Development: Where we are and where we need to go. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 7(4): 446-469.
- Hoffmeister, K., Cigularov, K.P., Sampson, Rosecrance, J C. & Chen, P.Y. 2011. A perspective on effective mentoring in the construction industry. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 32(7): 673-688.
- Holland, C. 2009. *Workplace Mentoring: A literature review*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.akoaootearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-4/n3682-workplace-mentoring-a-literature-review.pdf>. [Accessed: 1 August 2016].
- Holmes, H. 2016. *The difference between a coach and mentor and why it matters for startup founders*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.startupsmart.com.au/advice/leadership-advice/the-difference-between-a-coach-and-mentor-and-why-it-matters-for-startup-founders/>. [Accessed: 6 December 2016].
- Homitz, D.H. & Berge, Z.L. 2008. Using e-mentoring to sustain distance training and education. *The Learning Organization*, 15(4): 326-335.
- Howe-Walsh, L., Turnbull, S., Papavasileiou, E. & Bozionelos, N. 2016. [Online]. Available: http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/downloads/documents/annual-reports/employment-equity/2013-2014/14ceereport_part3.pdf. [Accessed: 26 October 2016].
- Hu, C., Wang, S., Wang, Y., Chen, C. & Jiang, D.Y. 2016. Understanding attraction in formal mentoring relationships from an affective perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 94: 104-113.
- Hudson, P. 2014. *Conflicts and conflict resolution strategies in mentor-mentee relationships*. Australia: Queensland University of Technology.
- Hudson, P. 2016. Forming the mentor-mentee relationship. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 1: 30-43.

- Hunt, J.H., Powell, S., Little, M.E. & Mike, A. 2013. *The effects of e-mentoring on teacher education and special education*. [Online]. Available: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0888406413502734>. [Accessed: 2 September 2016].
- Hunt, K.R. & Atherfold, G. 2004. *Electronic mentoring: Is it good for entrepreneurial learning?* Proceedings of the 49th International Council for Small Business Conference, 20-23 June, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Hunt, K.R. 2005. Electronic mentoring: Solving the issue of mentoring across distances. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 19(5): 7-10.
- Hunt, N. & Tyrrell, S. 2004. *Stratified sampling*. Sidney, Australia: Coventry University Press.
- Hwang, Y.S., Vrongistinos, K. 2012. Using Blackboard and Skype for mentoring beginning teachers. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 26(3): 172-179.
- Institute of Business Advisors. 2016. *Become a member*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ibasa.org.za/become-a-member>. [Accessed: 17 October 2016].
- iCouldBe. 2016a. *Common questions - new iCould be mentors*. [Online]. Available: http://www.icouldbe.org/standard/public/docs/iCouldBe_New_Mentor_FAQ_public.pdf. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- iCouldBe. 2016b. *How e-mentoring works*. [Online]. Available: http://www.icouldbe.org/standard/public/our_work.asp. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. 2016a. *Mentoring Programme*. [Online]. Available: http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/mentoring/index.html. [Accessed: on 12 July 2016].
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. 2016b. *Frequently asked questions*. [Online]. Available: https://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/young_professionals/programFAQs.html. [Accessed: 12 July 2016].
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. 2016c. *Collabratec*. [Online]. Available: <https://ieee-collabratec.ieee.org/?ppctNextUrl=/app/home>. [Accessed: 12 July 2016].

- Impactstory. 2014. *Explore using Facebook in a professional context*. [Online]. Available: <http://blog.impactstory.org/impact-challenge-facebook-professional>. [Accessed: 27 October 2016].
- Infinite Family. 2016a. *Our story*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.infinitefamily.org/index.php/about/who-we-are>. [Accessed: 23 November 2016].
- Infinite Family. 2016b. *Infinite family mentors Africa's future*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.images.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/customer-success/pdfs/infinite-family-case-study.pdf>. [Accessed: 23 November 2016].
- Internet World Stats. 2014. *Usage and population statistics*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.internetworldstats.com>. [Accessed: 6 December 2016].
- Investec. 2016. *Mentorship*. 2016. [Online]. Available: <https://www.investec.co.za/about-investec/sustainability/people/people-csi-south-africa/university-programmes/academic-support/mentorship.desktop.html>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- IOWA Mentoring Partnership. 2016. *E-mentoring Elements of Effective Practice*. [Online] Available: <https://www.iowamentoring.org/faq/e-mentoring-elements-effective-practice>. [Accessed: 4 October 2016].
- Isaacs, E., Walendowski, A., Whittaker, S., Schiano, D.J. & Kamm, C. 2002. *The character, functions, and styles of instant messaging in the workplace*. [Online]. Available: http://www.academia.edu/7604170/The_character_functions_and_styles_of_instant_messaging_in_the_workplace. [Accessed: 29 November 2016].
- Johnson, B.R. & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. 2004. *Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose has come*. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7): 14-26.
- Johnson, B.R., Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Turner, L.A. 2007. Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2): 112-133.
- Jolevski, T. 2012. *The Personality matching of mentors and mentees in a youth mentoring program*. Graduate Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the School Psychology Program. Rochester: College of Liberal Arts.
- Joshi, H. 2012. *Multicollinearity diagnostics in statistical modeling and remedies to deal with it using SAS*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cytel.com/hubfs/0-library-0/pdfs/SP07.pdf>. [Accessed: 2 December 2016].

- Kalisch B., Falzette, L. & Cook, J. 2005. Group e-mentoring: A new approach to recruitment into nursing. *Nurse Outlook*, 53: 199–205.
- Kandle, W., Ngassam, E.K. & Dlungwana, S. 2009. *Enhancing the quality of service delivered by South Africa's small contractors through e-mentoring*. Interactive Computer Aided Learning Conference, Villach, Austria, 23-25 September, pp. 1-9.
- Kasprisin, C.A., Single, P.B., Single, R.M. & Muller, C.B. 2003. Building a better bridge: Testing e-training to improve e-mentoring programmes in higher education. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 11(1): 67-78.
- Keengwe, J. & Blankson, L. 2013. *Virtual mentoring for teachers: Online professional development practices*. Pennsylvania: IGI Global Publishing.
- Kent, A.M., Green, A.M. & Feldman, P. 2015. The road less traveled - crossing gender and racial lines in comprehensive mentoring. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 72: 116-128.
- Khokhar, T. 2016. *Where are the cheapest and most expensive countries to own a mobile phone?* [Online]. Available: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/where-are-cheapest-and-most-expensive-countries-own-mobile-phone>. [Accessed: 29 October 2016].
- Khulisa Social Solutions. 2016a. *Who we are*. [Online]. Available: <http://khulisa.org.za/>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Khulisa Social Solutions. 2016b. *Global mentorship movement*. [Online]. Available: <http://khulisa.org.za/>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Kim, C. 2008. Using email to enable e3 (effective, efficient, and engaging) learning. *Distance Education*, 29(2): 187-198.
- Klecka, C. L., Cheng, Y. & Clift, R. T. 2004. Exploring the potential of electronic mentoring. *Action in Teacher Education*, 26(3): 2-9.
- Knouse, S. B. 2001. Virtual mentors: mentoring on the internet. *Journal of Employment Counselling*, 38(4): 162-169.
- Knox, S. & Burkard, A. 2009. Qualitative research interviews. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4-5): 566-575.
- Kochan, F.K. & Pascarelli, J.T. 2005. *Creating Successful Telementoring programs*. Connecticut, Portland: Information Age Publishing.

- Kogler-Hill, S.E. & Gant, G. 2000. *Mentoring by minorities for minorities: The organizational communications support program*. *Review of Business*, 21(1/2): 53-58.
- Kolb, S.M. 2012. Grounded theory and the constant comparative method: valid research strategies for educators. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(1): 83-86.
- Kothari, C.R. 2004. *Research methodology; Methods and techniques*. 2nd Edition. India, Mumbai: Wishwa Prakashan.
- Koyuncu, M., Burke, R.J., Alayoglu, N. & Wolpin, J. 2014. Mentoring relationships among managerial and professional women in Turkey: Potential benefits? *Cross Cultural Management*, 21(2): 2-22.
- Kram, K.E. 1983. Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26: 608-625.
- Kram, K.E. & Isabella, L.A. 1985. Mentoring alternative: The role of peer relationships in career development. *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1): 110-132.
- Kram, K.E. 1985. Improving the mentoring process. *Training and Development Journal*, 39: 40-43.
- Kroll, J. 2016. What is meant by the term *group* mentoring. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, pp. 1-15.
- Kumar, P. & Blake-Beard, S. 2013. What good is bad mentorship: Protégé's perception of negative mentoring experiences. *The Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 48(1): 79-91.
- Kumar, P., Irudayaraj, I.S.F., Jomon, M.G. & Singhal, M. 2013. The shadow of negative mentoring at the workplace. Is negative affect a mediator between mentoring experiences and a decline in organizational citizenship behaviour of the protégé? *Management and Labour Studies*, 38(4): 357-371.
- Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H. & Moon, S. 2010. *What is twitter, a social network or a news media?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.ambuehler.ethz.ch/CDstore/www2010/www/p591.pdf>. [Accessed: 15 November 2016].

- Kyrgidou, L.P. & Petridou, E. 2013. Developing women entrepreneurs' knowledge, skills and attitudes through electronic mentoring support. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(3): 548-566.
- Laloo, U.G., Bobat, R.A., Pillay, S. & Wassenaar, D. 2014. *A strategy for developing future academic leaders for South Africa in a resource-constrained environment*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25072580>. [Accessed: 2 December 2016].
- Lankau, M.J., Riordan, C.M. & Thomas, C.H. 2005. Twin perspectives? The effects of similarity and liking on formal mentoring relationships from mentors' and protégés' perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(2): 252-265.
- Laukhuf, R.L. & Malone, T.A. 2015. Women entrepreneurs need mentors. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 13(1): 70-86.
- Leck, J.D. & Wood, P.M. 2013. Forming trust in e-mentoring: A research agenda. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 3: 101-109.
- Leck, J.D. & Orser, B. 2013. Fostering trust in mentoring relationships: An exploratory study. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(4): 410-425.
- Leck, J.D., Elliott, C., Bourgeois, E. & Kemp, K. 2014. *Mentoring a diverse workforce knowledge synthesis grant - final report*. Working Paper 2014.01. Canada, University of Ottawa: Telfer School of Management.
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2013. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. 10th Edition. Essex, Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Lenhardt, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A. & Zickuhr, K. 2010. *Social media and mobile internet use among teens and young adults*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>. [Accessed: 20 December 2016].
- Lentz, E. & Allen, T.D. 2009. The role of mentoring others in the career plateauing phenomenon. *Group & Organizational Management*, 34(3): 358-384.
- Leppisaari, I. & Tenhunen, M.L. 2009. Searching for e-mentoring practices for SME staff development. *Journal of Service Business*, 3: 189-207.
- Leuf, B. & Cunningham, W. 2001. *The Wiki Way: Quick collaboration on the web*. Massachusetts, Boston: Addison-Wesley Longman Publishing.

- Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C. N., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H. & Mckee, B. 1978. *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Lewis, G. & Kourdi, J. 2012. *Mentor Guide*. Oxfordshire, Abingdon: Routledge Publishing.
- Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. 2008. *Qualitative communication research methods*. 2nd Edition. California, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Lindsay, S. 2015. *Building strong leaders in family planning through mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.msh.org/news-events/stories/building-strong-women-leaders-in-family-planning-through-mentoring>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Lloyd, S.A., Byrne, M.M. & McCoy, T.S. 2012. Faculty-Perceived Barriers of Online Education. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 8 (1): 1-12.
- Lotter, 2010. *E-mentoring as effective tutoring tool in higher education*. Proceedings of the 12th Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications. Durban, South Africa.
- Lotter, G.A. 2015. *E-fundi as a viable way to do e-mentoring*. Proceedings of the 12th Conference on Cognition and Exploratory Learning in the Digital Age of the International Association for Development of the Information Society, 24-26 October, Maynooth, Greater Dublin, Ireland.
- Loureiro-Koechlin, C. & Allan, B. 2010. Time, space and structure in an e-learning and e-mentoring project. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 41(5): 721-735.
- Lucas, S.R. 2013. *Beyond the existence proof: Ontological conditions, epistemological implications and in-depth interview research*. London: Routledge and Kegan Publishers.
- Male, G. & Pattinson, C. 2011. Enhancing the quality of e-learning through mobile technology: A socio-cultural and technology perspective towards quality e-learning applications. *International Journal of Information and Learning Technology*, 28(5): 331-344.
- Management Mentors. 2015a. *The differences between coaching & mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.management-mentors.com/resources/coaching-mentoring-differences>. [Accessed: 26 August 2016].

- Management Mentors. 2015b. *Twenty five benefits of mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.management-mentors.com/resources/benefits-of-mentoring>. [Accessed: 26 October 2016].
- Manichander, T. 2016. *Information & communication technology in education*. 2nd Edition. Russian Federation, Sochi: Ashok Yakkaldevi.
- Mann, P.S. 2005. *Introductory statistics*. 4th Edition. New York: Wiley and Sons.
- Mara Foundation. 2012a. *Mara Mentor*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mara-foundation.org/index.php/maramentor>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- Mara Foundation. 2012b. *About us*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mara-foundation.org/index.php/about-us>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- Maree, J.G. 2007. *First steps in research*. South Africa, Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Marris, B. 2015. *Coaching, mentoring and consulting – what’s the difference*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.altusq.com.au/mentoring-programs/coaching-mentoring-and-consulting-whats-the-difference/>. [Accessed: 6 December 2016].
- Marshall, M.N. 2006. Sampling for qualitative and quantitative research. *Journal of Family Practice*, 13(1): 522-526.
- Martin, C. 2012. *Promoting the entrepreneurship using a blended learning approach*. Conference proceedings of "eLearning and Software for Education". The 8th International Scientific Conference eLearning and Software for Education, 26-27 April, Romania, Bucharest.
- Matlay, H. 2000. Organisational learning in small learning organisations: an empirical overview. *Education and Training*, 42(4/5): 202-210.
- Maurtin-Cairncross, A. 2009. A still-chilly climate: Experiences of women in leadership positions in South African Higher Education. *Association of American Colleges*. Volume 38(1).
- McCray, C. R. & Cooper, B.S. 2015. *Mentoring with meaning: How educators can be more professional and effective*. Maryland, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- McIntosh, M.J. & Morse, J.M. 2015. Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, (2): 1-12.

- McKimm, J., Jollie, C. & Hatter, M. 2007. *Mentoring: Theory and Practice*. [Online]. Available: http://www.faculty.londondeanery.ac.uk/e-learning/feedback/files/Mentoring_Theory_and_Practice.pdf. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Mehta, U. & Ward, M. 2016. *The relationship between Black Economic Empowerment score and shareholder return in South Africa*. University of Pretoria: Gordon Institute of Business Science.
- Menges, C. 2016. Toward improving the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs: matching by personality matters. *Group and Organization Management*, 4(1): 98-129.
- Mentor Fundamentals. 2016. *A guide to mentoring online learners*. [Online]. Available: <https://micourses.org/resources/pdf/toolkit/mentorguide.pdf>. [Accessed: 7 November 2016].
- Mentor Jackets. 2016. *Make the most of your e-mentoring relationship*. [Online]. Available: http://www.gtmentorjackets.com/s/1481/images/gid40/editor_documents/professional_development/relationship_development/ementoring_suggestions.pdf?sessionid=09399613-27b5-4f73-9f12-d8720c73f9f9. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Mentored Pathways. 2016a. *Student application*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentoredpathways.org/new-student-application.cfm>. [Accessed: 15 October 2016].
- Mentored Pathways. 2016b. *About Mentored Pathways program*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentoredpathways.org/about-us.cfm>. [Accessed: 28 November 2016].
- MentorLink. 2016a. *About the program*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentorlinklounge.com/side-navigation/about-the-program/>. [Accessed: 25 November 2016].
- MentorLink. 2016b. *Register to become a mentor or a mentee*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentorlinklounge.com/side-navigation/how-to-participate/>. [Accessed: 25 November 2016].
- MentorNet. 2016a. *Our mission*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentornet.org/organization/index.html>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- MentorNet. 2016b. *How it works*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.mentornet.org/howitworks/index.html>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].

- MentorNet. 2016c. *MentorNet community for health sciences and career*. [Online]. Available: http://www.mentornet.org/organization/health_sciences_media_kit.html. [Accessed: 15 October 2016].
- Mercycorps. 2010. *Find a mentor, be a mentor build a business*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/find-mentor-be-mentor-build-business>. [Accessed: 18 September 2016].
- Meyer, M. & Fourie, L. 2004. *Mentoring and coaching: Tools and techniques for implementation*. South Africa, Randburg: Knowles Publishing.
- Meyer, M. & Mabaso, J. 2013. *Mentoring as a way to transfer learning, and accelerate empowerment*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.workinfo.org/index.php/articles/item/778-mentoring-as-a-way-to-transfer-learning-and-accelerate-empowerment>. [Accessed: 3 November 2016].
- Michau, A. & Louw, W. 2014. Tuesdays with an open and distance learning mentor. *Africa Education Review*, 11: 133-145.
- Micromentor: 2014. *How to mentor at a distance*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.micromentor.org/questions>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Million Women Mentors (MWM). 2016. *Mentored Pathways helps Louisiana students succeed*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.millionwomenmentors.org/node/313>. [Accessed: 5 December 2016].
- Mkize, V. 2016. *SA women empowered by Cherie Blair's Online Mentoring Network*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.pressreader.com/>. [Accessed: 4 January 2017].
- Mo, H.E. & Chen, Y.F. 2013. An e-mentoring system for practice teachers in vocational high schools of Taiwan. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 3(4): 175-183.
- Monks, K. 2007. *The business impact of equality and diversity: The international evidence*. Dublin: National Centre for Partnership and Performance.
- Morgan, L. M., & Davidson, M. J. 2008. Sexual dynamics in mentoring relationships: A critical review. *British Journal of Management*, 19 (1): 120-129.
- Mouton, J. 2009. *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies*. South Africa, Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Mowes, A.D. 2012. Conflict resolution mechanisms between postgraduate mentors and their mentee. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(2): 85-90.
- Management Sciences for Health. 2014. *New Mentoring network supports women leaders in East Africa*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.msh.org/blog/2014/11/17/new-mentoring-network-supports-women-leaders-in-east-africa>. [Accessed: 13 November 2016].
- Mueller, S. 2004. Electronic mentoring as an example for the use of information and communications technology in engineering education. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 29(1): 53-63.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. 2010. *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Kenia, Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Murphy, W.M. 2011. From e-mentoring to blended mentoring: Increasing students' developmental initiation and mentor's satisfaction. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10(4): 606-622.
- Myers, M.D. 2009. *Qualitative research in business and management*. London: Sage Publishing.
- Nachmais, C.F. & Nachmais, D. 2008. *Research methods in the social sciences*. 7th Edition. New York: Worth Publishers.
- National Youth Development Agency. 2015. *Big business and world renowned mentors to empower young entrepreneurs*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nyda.gov.za/news/Pages/Big-Business-and-World-Renowned-Mentors-To-Empower-Young-Entrepreneurs.aspx>. [Accessed: 4 October 2016].
- Nchindila, B.M. 2007. *Conditions for successful online mentoring*. Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Nedbank. 2014. *Nedbank's partnership with the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship set to boost budding entrepreneurs*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nedbank.co.za/content/nedbank/desktop/gt/en/news/press-room-media-centre/articles/2014/nedbanks-partnership-with-the-branson-centre-of-entrepreneurship-set-to-boost-budding-entrepreneurs.html>. [Accessed: 14 November 2016].

- NGO Pulse. 2016. *Khulisa Social Solutions*. 2016. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ngopulse.org/organisation/khulisa-social-solutions>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Nicol, T.L. 2015. *How to do it the Branson (Centre) Way with mentoring*: [Online]. Available: <http://www.entrepreneurmag.co.za/advice/funding/attracting-investors/they-re-here-to-help-you/>. [Accessed: 14 November 2016].
- Niehoff, B.P. 2006. Personality predictors of participation as a mentor. *Career Development international*, 11(4): 321-333.
- Nieman, G., Hough, J. & Nieuwenhuizen, C. 2003. *Entrepreneurship: A South African perspective*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nimon, K., Henson, R.K. & Gates, M.S. 2010. Revisiting interpretation of canonical correlation analysis: A tutorial and demonstration of canonical commonality analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 45(4): 702-724.
- Nsehe, M. 2015. *Tony Elumelu Foundation Selects First 1,000 African Entrepreneurs to Receive \$5,000 Grant*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mfono-bongnsehe/2015/03/23/tony-elumelu-foundation-selects-first-1000-african-entrepreneurs-to-receive-5000-grant/#53ed51222abf>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Ntim, C.G. & Soobaroyen, T. 2013. Black economic empowerment disclosures by South African listed corporations: the influence of ownership and board characteristics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116: 121-138.
- Nyakio, M.R. 2013. *The effect of mentorship program on business performance amongst micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMES) in Nairobi country*. A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of master of business administration, school of business, University of Nairobi.
- NYDA. 2015. *What is NYDA?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.nyda.gov.za/About-Us/Pages/default.aspx>. [Accessed: 3 December 2016].
- Ochara-Muganda, N. & Van Belle, J.P. 2010. A Proposed Framework for E-Government Knowledge Infrastructures for Africa's Transition Economies. *Journal of e-Government Studies and Best Practices*, pp. 1- 9.
- OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). 2008. *Gender and Sustainable Development. Maximising the economic, social and environmental*

- role of women*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development>. [Accessed: 11 December 2016].
- O'Keefe T. & Forrester, D.A. 2009. A successful online mentoring program for nurses. *Nurses Administration Quarterly*, 33(3): 245-250.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Collins, K.M. 2007. A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in Social Science research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2): 281-316.
- Orser, J.L.B. 2013. Fostering trust in mentoring relationships: an exploratory study. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(4): 410-425.
- Ozgen, E, & Baron, R.A. 2007. Social sources of information in opportunity recognition: Effects of mentors, industry networks, and professional forums. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 22: 174-192.
- Page, M. 2014. *What are the benefits of mentoring?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.michaelpage.com.au/advice/management-advice/leadership/what-are-benefits-mentoring>. [Accessed: 24 September 2016].
- Panopoulos, A.P. & Sarri, K. 2013. E-mentoring: The adoption process and innovation challenge. *International Journal of Information Management*, 33:217-226.
- Papacharissi, Z. 2009. The virtual geographies of social networks: A comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld, *New Media and Society*, pp. 199-220.
- Paris, L.F. 2013. Reciprocal mentoring: Can it help prevent attrition for beginning teachers? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(6): 136-158.
- Paterson M., McColl, M. & Paterson, J. 2004. Preparing allied health students for fieldwork in smaller communities. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 12: 32-33.
- Patton, M.Q. 2006. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. California, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Patton, W. & McMahon, M. 2006. The systems theory framework of career development and counseling: Connecting theory and practice. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 28(2): 153-166.
- Peel, D. 2008. What Factors affect coaching and mentoring in small and medium sized enterprises. *International Journal of Evidence based Coaching and Mentoring*, 6(2):1-18.

- PERC. 2016. WV eMentoring. [Online]. Available: <http://perc.cehs.wvu.edu/projects/completed/wv-ementoring>. [Accessed: 30 November 2016].
- Perren, L. 2003. The role of e-mentoring in entrepreneurial education and support: a meta-review of academic literature. *Education and training*, 45(8/9): 517-525.
- Petridou, E. 2009. Electronic mentoring women entrepreneurs: discussing participant's reactions. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(7): 523-542.
- Petridou, E., Sarri, A. & Kyrgidou, L.P. 2009. Entrepreneurship in higher educational institutions: the gender dimension. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(4): 286-309.
- Pietsch, T.M. 2012. A transition to e-mentoring: factors that influence nurse engagement. *Comput Inform Nursing*, 30(12): 632-639.
- Pillon, S. & Osmun, W.E. 2013. Mentoring in a digital age. *Canadian Family Physician*, 59(4): 442-444.
- Pina, A.A., Bohn, L. & Lyons, J. 2011. Investigating and implementing online student identity verification. *E-mentor*, 38(1).
- Pinho, S.D., Coetzee, M. & Schreuder, D. 2005. Formal mentoring: mentee and mentor expectations and perceived challenges. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 3(3): 20-26.
- Piterman, H. 2008. *Women in management*. [Online]. Available: http://www.theage.com.au/ed_docs/women.pdf. [Accessed: 5 January 2017].
- Polikoff, M.S., Desimone, L.M., Hochberg, E.D. & Porter, A.C. 2015. Mentor policy and the quality of mentoring. *The Elementary School Journal*, 116(1): 77-102.
- Popper, K. 2004. *The logic of scientific discovery*. London: Routledge Publishers.
- Potgieter, D. 2011. *Mentoring as a strategy to develop leadership potential of female employees*. Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Technologiae in the Faculty of Business Management and Economic Sciences. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University: Port Elizabeth.
- Poulsen, K.M. 2013. Mentoring programmes: learning opportunities for mentees, for mentors, for organisations and for society. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 45(5): 255-263.

- Pritchard, P.A. & Grant, C.S. 2015. *Success strategies from women in STEM: A portable mentor*. 2nd Edition. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Purcell, K. 2004. Making e-mentoring more effective. *American Journal of Health-system Pharmacy*, 6: 284-286.
- Quaintana, M.G.B. & Zambrano, E.P. 2014. E-mentoring: The effects on pedagogical training of rural teachers with complex geographical accesses. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30: 629-636.
- Quinlan, C. 2011. *Business research methods*. South-Western: Cengage Learning.
- Quinlan, C., Babin, B J., Carr, J C., Griffin, M. & Zikmund, W.Z. 2015. *Business research methods*. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Ragins, B.R. & Kram, K.E. 2007. *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice*. California, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ragins, B.R. 2012. *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship: Relational mentoring*. London: Oxford University Press
- Raman, A., Sani, R.M. & Kaur, P. 2014. Facebook as a collaborative and communication tool: A study of secondary school students in Malaysia. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (155): 141-146.
- Rankhumise, E.M. 2013. Mentoring as an enhancement to career success of protégés. *Journal of Public Administration*, 48(2): 369-380.
- Republic of South Africa. 2015. *The status of women in the South African economy*. [Online]. Available: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Status_of_women_in_SA_economy.pdf. [Accessed: 2 January 2017].
- Richards, L. & Morse, J.M. 2013. *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Rideout, S. 2006. Mentoring: guided by the light. *PT Magazine*, 14(1): 42-48.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. 2008. *Semi-structured Interviews*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3629.html>. [Accessed: 16 September 2016].
- Rockwell, B. V., Leck, J. D., & Elliott, C. J. 2013. Can e-mentoring take the "gender" out of mentoring? *Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 7(2): 2-5.

- Rowland, K.N. 2012. E-mentoring: an innovative twist to traditional mentoring. *Journal of Technology Management and Innovation*, 7(1): 1-8.
- SAFCEC (South African Forum of Civil Engineering Contractors). 2016. *About us*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.safcec.org.za/>. [Accessed: 5 December 2016].
- Samier, E. 2000. Public administration mentorship: conceptual and pragmatic considerations. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(1): 83-101.
- Sandelowski, M. 2000. Focus on research methods. Combining qualitative and quantitative sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques in mixed-method studies. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 23: 246-255.
- Sanyal, C. & Rigby, C. 2016. E-mentoring as a HRD intervention: an exploratory action research study with an international professional mentoring scheme. *Human Resources Development International*, August, pp. 1-19.
- Sarri, K. 2011. Mentoring female entrepreneurs: a mentors' training intervention evaluation. *Journal of Industrial Training*, 35(7): 721-741.
- Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research methods for business students*. 5th Edition. London: Pearson Publications.
- South African Women in Construction Association). 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.specifile.co.za/company/109683-sawic-south-african-women-in-construction-association>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- SAYes. 2016. *Youth Mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://sayesmentoring.org/>. [Accessed: 28 September 2016].
- Scandura, T.A. & Williams, E.A. 2001. An investigation of the moderating effects of gender on the relationships between mentorship initiation and protégé perceptions of mentoring functions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59: 342-363.
- Schmee, J. 2012. *Outliers in statistical data*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00401706.1986.10488106?tab=permissions&scroll=top>. [Accessed: 10 December 2016].
- Sea Change Mentoring. 2016. *All about us*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.seachangementoring.com/>. [Accessed: 18 August 2016].

- Seda (Small Enterprise Development Agency). 2016. *Coaching and mentoring*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.seda.org.za/Search/Results.aspx?k=mentoring>. [Accessed: 12 November 2016].
- Seepersad, R. 2012. *Island diasporas: Perceptions of Indo-Caribbean protégés regarding the effects of their cross-cultural mentoring experience in the United States*. A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. University of Florida.
- Segal, G., Borgia, D. & Schoenfeld, J. 2005. The motivation to become an entrepreneur. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Behavior and Research*, 11(1): 42-57.
- Sekaran, U. 2006. *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. 4th Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Seraphim, K.G. 2010. Enticers and barriers to e-learning based distance corporate training. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 11(4): 109-120.
- Seth, 2015. *Business development*. [Online]. Available: http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2007/10/business-develo.html. [Accessed: 2 August 2016].
- Shanduka Black Umbrellas. 2016. *Why become a mentor*. [Online]. Available: <http://shandukablackumbrellas.org/mentor/why-become-a-mentor>. [Accessed: 22 October 2016].
- Shrestha, C.H., May, S., Edirisingha, P., Burke, L. & Linsey, K. 2009. From face-to-face to e-mentoring: Does the “e” aid any value to mentors? *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 20(2): 116-124.
- Siegel, P.H., Schultz, T, & Landy, S. 2011. Formal versus informant mentoring of MAS professionals. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 27(2): 5-12.
- Silverman, D. 2010. *Doing qualitative research*. 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publishing.
- Sincero, S. 2012. *Advantages and disadvantages of surveys*. [Online]. Available: <https://explorable.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-surveys>. [Accessed: 21 November 2016].
- Single, P.B. & Single, R.M. 2005. E-mentoring for social equity: review of research to inform program development. *Partnership in Learning*, 13(2): 301-320.

- Single, P.B. & Muller, C.B. 2001. *When e-mail and mentoring unite: The implementation of a nationwide electronic mentoring program*. [Online]. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228538231_When_Email_and_Mentoring_Unite_The_Implementation_of_a_Nationwide. [Accessed: 5 January 2017].
- Skeels, M.M. & Grundin, J. 2009. *When social networks cross boundaries: A case study of workplace use of Facebook and LinkedIn*. [Online]. Available: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cf78/55e56dfc746ad7a1b2e600a390f7b6a8761a.pdf>. [Accessed: 30 November 2016].
- Skype. 2016a. *Group calls*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.skype.com/en/features/group-calls/>. [Accessed: 31 December 2016].
- Skype. 2016b. *Solving your connection issues: Windows desktop*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.dimegsa.com/supportskype/faq/FA12303>. [Accessed: 27 October 2016].
- Smith-Jentsch, K.A., Scielzo, S. A., Yarborough, C.S. & Rosopa, P.J. 2008. A comparison of face-to-face and electronic peer-mentoring: Interactions with mentor gender. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72: 193-206.
- Social Media Camp. 2014. *Dabbling with google hangouts*. [Online]. Available: <http://socialmediacamp.ca/dabbling-with-google-hangouts/>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Soffar, H. 2015. *The advantages and disadvantages of Twitter*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.online-sciences.com/technology/the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-twitter/>. [Accessed: 2 October 2016].
- Solanas, A., Manolov, R., Leiva, D. & Richards, M.M. 2011. Retaining principal components for discrete variables. *Journal of Psychology*, 41(3): 33-50.
- Souktel. 2015. *The best way to reach youth? Use WhatsApp!* [Online]. Available: <http://www.souktel.org/media/news/best-way-reach-youth-use-whatsapp-new-research-dai-souktel>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Sphigelman, C.N & Gill, C.J. 2012. The characteristics of unsuccessful e-mentoring relationships for youth with disabilities. *Qualitative Health Research*, 23(4): 463-475.
- Stanley, C.A. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. Cross-race faculty mentoring. *The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 37(2): 44–50.

- Starting an E-mentoring Program*. 2016. [Online]. Available: <https://nisd.net/sites/default/files/partnerships/mentorhandout.pdf>. [Accessed: 22 August 2016].
- Stat Trek. 2017. *Residual analysis in regression*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.stattek.com/regression/residual-analysis.aspx?Tutorial=AP>. [Accessed: 3 October 2016].
- Statista. 2016. *Most famous social network sites worldwide ranked by active users*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users>. [Accessed: 27 October 2016].
- Stewart, S. & McLoughlin, C. 2007. *Design features of an e-mentoring system for the health professions: Choosing to learn in partnership*. Proceedings from 24th Ascilite Conference, 2-4 December, Singapore.
- Stewart, S. & Carpenter, C. 2009. Electronic mentoring: an innovative approach to providing clinical support. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 16(4): 199-206.
- St Jean, E. & Audet, J. 2012. The role of mentoring in the learning development of the novice entrepreneur. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 8: 119-140.
- St Jean, E. & Mathieu, C. 2015. Developing attitudes toward an entrepreneurial career through mentoring: the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Development*, 42(4): 325-338.
- Stokes, A. 2001. Using telementoring to deliver training to SMEs: a Pilot Study. *Education and Training*, 43(6): 317-324.
- Stokes, P., Garrett-Harris, R. & Hunt, K. 2003. *An evaluation of electronic mentoring (e-mentoring)*. Presented at the 10th European Mentoring and Coaching Conference, 20-21 November, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Stommel, M. & Donntje, K. 2014. *Statistics for advanced practice nurses and health professionals*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Straus, S.E., Johnson, M.O., Marquez, C. & Feldman, M.D. 2013. Characteristics of successful and failed mentoring relationships: A qualitative study across two academic health centers. *Academic Medicine*, 88(1): 82-89.

- Straus, S.E., Chatur, F. & Taylor, M. 2009. Issues in the mentor-mentee relationship in academic medicine: a qualitative study. *Academic Medicine*, 84(1): 135-139.
- Struwig, F.W. & Stead, G.B. 2013. *Research: Planning, designing and reporting*. 2nd Edition. Cape Town: Pearson.
- Sullivan, R. 2000. Entrepreneurial learning and mentoring. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, 6(3): 160-175.
- Techopedia. 2016. *Mobile app*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/2953/mobile-application-mobile-app>. [Accessed: 28 October 2016].
- TechTarget. 2015. *What is Twitter? 2015*. [Online]. Available: <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Twitter>. [Accessed: 27 October 2016].
- TechTarget. 2016. *Google Hangouts*. [Online]. Available: <http://searchmobilecomputing.techtarget.com/definition/Google-Hangouts>. [Accessed: 28 October 2016].
- Techwelkin. 2016. *How to stop a WhatsApp message sent to wrong person*. [Online]. Available: <http://techwelkin.com/how-to-stop-a-whatsapps-message-sent-to-wrong-person>. [Accessed: 4 November 2016].
- Tesch, R. 1992. *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. United States of America, New York: Routledge-Falmer.
- The Bar Council. 2016. *How the e-mentoring scheme works*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/supporting-the-bar/bar-mentoring-service/e-mentoring-for-students/how-the-e-mentoring-scheme-works/>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- The Economic Times. 2016. *Commercial messaging will be big for us in 2017: WhatsApp*. [Online]. Available: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/commercial-messaging-will-be-big-for-us-in-2017whatsapp/articleshow/55437444.cms>. [Accessed: 9 December 2016].
- Thulo, L. 2014. *Believing in purpose over passion*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.smesouthafrica.co.za/Believing-in-purpose-over-passion-Tuming-Lee/>. [Accessed: 19 September 2016].

- Tony Elumelu Foundation. 2016a. *About us*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/programme/about-us/>. [Accessed: 20 September 2016].
- Tony Elumelu Foundation. 2016b. *The TEEP FAQs-All you need to know*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/teep/the-teep-faqs-all-you-need-to-know>. [Accessed: 13 October 2016].
- Tony Elumelu Foundation. 2016c. *Startup enterprise toolkit*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/teep/startups/#mentoring>. [Accessed: 11 October 2016].
- Torgenson, J.K. 2006. *Facebook stirs uproar over online privacy*. *The Johns Hopkins Newsletter* 9/21. [Online]. Available: <http://media.www.jhunewsletter.com>. [Accessed: 1 November 2016].
- Twelve ways to connect, create, and collaborate using Google Hangouts. 2013. *Getting started with your own Hangout*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.Copyblogger.com/google-hangout-content/>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- UNATTI. 2015a. *Unatti and intergenerational e-mentoring*. [Online]. Available: https://tmp.unatti.com/en/community/blog/unatti-et-le-e-mentoring-intergenerational?_route=graphe_front_show_blog&_route_params%5B_locale%5D=en&_route_params%5Bslug%5D=unatti-et-le-e-mentoring-intergenerationnel. [Accessed: 12 December 2016].
- UNATTI. 2015b. *Professional mentoring and sponsoring*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.unatti.com/en/>. [Accessed: 12 December 2016].
- Under 30 CEO. 2016. *Advisors vs. mentors: What's the difference?* [Online]. Available: <http://under30ceo.com/advisors-vs-mentors-whats-the-difference>. [Accessed: 6 December 2016].
- Underhill, C.M. 2006. The effectiveness of mentoring programs in corporate settings: a meta-analytical review of the literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68: 292-307.
- University of Saskatchewan. 2016. *Strategies for establishing e-Mentoring programs and overcome challenges*. [Online]. Available: http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/mentoring/ContentHTML/Part2_15.html. [Accessed: 4 October 2016].

- University of Southern Queensland. 2016. *Online mentoring program to help USQ students*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.usq.edu.au/news-events/news/2016/07/industry-mentoring>. [Accessed: 10 October 2016].
- US Aid. 2016. *East Africa women's mentoring network*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.imgforhealth.org/tags/east-africa-womens-mentoring-network-eawmn/201510>. [Accessed: 14 November 2016].
- Van der Sijde, P. & Weijman, G. 2013. Benefits and impact of mentoring for entrepreneurs: The entrepreneur's perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*. 3(4): 194-204.
- Ventureburn. 2014. *Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship lends hand to African startups*. 2014. [Online]. Available: <http://ventureburn.com/2014/05/branson-centre-of-entrepreneurship-lends-hand-to-african-startups>. [Accessed: 14 November 2016].
- Virgin Unite. 2016. *Welcome to Virgin!* [Online]. Available: <https://www.virgin.com/unite/>. [Accessed: 2 December 2016].
- Virtual Press. 2012. *Launching pad for infinite possibilities*. [Online]. Available: <http://pressoffice.mg.co.za/itweb/videos.php?vid=237>. [Accessed: 23 September 2016].
- Vision Design Group. 2016. *How does e-mail work: A simple (illustrated) explanation*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.visiondesign.com/how-does-email-work-a-simple-illustrated-explanation/>. [Accessed: 25 November 2016].
- Visualscope. 2016. *What is the difference between Facebook and Twitter?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.visualscope.com/twitfb.html>. [Accessed: on 22 August 2016].
- Walker, L. 2016. *WhatsApp on iPhone*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.lifewire.com/whatsapp-messenger-review-2654844>. [Accessed: 30 October 2016].
- Wanberg, C.R., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. & Marchese, M. 2006. Mentor and protégé predictors and outcomes of mentoring in a formal mentoring program. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69: 410-423.
- Warren, C.A. 2006. *Qualitative interviewing Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. California, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Waters, J.K. 2007. *Blogs and Wikis in the business world: definition and solutions*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.cio.com/article/2438542/web-services/blogs-and-wikis-in-the-business-world-and-definition-solutions.html>. [Accessed: 27 October 2016].
- Watson, G.E.H. 2004. *A situational analysis of entrepreneurship mentors in South Africa*. Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Commerce in the subject of Business Management. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Weiler, L.M., Haddock, S.A., Zimmerman, T.S., Henry, K.L., Krafchick, J.L. & Youngblade, L.M. 2015. Time-limited structured youth mentoring and adolescent problem behaviors. *Applied Development Science*, 19(34): 196-205.
- Weinberg, F.J. & Lankau, M.J. 2011. Formal mentoring programs: A mentor-centric and longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Management*, 37(6): 1527-1557.
- Westenberg, J. 2015. *Smartphones make communication easier not better*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.androidauthority.com/smartphones-make-communication-easier-not-better-654878/>. [Accessed: 7 August 2016].
- Western, S. 2012. *Coaching and Mentoring: A Critical Text*. New York: Sage Publishing.
- WhatIs.Com. 2016. *Mobile App*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.whatis.techtarget.com/definition/mobile-app>. [Accessed: 28 October 2016].
- Wheeler, S. & Lambert-Heggs, W. 2009. Connecting distance learners and their mentors using blogs. The Mentor Blog Project. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 10(4): 323–331.
- Wiederman, M.W. 2009. Volunteer bias in sexuality research using college student participants. *Journal of Sex Research*, 36(10): 59-66.
- Wiid, J. & Diggins, C. 2009. *Marketing research*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Williams, S., Sunderman, J. & Kim, J. 2012. E-mentoring in an online course: benefits and challenges to e-mentors. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Monitoring*, 10(1): 109-123.

- Williams, S.L. & Kim, J-H. 2011. E-mentoring in online course projects: Description of an e-mentoring scheme. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(2): 80-95.
- Wong, A. & Premkumar, K. 2007. *An introduction to mentoring principles, processes and strategies for facilitating mentoring relationships at a distance*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/drupal/?q=resources>. [Accessed: 20 October 2016].
- Wood, A. J. 2014. *Tapping into internet resources: an e-mentoring option*. A Capstone project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Science Degree. USA: Winona State University.
- Wood, M. 1999. The challenge of teleelectronic mentoring. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 23(3): 140-144.
- Yaw, D.C. 2007. *E-mentoring in virtual education*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/67748>. [Accessed: 8 November 2016].
- Yeager, D. S., Krosnick, J. A., Chang, L., Javitz, H., Levendusky, M. S., Simpser, A. & Wang, R. 2011. Comparing the Accuracy of RDD Telephone Surveys and Internet Surveys Conducted with Probability and Non-Probability Samples. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 75(4): 709-747.
- Yin, R.K. 2011. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Yip, J. & Kram, K.E. 2015. *Developmental networks: Enhancing the science and practice of mentoring*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.
- Yong, A.G. & Pearce, S. 2013. A beginner's guide to factor analysis: focusing on exploratory factor analysis. *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, 9(2): 79-94.
- Young African Leaders Initiative. 2016a. [Online]. Available: <https://yali.state.gov/mandela-washington-fellowship-application-questions>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Young African Leaders initiative. 2016b. *Network*. [Online]. Available: <https://www.yali.state.gov/beinvolved/>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].
- Young African Leaders initiative. 2016c. About YALI. [Online]. Available: <https://www.yali.state.gov/yali-africa/>. [Accessed: 12 October 2016].

Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development. 2015. *Meet the outstanding YPARD women selected for the online mentoring programme for young women entrepreneurs*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ypard.net/news/meet-outstanding-ypard-women-selected-online-mentoring-program-young-women-entrepreneurs>. [Accessed: on 12 August 2016].

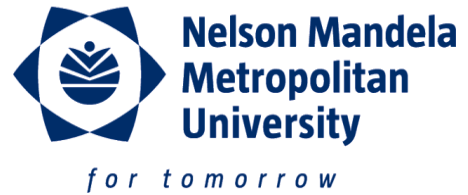
Young Professionals platform for Agricultural Research for Development. 2016. *Mentoring youth in agriculture programs*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ypard.net/mentoring>. [Accessed: 4 December 2016].

Zikmund, W.G. 2003. *Business research methods*. Orlando: Thomson South-Western.

Zikmund, W.G. 2004. *Business research methods*. 7th Edition. Florida, Orlando: Thomson South-Western.

Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C. & Griffen, M. 2009. *Business research methods*. 8th edition. Kentucky: South-Western.

ANNEXURE 1



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Tel. +27 (0) 41 5042201

3 May 2016

ONLINE MENTORING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR FEMALE CAREER AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

I am a doctoral student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and am currently (2015) conducting research on online mentoring as a transformative tool for female career and business development.

I am collecting information via interviews with online field specialists, mentors and mentees regarding online mentoring processes, challenges and conditions necessary for an effective online mentoring environment in South Africa to develop an understanding of the possibility of utilising online mentoring for female career advancement. Ethical clearance has been obtained from the NMMU ethics committee (H-16-BES-BMa-004). All information will be treated in the strictest confidence and results will be reported anonymously as Participant A, B, C, etc.

The questionnaire comprises of two sections:

- Section A canvasses biographical data of the participants.
- Section B explores online mentoring involvement.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Nadine Oosthuizen

E-mail: Nadine.oosthuizen@nmmu.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof Sandra Perks

E-mail: Sandra.perks@nmmu.ac.za

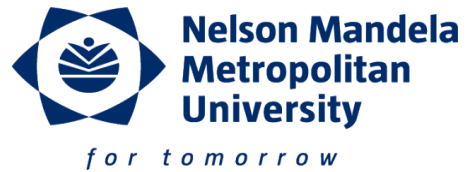
SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Name of institution:_____
2. Name of manager/owner:_____
3. Contact details:
Phone:_____
- E-mail:_____
4. Age of manager:_____
5. Ethnic affiliation:_____
6. Gender:_____
7. Number of years working experience:_____
8. Number of years in this position:_____
9. Level of education:_____

SECTION B: ONLINE MENTORING

1. How did you become involved in online mentoring?
2. When did you become involved in online mentoring?
3. Do you utilise traditional mentoring in addition to online mentoring?
4. Which media platform do you use for online mentoring?
5. Which processes are in place to ensure effective online mentoring?
6. What do you regard as the ideal period for an online mentoring relationship?
7. What are the challenges experienced by online mentors?
8. What are the challenges experienced by online female mentees?
9. How did you resolve these challenges?
10. If some of these challenges are still prevalent, how do you suggest it could be addressed?
10. What do you think should South Africa do to promote and implement online mentoring?
11. Any other issues or factors that you would like to share about the online mentoring process.

ANNEXURE 2



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Tel. +27 (0) 41 5042201

10 May 2016

ONLINE MENTORING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR FEMALE CAREER AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Dear Respondent

I am a doctoral student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and am currently (2016) conducting research on online mentoring as a transformative tool for female career and business development. I am collecting information in the form of an electronic survey. In this study a small business will be regarded as a business of no more than 50 employees. Online mentoring refers to technology mediated mentoring between a mentor and a mentee and is characterised by its non-face-to-face nature. Info will be canvassed from both mentees (female only) and mentors (male and female). Mentors can also provide insight into their perception of the online mentoring environment. This study will provide insight on the design and implementation of effective online mentoring programmes for female mentees to fast-track their corporate careers or develop their small businesses.

Ethical clearance has been obtained from the NMMU ethics committee (H-16-BES-BMa-004). All information will be treated in the strictest confidence and would be used for research purposes only. The majority of the data will be reported in statistical format and no individual respondents will be identified. I would appreciate it if you could complete the questionnaire by clicking on the link provided. **Please note that to complete this questionnaire you must have been involved at some stage in mentoring either as a mentor or mentee.**

The questionnaire comprises of five sections:

- Section A canvasses general information regarding online mentoring.
- Section B explores the perception and challenges associated with online mentoring.
- Section C canvasses general demographic information pertaining to all respondents.
- Section D canvasses general demographic information pertaining to corporate employee respondents.
- Section E canvasses general demographic information pertaining to small business entrepreneur respondents.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely

Nadine Oosthuizen
E-mail: Nadine.oosthuizen@nmmu.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof Sandra Perks
E-mail: Sandra.perks@nmmu.ac.za

INSTRUCTIONS:

PLEASE NOTE THAT TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE YOU MUST HAVE BEEN INVOLVED AT SOME STAGE IN MENTORING EITHER AS A MENTOR OR MENTEE.

CORPORATE EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS: Please complete sections A, B, C and D

BUSINESS OWNER RESPONDENTS: Please complete sections A, B, C and E

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What was your role in the mentoring process?

Mentor	1	Mentee	2	Both	3
--------	---	--------	---	------	---

2. Which online mentoring method would you prefer to utilise? You may indicate more than one option.

E-mail	
Skype	
Telephone	
Video-conferencing	
Whatsapp	
SMS	
Other, specify:	

3. Which type of support do you think online mentoring should provide? You may indicate more than one option.

Emotional support	
Social support	
Business advice	
Career progress support	
Other, specify:	

SECTION B: ONLINE MENTORING PERCEPTIONS

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	Mark by means of an (x) the extent to which you regard the following as important for online mentoring:					
1	Access via your own personal computer	5	4	3	2	1
2	Unreserved e-mail access	5	4	3	2	1
3	Availability of an administrative system	5	4	3	2	1
4	Quality of administrative system support for the storage, retrieval and maintenance of information	5	4	3	2	1
5	Internet access speed	5	4	3	2	1

	Mark by means of an (x) the extent to which you regard the following as important for online mentoring:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	Availability of technical support in event of computer malfunctioning	5	4	3	2	1
7	Ease of access to the communication channel used for interaction such as chat rooms or skype	5	4	3	2	1
8	User friendliness of the communication channel used for interaction	5	4	3	2	1
9	That mentor is of similar age as mentee	5	4	3	2	1
10	That mentor is of similar gender as mentee	5	4	3	2	1
11	That mentor is of similar ethnic affiliation as mentee	5	4	3	2	1
12	Mentor's extent of previous mentoring experience	5	4	3	2	1
13	Previous experience with the same mentor	5	4	3	2	1
14	Nature of educational background of mentor	5	4	3	2	1
15	Work and career experience of mentor	5	4	3	2	1
16	Leadership style of mentor	5	4	3	2	1
17	Personality of mentor	5	4	3	2	1
18	Language spoken by mentor	5	4	3	2	1
19	Communication richness (extent of detail conveyed) during interaction	5	4	3	2	1
20	Clarity of message conveyed by both parties	5	4	3	2	1
21	Logical manner in which the message is conveyed	5	4	3	2	1
22	Ease of expressing your feelings in writing using an online communication medium	5	4	3	2	1
23	Using simple language to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstandings	5	4	3	2	1
24	Ease with which mentee can relate to mentor's communication style	5	4	3	2	1
25	Honesty of both mentor and mentee on reflecting on communication process	5	4	3	2	1
26	Elaborating on the meaning of words to confirm the intended message by mentoring pair	5	4	3	2	1
27	Accuracy of record-keeping of all communications by mentee and mentor	5	4	3	2	1
28	Utilising multiple contact methods such as e-mails, chat rooms and instant messaging to interact	5	4	3	2	1
29	Mentor's familiarity with the specific topic discussed in the message	5	4	3	2	1
30	Mentor's familiarity with the range of topics to be discussed in messages	5	4	3	2	1
31	Taking into consideration time zone differences	5	4	3	2	1
32	Availability of the mentor or mentee to interact at a specified time	5	4	3	2	1
33	Frequency of interaction	5	4	3	2	1
34	Length of mentoring process	5	4	3	2	1
35	Speed of response from mentoring pair	5	4	3	2	1
36	Availability of the same communication method for interaction e.g. Skype between the mentoring pair	5	4	3	2	1
37	Mentee/mentor's perception of cultural differences	5	4	3	2	1
38	Extent to which the mentee's values are aligned to those of mentor	5	4	3	2	1

	Mark by means of an (x) the extent to which you regard the following as important for online mentoring:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
39	Your perception of the challenges associated with online mentoring	5	4	3	2	1
40	Your perception of the perceived benefits associated with online mentoring	5	4	3	2	1
41	General attitude of mentee/mentor	5	4	3	2	1
42	The closeness and camaraderie in the relationship	5	4	3	2	1
43	How complex you perceive the online mentoring process to be	5	4	3	2	1
44	Perceived similarity of attitude between mentee and mentor	5	4	3	2	1
45	Perceived similarity of beliefs between mentee and mentor	5	4	3	2	1
46	Mutual trust	5	4	3	2	1
47	Two-way information exchange between mentee and mentor	5	4	3	2	1
48	Working together in a team during mentoring process	5	4	3	2	1
49	Clear expectations of relationship from inception	5	4	3	2	1
50	Clear goals of relationship from inception	5	4	3	2	1
51	Clear boundaries for depth of relationship from inception	5	4	3	2	1
52	That a mentor offers emotional support	5	4	3	2	1
53	Swiftness by which mentoring relationship can develop	5	4	3	2	1
54	Clear structure of mentoring programme at inception	5	4	3	2	1
55	Conflict resolution process established at inception	5	4	3	2	1
56	Agreement on what is and what is not appropriate to share in correspondence	5	4	3	2	1
57	That a mentor can relate to the mentee on a personal level	5	4	3	2	1
58	Your previous experience of online communication	5	4	3	2	1
59	Your readiness to use the technology in the online mentoring process	5	4	3	2	1
60	Your level of computer literacy	5	4	3	2	1
61	Certainty of the mentee where she wants to be in her future career/business	5	4	3	2	1
62	Motivation of the mentee to fast-track her career/business progress	5	4	3	2	1
63	Mentee's perseverance to embrace change	5	4	3	2	1
64	Mentee's willingness to work on her career/business progress	5	4	3	2	1
65	Mentee's willingness to implement changes suggested	5	4	3	2	1

	I expect online mentoring to:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
66	Improve the self-confidence of a mentee to pursue her dream(s)	5	4	3	2	1
67	Expose a mentee to new ideas and ways of thinking	5	4	3	2	1
68	Satisfy self-development needs of a mentee	5	4	3	2	1
69	Improve interpersonal skills of a mentee	5	4	3	2	1
70	Teach a mentee how to take control of her work life	5	4	3	2	1
71	Increase a mentee's business performance	5	4	3	2	1
72	Fast-track a mentee's career path/business growth progress	5	4	3	2	1
73	Assist a mentee in developing specific workplace skills and abilities	5	4	3	2	1
74	Significantly increase a mentee's network of professional contacts	5	4	3	2	1
75	Help a mentee gain real world knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
76	Assist a mentee in applying theory to practice	5	4	3	2	1
77	Build a mentee's morale	5	4	3	2	1
78	Motivate a mentee to pursue career/business opportunities	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF ALL RESPONDENTS

Please indicate your responses with an (X).

1. Gender?

Male	1	Female	2
------	---	--------	---

2. Age?

18 - 25 years	1	36 - 45 years	3	56 - 65 years	5
26 - 35 years	2	46 - 55 years	4	Over 65 years	6

3. Highest education level?

Secondary and below	1	National Diploma	3	Postgraduate degree (e.g. Honours/MBA)	5
National certificate	2	Bachelor's degree	4	Other, please specify:	6

4. Home language spoken?

English	1	Zulu	3	Other, please specify:	5
Afrikaans	2	Xhosa	4		

5. Management qualifications?

Yes	1	No	2	If yes, specify:	3
-----	---	----	---	------------------	---

6. Ethnic affiliation?

Black	1	Coloured	3	Other, please specify:	5
White	2	Asian	4		

7. Years working experience?

Less than 1	1	1-5	2	6-10	3	11-15	4	16 and more	5
-------------	---	-----	---	------	---	-------	---	-------------	---

SECTION D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF CORPORATE EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS

Please indicate your response with an (X).

1. Position in business?

Manager	1	Employee	2
---------	---	----------	---

2. Function employed in?

Marketing	1
Human resources	2
Purchasing	3
Finance	4
Administration	5
Operations	6
Logistics	7
Sales	8

3. Number of employees?

Less than 5	1	6-20	2	21-50	3	51-200	4	More than 200	5
-------------	---	------	---	-------	---	--------	---	---------------	---

4. Employment sector?

Education	1	Architecture	9
Health	2	Transport and travelling	10
Agriculture	3	Leisure and entertainment	11
Financial and insurance	4	Tourism	12
Communication	5	Construction and engineering	13
Real estate	6	Medical	14
Mining	7	Sports	15
Catering and accommodation	8	Social services	16
Other, please specify:			17

SECTION E: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF BUSINESS OWNER RESPONDENTS

Please indicate your response with an (X).

1. Family business?

Yes	1	No	2
-----	---	----	---

2. Years business has been in existence?

Less than 1	1	1-5	2	6-10	3	11-15	4	16 and more	5
-------------	---	-----	---	------	---	-------	---	-------------	---

3. Form of ownership?

Sole trader	1	Close corporation	3	Public company	5
Partnership	2	Private company	4	Other, please specify:	6

4. Number of employees?

Less than 5	1	6-20	2	21-50	3
-------------	---	------	---	-------	---

5. Business activity?

Manufacturing	1	Retail	2	Service	3	If other, specify:	4
---------------	---	--------	---	---------	---	--------------------	---

6. Business sector?

Education	1	Architecture	9
Health	2	Transport and travelling	10
Agriculture	3	Leisure and entertainment	11
Financial and insurance	4	Tourism	12
Communication	5	Construction and engineering	13
Real estate	6	Medical	14
Mining	7	Sports	15
Catering and accommodation	8	Social services	16
Other, please specify:			17

7. Area that business premises are situated?

Central Business District	1	Major shopping complex	3	If combination, specify:	5
Residential area	2	Small shopping complex	4	If other, specify:	6

8. Who are your target market?

General public	1	Businesses	2	Both general public and businesses	3
----------------	---	------------	---	------------------------------------	---

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

ANNEXURE 3



Ref: H-16-BES-BMa-004 [Approved]

Chairperson: Faculty RTI Committee
Faculty of Business and Economics Sciences
Tel. +27 (0)41 504 2906

3 May 2016

Prof S Perks
NMMU
Department Business Management
South Campus

Dear Prof Perks

PROJECT PROPOSAL: ELECTRONIC MENTORING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR FEMALE CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH (PHD: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT)

PRP: Prof S Perks
PI: Ms N Oosthuizen

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at Fac RTI.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee. However, please note that the approval is on condition that permission to conduct the study is also obtained from the other relevant individuals, parties, organisations and/or role players to which the study pertains.

The ethics clearance reference number is **H-16-BES-BMa-004**, and is valid for three years. Please inform the Faculty RTI Committee, via the faculty representative, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time.

Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome.

Yours sincerely

Prof C Rootman
Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences