

# **Mentoring and human resource development in the construction industry South Africa: Where we are and Where we need to go: A literature review**

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## **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** Although mentoring theory, research and practice have begun to mature, relatively few articles on mentoring have appeared in the human resource development (HRD) literature. The purpose of this paper is to examine past theory, research and practice on mentoring through the lens of (HRD), within the construction industry, in order to identify gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD professionals.

**Design:** The study was mainly a literature review with a special focus on mentoring. The data used in the report was mainly qualitative, based on the content analysis, and historical data.

**Findings:** After reviewing core aspect of mentoring central, to all domains of HRD, the authors summarize the key issues that had been studied regarding mentoring and career development, organization development, and training and development, proposing new directions for future research.

**Value:** The authors conclude with a research agenda that identifies where researchers need to go with mentoring research and HRD to better inform the practice of mentoring in organizations.

**Research Limitations/Implications:** The paper was limited to the construction industry.

**Practical Implications:** Human Resource Development and Mentoring is obviously an important career advancement tool for organizations, in terms of both their impact on the career paths of juniors and their benefits. The paper challenges the South African construction sector, construction companies in Gauteng Province and including the different stakeholders to mentor its construction employees

**Key words:** Mentoring, Construction Industry, Training, Career, Organization Development.

# 1 Introduction

Both academics and practitioners have recognized that interpersonal relationships such as mentoring are valuable because of their impact upon employee socialization, learning, career development, expatriate adjustment, and the preparation of employees for managerial positions (e.g. Dockery & Saal, 1998; Laabs, 1998; Noe, 2002). A growing body of academic and practitioner literature supports the popular perception that mentoring has considerable value to both individual employees and organizations. Mentoring is defined as a dyadic relationship where psychosocial support and career support are the functions provided by the mentor to the protégé (Kram, 1996). Mentoring is recognized as a powerful human resource development (HRD) tool that assists in career advancement, and promotes many affective outcomes; one of them being job satisfaction (Aremu & Adeyolu, 2003; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 2006).

Mentoring relationships are defined as relationships between a senior, more experienced person as mentor and a young, less experienced person as protégé for the purpose of providing high amounts of both career and psychosocial assistance (Higgins, & Kram, 2001) [1]. Mentoring is an important developmental activity for protégés and mentors (Turban & Dougherty, 1994) [2]. Mentoring has recently been claimed to be recognized as a relatively powerful HRD (Human Resource Development) intervention with the capability of assisting employees in career development, serving as a form of on-the-job training and helping to create learning organizations (Hegstad & Wentling, 2005) [3]. The understanding of work-based mentoring relationships has substantially increased during the past two decades (Wanberg, Welsh & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007) [4]. Mentoring in business generally is associated with a wide range of favorable behavioral, attitudinal, health-related, relational, motivational, and career outcomes, although sometimes the effect size is generally small. Mentoring involves developmental assistance provided by a more senior individual within a protégé's organization, that is a single, one on one relationship, this focus reflects a stream a stream of research on mentoring beginning with Levinson and colleagues, who proposed that a mentor is "one of the most complex and developmentally important relationships, the mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority, a teacher, adviser or sponsor" (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978).

Recently researchers have begun to consider the limitations of focusing research and practice on a single or primary mentor and instead, have begun to revisit Kram's (1985) original proposition that individuals rely upon not just one but multiple individuals for developmental support in their careers, a phenomenon she calls "relationship constellations" (e.g., Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Higgins, 2000; Thomas & Higgins, 1996). There are some specialties related to Construction Company's. Traditionally and historically, apprenticeship relations in construction industry have been a method of transferring knowledge and experience. On the other hand, since these organizations are project-based, they gain new experience and knowledge during the process of completing any new project; thus, mentoring would act as a means of transferring tacit knowledge of senior members to junior employees. Also, the project-orientation nature of these firms sometimes ends in high turnover of employees. For new employees, mentoring can act as a significant networking development opportunity.

Given current trends in the workplace, within the construction industry, such as placing greater responsibility on employees for managing their own careers, increasing need for continuous learning, and greater reliance on on-the-job development, it seems unlikely that

mentoring will wane in significance soon. Moreover, the role of mentoring in fostering the development of adults is discussed as a component of a number of adult development theories (Bee & Bjorklund, 2004) and is noted to be an important means of facilitating learning in our society (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999). It is, therefore, not surprising that mentoring has been recommended as an essential tool for human resource development. The recent publication of several reviews of research on mentoring (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003) highlight that our knowledge of mentoring is maturing. Noteworthy advances have been made in understanding the nature, process, and outcomes of mentoring relationships. However, the literature on mentoring is still fairly young (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003); many questions about mentoring remain poorly answered or have yet to be thoroughly investigated, within the construction industry.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Studying mentoring as a form of SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) is an interesting addition to the HRD (Human Resource Development) literature because many of the characteristics of an organization, traditional approaches to individual human resources can't be easily changed. For example, turnover and selection processes may be able to slowly change the employee landscape, but they can't change a crucial element of human resources the individual employees' characteristics. While research has shown that individual characteristics such as personality are strong predictors of job-related attitudes and performance (Grant & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge & Ilies, 2002; Judge, Martocchio, & Thoresen, 1997; Mount & Barrick, 1995; Salgado, 1997; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001), such factors can't be acted on in an HRD capacity. The organization can, however, alter its human resources activities (i.e., its mentoring and other developmental offerings).

#### Objective of the study

- To examine past theory, research and practice on mentoring through the lens of (HRD).
- To identify gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD professionals.
- To determine the role of mentoring in HRD.

## **2 Literature Review**

Mentoring as a form of strategic human resource management is an interesting addition to the HRD literature because it provides a mechanism of change for individual employees, within the organization. Having a powerful human resource development (HRD) organization is a worthwhile asset of companies, and an enterprise's efficiency is closely connected to human capital's managerial and developmental systems [1,2]. Human capitals play an impressive role in order to success an organization. Consequently, people with high skills and expertise increase their chances of being at work [3]. Thus, successful construction companies and/or organizations will be those that are able to engage, educate, develop and retain highly skilled employees. In order to do so, developing a learning environment is, therefore, essential to the future of HRD.

Human resource (HR) can create values for an organization by finding ways to improve workforce managements that have a positive impact on performance. Since HR has a significant influence on the overall management system, it is well positioned to create substantial benefits, both for the employee and the organization. Nowadays, it is a common belief in both the business and the academic world that the HRs of an organization can be a source of competitive advantage and one of the hidden forces behind growth, profits and lasting value of the organization. The importance of involving HR in development, planning, and implementation of competency strategies has been emphasized by researchers [4,1].

HRs are becoming the most important asset of an organization if they are adequately nurtured, educated and developed [5]. In this regard, the dynamic external environments within which many businesses currently operate requires that they develop a capacity for training and learning faster than competitors, to find solutions to novel and complex problems and to enhance the quantity of what they do through effective training and development practices [6]. Therefore, the main core thread of this paper is methods of training and development in HRD practices within the construction industry. Research on mentoring has been on issues related to career development than on the other major domains comprising HRD. One recent review of the business and psychological literature on mentoring employees identified more than 90 studies examining the relationship between mentoring and work or career related outcomes (Wanberg et al., 2003). More than 95% of these studies examined outcomes for protégés; only 13% investigated mentors' outcomes. Current understanding of the influence of mentoring on career development, within organizations, can be characterized as follows. Having a mentor and receiving more mentoring functions is associated with more favorable objective (e.g., compensation, promotions) and subjective outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, job satisfaction) for protégés.

Research has studied the role of individual characteristics in mentoring. Models of mentoring have incorporated both protégé and mentor characteristics as key antecedents of mentoring relationships as well as factors that may affect the outcomes of mentoring relationships (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Wanberg et al., 2003). In addition, the combination of protégés' and mentors' attributes or dyad characteristics are increasingly recognized as a potentially important influence on mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003). A number of researchers have studied how gender and race affect mentoring, within organizations. From the protégé's perspective, key questions that have been investigated include (1) are women (or minorities) less likely than men (or Caucasians) to have a mentor? (2) Do women (or minorities) receive the same kind and amount of mentoring functions as others? And (3) do women (or minorities) gain the same favorable outcomes from mentoring as men (or Caucasians) (Wanberg et al., 2003)? The majority of research suggests that women and minorities are as likely as men and Caucasians to have mentors (Ragins, 1999; Wanberg et al., 2003), but inconsistent findings make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about relationships between protégés' gender or race and mentoring functions (Wanberg et al., 2003).

Similarly, it is unclear whether female and minority protégés achieve the same career outcomes as their counterparts. There is some evidence that mentors' race and gender may be associated with differences in protégés' compensation (Wanberg et al., 2003). These findings underscore the importance of considering both the characteristics of mentors and protégés. Note that research on diversity and mentoring falls at the intersection of two domains of HRD: career development and organization development. An improved

understanding of how diversity affects mentoring and the career-related benefits arising from mentoring would enable HRD professionals to more effectively use mentoring as a career development tool for all individuals, as well as more successfully deploy mentoring as an organization development initiative to achieve diversity-related objectives.

### 2.1.1 HRD in the construction organization

The construction industry has been considered to be one of the most dynamic and complex industrial environments [26, 27]. It is a project based industry within which individual projects are usually custom-built to client specifications [28, 27]. The dynamic environment and changing demands of construction activities required the formation of the teams each time a new project is committed [29]. This is particularly appeared in larger contractor companies, which are focused on managing the construction phases and the processes with a few directly employed managers and professional staff in order to lead the outsource teams [30]. Most importantly, however, the external sources of workforces are very common in the industry [27, 31]. Whilst the increasing use of external sources of labour has allowed the managing contractors to pass on risk and achieve greater flexibility, it has also made employee development and project co-ordination more complex, with a requirement for more highly skilled and experienced management [30, 27].

Despite these challenging characteristics of the industry, literature on HRD within large construction organisations is scarce and much of the evidence relies on data gathered over last decades [26, 32].

Raiden et al. [33] found that the companies demonstrated significant commitment toward strategic HRD with the benefits of staff retention and improved organizational performance. On the other hand, the success of an organization, particularly a construction organization, is largely dependent upon the quality and morale of its people [34]. HRD provides an influential approach to the development of people in many business sectors [35]. In this regard, the construction industry, however, presents a challenging environment for the effective management and development of human resources due to the dynamic and fast changing organizational, project and skill requirements. Construction projects have seen as project-based environment by many researchers [36, 34, 29]. Accordingly, some internal and external factors can influence the HRD processes in project-based environments. The researchers define the organization's strategic choice in terms of HRD, organizational structure, organizational culture and factors central to the individual employees within the organization as some of the internal factors [30, 37].

These parameters, by maintaining employee commitment, contribute to the employee resourcing strategies and achievement of project goals at a minimum risk. In addition to the internal factors, several parameters are external to the organization and affecting the way HRD practices are organized. The challenges comprise those that apply to the construction industry, specifically, and those, which apply to all business sectors. Common throughout all different business sectors are:

- ❖ Technological, legislative and demographic change;
- ❖ Changes in people' values and beliefs, quality standards and expectations; and
- ❖ Changes in the economic/labour markets.

Particular challenges typical for the construction industry include:

- ❖ Unique product [36, 34];
- ❖ Transient workforce moving between different work locations and/or projects [30];
- ❖ Male dominated, macho culture of the industry [37];
- ❖ Short-term teams formed, disbanded, mixed and changed in composition [29];
- ❖ Projects won at short notice [38];
- ❖ Changing proficiency, skill and competency requirements [34]; and
- ❖ Client pressures.

The unique and dynamic environment of the industry, one of the company's strengths, in terms of HRD, lies in the managerial aim for good people development practices. Although, employees do not feel this is always realized, this forms a positive foundation for opening future opportunities through the development of more organized HRD practices. The above statements indicate on the importance of HRD practices and its applications in construction industry in order to improve the performance of construction activities. Little attention has been also given to the importance of staff training and motivation in HRD practices in the construction industry's literature.

#### 2.1.2 Mentoring and training and development

The Oxford English Dictionary defines training as the action of teaching a person a practical skill or type of behaviour in any profession, art or craft. The HRD definitions do not also differ significantly. It is generally defined as a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes through learning experiences, to achieve effective performance in an activity or a range of activities [7]. Many definitions and interpretations of training and development can be found within the HRD literature. For instance, Van Wart et al. [39], suggest that "training is the application driven and aims to impart skills that are useful immediately, in particular situations". Learning and individuals in organizations have been considered as the key themes of training and development [42]. According to Koestler [43], skills are either innate or acquired and the key characteristic of any acquired skill is that it is learned. Even simple skills are better learnt; they become more flexible, when the learner understands the principles behind them. In order to facilitate the acquisition of skills and expertise for employees, Caravan [8] suggests that training must become a mainstream function and an integral part of any organization's strategic direction. Bowen [44] asserts that HRD strategies must be intrinsically linked to overall business strategy.

Little research has focused on how mentoring is related to learning in organizations (Allen & Eby, 2003). Given that mentoring relationships are primarily directed toward professional development and that dictionary definitions of *mentor* often include the term *teacher*, this lack of attention is surprising. Research and theory building efforts highlight the potential importance of the role of learning in mentoring relationships. The preliminary evidence suggests that mentors and protégés see learning as an important objective and outcome of their relationships (Singh et al., 2002). Protégé learning has been linked positively with receiving support from a mentor (Eby et al., 2004) and appears to mediate subsequent positive, work-related outcomes experienced by protégés (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). In contrast, decreased protégé learning appears to be associated with having negative experiences in mentoring relationships (Eby et al., 2004).

Proposing a model of formal mentoring, Wanberg and colleagues (2003) incorporated taxonomy of learning outcomes (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993). They proposed that the relationship between mentoring received and more distal career outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, promotions) would be partially mediated by cognitive, skill based, and affective learning. Although this model needs to be tested, it seems probable that examining the relationships among training and mentoring are likely to be fruitful areas of future research. Key questions that needs to be addressed are (1) What do protégés learn from their mentors? (2) What do mentors learn from their protégés? and (3) How do protégés and mentors learn from each other?

The nature of construction, industry shows that most of the construction organizations are faced with many barriers and difficulties in order to apply effective training and development practices for their staff and labour [27, 29, 45]. Manager's executives and supervisors can have a significant and constructive impact on transfer of training [46]. The training of personnel contributes directly to the development of HRs within construction organizations. Training also plays a critical role in increasing workers' adaptability and flexibility, which employers have found is becoming increasingly important. Thus, it is important for an organization to maintain a necessary competence in its employees through adequate training [47]. Training has to start with the recognition of training needs through job analysis, performance assessment and organizational analysis. Once the training needs of extension personnel have been identified, the next step is to organize training programs. Methods such as role playing, simulation exercises, case study, on the job training, off the job training, and distance education can be used in construction industry to create learning situations based on experience. The most effective methods, which emphasized by researchers, are on-the-job training, off-the-job training [48] and distance education [49].

### **3 Research Methodology**

The study is mainly a literature review with a special focus on mentoring. The data used in the report is mainly qualitative, based on the content analysis, case studies and historical data.

### **4 Findings and Discussion**

#### **4.1.1 The role of mentoring in HRD**

Mentoring is a process in which one person [mentor] is responsible for overseeing the career and development of another person [protégé] outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship (Clutterbuck, 1991). A mentor is someone who is concerned with a person's life's work (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1996) and helps her/him become what that she/he aspires to be through career and psychological support (Appelbaum, et. al, 1994). Gregson (1994) says that mentoring is an endeavor to transmit proficiency and expertise from practiced members in an organization to the less experienced. It is mostly used as a "fast-track" support scheme wherein the senior members of the organization oversee the activity and performance of the more junior colleagues who have been identified as 'crown princes' - kings of tomorrow. For these crown-princes, mentoring is used as a holistic HRD intervention to develop diverse attributes and skills among them. To achieve this purpose, mentoring needs the activities like sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, counselling, friendship (Kram, 1985) and appraisal (Leibowitz et. al., 1986) to undertake. But in practice, since the mentor can assume a few of

these functions, the process of mentoring may mean quite different things in different settings (Jackson, 1993).

Ragins and Kram (2007) take a more comprehensive view of the concept of mentoring and say that the mentors are supposed to contribute to the protégé on two dimensions; career building and psychosocial richness. Career building functions include promoting job related skills and behaviours of the mentees, patronizing their growth and advancement, and enhancing their outlook as a way to help them grow intrinsically as well as extrinsically along the hierarchy of the organization. Psychosocial richness functions include building behaviors, such as offering acceptance and providing friendship, that enhance the protégé's personal growth, identity and self-worth. Eddy et al. (2003) say that efficacy of mentoring has been got divulged upon the organizations and a growing number of them have implemented formal mentoring programs.

These programs are thought to benefit the organization, as well as the individual mentoring participants. Gregson (1994) mentioned that the relationship between mentor and the protégé seems to form a bond that binds both parties to the organization. Findings of Fagenson (1992) are worth mention at this stage. He is of the view that entering into the mentoring relationship as a protégé is not a random process to be opted by anyone. Not everyone is motivated to assume the role of protégé. Rather dispositional characteristics matter in this regard. Individuals with high growth and achievement need level were more to have a mentor than those who were low in need for growth and achievement. Aryee et al. (1999) found that the people with ambition to succeed showed more inclination towards protégé-initiated mentoring. The point was supported by Turban and Dougherty (1994) who say that the individuals with an internal locus of control were more likely to initiate mentoring relationships than those with an external locus of control. Apart from personality and disposition based features, learning goal orientation has been also found in scores of studies as a factor behind the choice for entering into mentor-mentee relationship. Brett and Vande Walle (1999) suggest that the individuals with a learning goal orientation are more likely to want to participate in HRD activities especially the mentor-protégé relationship. Godshalk and Sosik (2003) say that mentoring is a growth and development driven process, and the people having a learning goal mindset have an inclination toward adopting mentoring as development tool. In the nutshell, it looks that formal mentoring programs will be particularly attractive to high growth need level and high learning goal-oriented people because these programs offer them the opportunity to learn new behaviours, skills, and competency.

Just like coaching, mentoring should also not be taken as a panacea for all HRD ailments. It is not appropriate in all circumstances, nor is it necessarily superior to other forms of management development (Clutterbuck, 1991). Rather it is a process to be used alongside other forms of career progression. The people who rely on mentoring alone may be missing out on other important sources of career help (Shapiro et. al, 1988). Mentoring should not be taken as replacement for effective classroom training and other staff development scheme - but it can make them even more effective (Grgson,1993).

#### 4.1.2 Past theory, research and practice on mentoring through the lens of (HRD)

Four core issues relevant to research and practice on mentoring, regard less of which aspect of HRD one is contemplating, are (1) the definition and measurement of mentoring, (2) the dynamics involved in mentoring relationships, (3) understanding different types of mentoring relationships (e.g., formal vs. informal), and (d) the differentiation of mentoring from other workplace relationships. In a qualitative research of Kram, (1985), she



identified two kinds of assistance, mentors provide to their protégés. Career functions directly aid protégés' career advancement and include challenging assignments, coaching, exposure, protection, and sponsorship. Psychosocial functions which include acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling, enhance protégés' sense of competence and identity. These mentoring functions have been a prominent method used by many researchers to define and assess mentoring.

Three well known measures of multiple mentoring functions (Ragins, 1999) have been used in a number of studies and have well established psychometric properties: the Mentoring Role Instrument (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990), the Mentoring Functions Scale (Noe, 1988), and the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). Differences across the instruments highlight two areas of continued uncertainty regarding mentoring functions, (Wanberg et al., 2003). First because of mixed evidence (Scandura & William, 2001; Tepper, Shaffer, & Tepper, 1996, it is not clear how many distinct mentoring functions there are. Some research suggests that Kram's (1985) original two mentoring functions are the appropriate way to characterize the assistance mentors provide (Noe, 1988). Other research supports the idea that role modeling, initially conceptualized as a facet of psychosocial mentoring, should be viewed as a third, separate mentoring function (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). Second, debate continues which of the narrower mentoring functions are facets of psychosocial mentoring and which are facets of career mentoring. For example, coaching was initially identified by Kram as a facet of career mentoring. Consistent with diverging empirical evidence, this classification has been maintained in the development of some instruments (e.g., Ragins & McFarlin, 1990) but not others (Noe, 1988). There is widespread agreement that mentoring functions are an important component of mentoring relationship and that there is at least two distinct mentoring mentoring functions (Wanberg et al., 2003). HRD professionals should consider the subtle difference across measures of mentoring when selecting instruments to use and interpreting their results. Another emerging area of inquiry focuses on the dark side of mentoring. Although it has long been recognized that some mentoring relationships could be dysfunctional, only recently have the negative aspects of mentoring begun to be systematically studied. Through content analysis of experiences reported by 84 protégés in negative mentoring relationships, Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000) identified 15 types of negative mentoring experiences. Subsequent research confirmed the grouping of these experiences into five metathemes: mismatch within dyad, distancing behavior, manipulative behavior, lack of mentor expertise, and general dysfunctionality (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004).

Initial findings indicate that these dimensions of negative mentoring have moderate to large (negative) associations with the positive, supportive aspects of mentoring (i.e., mentoring functions) but account for additional variance in protégé outcomes, including intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and job withdrawal (Eby et al., 2004). Some evidence suggests that certain negative experiences may be more prevalent or have greater impact in formal mentoring relationships than informal ones (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby et al., 2004). Additional research on negative mentoring experiences, particularly on their antecedents and consequences, would help inform HRD professionals' efforts to maximize the benefits of mentoring. A limited amount of research has examined the dynamics of mentoring relationships, including the "micro" processes through which mentors and protégés interact and the "macro" processes through which mentoring relationships evolve over time (Wanberg et al., 2003). For example, studies of "micro" processes have examined how protégés' use of ingratiation and influence tactics (Aryee, Wyatt, & Stone, 1996; Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993) relate to mentoring functions.

In general, relatively not much research has been directed specifically toward understanding formal mentoring relationships. The majority of research on mentoring has not identified the origins of the mentoring relationships being examined (Wanberg et al., 2003). A number of scholars and practitioners have argued that formal and informal mentoring relationships differ in meaningful ways. For example, they may differ in terms of the structure surrounding them (e.g., having guidelines for how often to meet and topics to discuss), the motivation and skills of the mentors, and the willingness of mentors to visibly support their protégés (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Finally, there is a growing body of research that has focused on differentiating mentoring from other workplace relationships. Early work in this area described the dimensions on which mentoring differed from other supportive workplace relationships (Missirian, 1982; Shapiro et al., 1978). Later researchers examined the similarities and differences between leadership and mentoring (Scandura & Schreishiem, 1994; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Most recently, researchers have proposed that protégés hold multiple developmental relationships simultaneously and have called for research exploring a protégé's entire developmental network, which will likely include alternative forms of mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Questions remain as to the nature of and distinction between those relationships that are viewed as mentoring and those that serve other developmental purposes (D'Abate et al., 2003). Understanding this distinction is important to HRD's effective use and implementation of mentoring in construction organizations. Mentoring and career development, to date more research on mentoring has been on issues related to career development than on the other major domains comprising HRD.

One recent review of the business and psychological literature on mentoring employees identified more than 90 studies examining the relationship between mentoring and work- or career-related outcomes (Wanberg et al., 2003). More than 95% of these studies examined outcomes for protégés; only 13% investigated mentors' outcomes. Current understanding of the influence of mentoring on career development can be characterized as follows. Having a mentor and receiving more mentoring functions is associated with more favorable objective (e.g., compensation, promotions) and subjective outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, job satisfaction) for protégés. Research has studied the role of individual characteristics in mentoring. Models of mentoring have incorporated both protégé and mentor characteristics as key antecedents of mentoring relationships as well as factors that may affect the outcomes of mentoring relationships (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Wanberg et al., 2003). The combination of protégés' and mentors' attributes or dyad characteristics are increasingly recognized as a potentially important influence on mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003).

To explain the glass ceiling, a number of researchers have studied how gender and race affect mentoring. From the protégé's perspective, key questions that have been investigated include (1) are women (or minorities) less likely than men to have a mentor? (2) do women (or minorities) receive the same kind and amount of mentoring functions as others? and (3) do women (or minorities) gain the same favorable outcomes from mentoring as men (Wanberg et al., 2003). The majority of research suggests that women and minorities are as likely as men and Caucasians to have mentors (Ragins, 1999; Wanberg et al., 2003), but inconsistent findings make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about relationships between protégés' gender or race and mentoring functions (Wanberg et al., 2003). Similarly, it is unclear whether female and minority protégés achieve the same career

outcomes as their counterparts. There is some evidence that mentors' race and gender may be associated with differences in protégés' compensation (Wanberg et al., 2003).

The findings underscore the importance of considering both the characteristics of mentors and protégés. The research on diversity and mentoring falls at the intersection of two domains of HRD: career development and organizational development. An improved understanding of how diversity affects mentoring and the career-related benefits arising from mentoring would enable HRD professionals to more, effectively use mentoring as a career development tool for all employees within the organization, as well as more successfully deploy mentoring as an organization development initiative to achieve diversity related objectives.

#### 4.1.3 Gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD professionals.

##### **Core aspects of mentoring**

The kinds of assistance mentors provide (i.e., mentoring functions) are widely used to define and assess mentoring relationships. There are at least two distinct major mentoring functions:

- career
- psychosocial

Debate continues over:

- Whether there are more distinct mentoring functions.
- The nature of the sub facets comprising the major mentoring functions.
- There are several regularly used measures of mentoring functions.

A small body of research suggests negative mentoring experiences can be described by:

- Several promising studies suggest additional research on mentor protégé interactions and the evolution of mentoring relationships would be valuable.

Limited research on formal mentoring suggests:

- It can, but does not always, lead to the same protégé outcomes as informal mentoring.
- Mentoring has not yet been thoroughly distinguished from other supportive workplace relationships in the construction industry.

##### **Career development**

- More research on mentoring has focused on career development than on other areas of HRD.
- For protégés, mentoring is associated with small objective career outcomes and small to moderate subjective outcomes.
- Evidence regarding the direction of these relationships is lacking; more experimental and longitudinal studies are recommended within organizations.

- Women and minorities appear as likely as their male or other race counterparts to have mentors, within the construction industry and the impact of diversity on mentoring functions and protégé outcomes is less clear.

### **Organization development**

There has been little attention paid to mentoring outcomes at the organizational level of analysis.

Three organizational outcomes of mentoring have been suggested:

- Developing human resources
- Managing organizational culture
- Improving organizational communication

Limited research suggests that mentoring can assist protégés in adapting to organizational change.

- Measurement of the impact of formal mentoring programs on organizational outcomes such as retention is lacking, within the construction organizations.
- Research findings support that mentoring can be a means to promote equity and diversity in organizations.
- Preliminary evidence indicates that the source of the relationship may influence organizational outcomes.

### **Training and development**

- Not much research has focused on mentoring and learning.
- Preliminary findings and recent theory building suggest protégé learning may be a key construct mediating the relationship between mentoring functions and protégé outcomes.
- Theory and past research suggest protégés may gain cognitive, skill based, and affective learning from mentoring.

Additional research is needed to determine how the content and format of training, within organizations for mentors and protégés influences the success of mentoring relationships.

## **5 Conclusion**

In this paper, the authors have reviewed current perspectives on mentoring and HRD and identified directions, gaps for future research, theory, and practice from the perspective of the HRD domains of career development, organization development, and training and development within construction organizations. Noteworthy strides have been made on mentoring research, theory, and practice providing a solid foundation on which to build the additional work that is needed to fully understand and maximize the effective use of mentoring.

It seems that the issue of mentoring and human resource development in construction organizations can generally be considered as a good field of research and vast topics of research can be defined in this regard.

## 6 References





## 7 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1.1 Importance of Mentoring in the Workplace

Mentoring is a tool that organizations can use to nurture and grow their people, and it's gaining in popularity. As organizations strive to retain hard earned experience and wisdom, they are turning to mentoring programs as a form of interpersonal knowledge management. Mentees observe, question and explore, while mentors demonstrate, explain and model. Coaching is also a big thing in organizations today. While coaching can definitely help individuals become better leaders and managers, it doesn't really tap into the collective wisdom of people who have succeeded inside specific organizations or industries. Mentoring on the other hand, can help employees navigate organizational culture, solve problems and advance their careers. Mentoring is a great way to make sure the talent pipeline is filled with people ready to manage and lead. Additionally, organizations are using mentoring as a way to retain and recruit talent. As young graduates hit the workforce in numbers, mentoring has become a key tool for both recruiting and retention.

In many professions today, mentors are thought to enhance, if not ensure, the professional development and success of talented newcomers. Mentoring can be described as a dynamic and reciprocal relationship in a work environment whereby a more advanced and wise career incumbent (the mentor) helps a less experienced person who has development potential (the mentee – who is not his direct subordinate) develop into some specified capacity (Management today Oct 2004). However, the role of the mentor is only to provide advice. A mentor's role is twofold, firstly providing career development behaviours such as coaching, providing challenging assignments and fostering the mentee's visibility. Secondly they provide psycho-social support such as counselling, support and role modelling. Without a mentor, an individual will learn less, more slowly or not at all (Management today Oct 2004). Mentoring is about facilitating change by providing a stable source of support throughout the process.

Mentoring has been used for centuries as a way of helping younger protégé's to advance, and according to Darwin (2000) mentoring is presently at the forefront of strategies to improve workplace learning. Harris et al, argue that "workplace mentoring is the most critical factor in worksite learning" (Harris et al., 2001:274). Today mentoring is commonly used in professional and managerial learning, but is relatively new as a means of supporting low- paid trainees and apprentices doing certificate- level qualifications. Mr Phillip Marsh, the Managing Director of Mentoring for Success (Pty) Ltd, said: "Sadly, in our current millennium, mentoring often fails to deliver in the corporate and public sector environments, due mainly to the fact that it is usually applied in an informal sense, with undefined or ambiguous expectations, and more often than not, involves either poorly considered or the inappropriate selection and pairing of mentors and mentees, without access to practical tools and techniques" (Marsh, 2011). Based on past experiences, I felt it necessary to investigate further the need, if any, for a good mentoring programme, rather than an informal one, for graduates entering the work place.



#### 4.1.2 Mentoring programs currently utilised in the construction industry

In South Africa a lot of strides have been made in supporting Gautrain's skills development imperative. Gautrain's concessionaire, the Bombela Concession Company has committed to utilise 90% of local skills in the design, construction and operations phases of the Project. To grow the current skills base and support future economic needs, Bombela, as a Project requirement, has since the commencement of construction in 2006 had a number of training interventions, with 95% being aimed at growing skills in the technical and engineering fields. Together with Gautrain, Bombela recognizes the need for investment in its people – individual aspirations of the Project are supported by providing relevant training interventions, coaching and mentorship. Through a talent management process, individuals that perform well in their respective functions are up skilled and appointed to critical positions within the company. A thorough performance management program is in place. It allows employees together with their managers to identify opportunities for future development and training is (Gautrain, 2013).

The South African Association of Consulting Engineers (SAACE) stated that skills development is an important aspect of their association. The Young Professionals Forum is a mentorship initiative they have that allows younger people the opportunity to influence the decision-making for the future of SAACE. This mentorship initiative: The Young Professional Forum aim to recognize and expose young incoming talent so as to develop and utilize their leadership and technical skills. This Forum is supportive of the Governments Joint Initiative of Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), which is a partnership between labour, business and government to attract offshore and local skills to selected sectors to minimize the current skills shortages. It is also used as a means to mentor graduates to further develop the country's growth (Moolman, 2006).

The South African Women in Engineering (SAWomEng) was founded in 2004 and started at the University of Cape Town. Their aim is to represent women in all engineering disciplines while still at university. This is the first of its kind in South Africa. Their vision is to provide mentorship for students so as to bridge the gap between the university environment and the engineering industry (Moolman, 2006). The idea is to assist students in attaining vacation work and also securing employment once their studies are complete. The five foundry pillars this organization is built on are as follows: igniting the mind, mentorship, incubating the engineering mind, providing a meeting of minds between old and new engineering, and embracing the multi-faceted nature of female engineers (Mampuru & Mosajee, 2010).

The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme was piloted after 2004 as part of the Rural Development Programme (Desai, 2008). The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme is a programme that addresses the shortage of work opportunities and qualified contractors by identifying candidates throughout the country who will undergo a thirty month training programme. Civil engineers Andre Wessels and Gerhard Vivier started Focus Engineering with the aim of developing mentoring and project management services to contractors (Moolman, 2007). They saw the need to mentor contractors to be able to be efficient and successful. Similarly to what Focus Engineering accomplished under the Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme other companies like PD Naidoo & Associates

followed suite. The Vuk'uphile Learnership Programme has been extensively utilised throughout the Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) (de Koker, 2009).

In South Africa there is a professional coaching and mentoring body. The Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) is a local body comprising of a group of experienced business and life coaches who saw the need for coaching and mentoring in South Africa (Shelley, 2008). COMENSA's mission is to support professional practise and a learning culture in coaching and mentoring through standards and ethics. Their vision is to empower people to achieve their full potential in a consciousness of sustainable well-being. It also underlines COMENSA's integral commitment to the process of national development, transformation and empowerment in South Africa (COMENSA, n.d.).

The SAICE Infrastructure Report Card for South Africa 2011 stated that: "training and mentorship of artisans and young engineering professionals is also essential at all levels, especially in the public sector" (Ashpole, 2011).

The South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions (SACPCMP) has implemented a registration system for Professional Construction Mentors. This was done in order to draw the more experienced professionals to register as mentors and in so doing be able to mentor others who would need/ want to register as a professional Construction or Project Manager.

#### 4.1.3 Benefits and issues in mentoring and programmes

Mentoring of young employees is a way senior employees can help drive success of a corporation or an initiative. Young employees graduate from academic institutions armed with academic knowledge and enthusiasm. However, many people quickly realize that they lack the skills required to navigate and succeed in a corporate environment. When employees of different generations need to work together on projects, there is the potential for an unhealthy rivalry and a contentious relationship. The young employee may feel the mature employee is stuck in their ways and unwilling to try an alternative, and the mature employee sees the youthful exuberance as flighty and undisciplined. When a mentor sponsors an employee, they form a professional bond that should leave a lasting impression on both parties. Mentoring is a great way for senior employees to help the future leaders of tomorrow, and provides a way to give back to the organization. Through the sponsorship of a mentor, the protégée should receive increased visibility and exposure within the organization, the mentor can serve as an important role by sharing experiences with the protégée.

This allows young employees the ability to learn from mistakes of others. The protégée receives all the benefits without making the same, possibly career limiting, mistakes. The mentor can provide critical insights to the organization and help the young read and sense the events going on around them. This helps the young employee recognize opportunities and avoid career limiting mistakes. Succeeding in an established corporate environment is not easy. Young employees with an ambition to climb the corporate and make the most of their professional opportunities need to learn how to succeed. The mentor is normally a seasoned veteran who can provide a road map on how they and other successful employees climbed the corporate ladder. Young employees are

valuable organizational resources, the organization that provide leadership and mentoring to young employees can receive great dividends from time spent with them.

Serving in a role of a mentor, reinforces that the mentor is a subject matter expert and demonstrate leadership qualities by sharing this expertise. Organizations sometimes fail to realize the obstacles the young employee's faces on daily basis, the mentor can help with overcoming work related obstacles. Being a mentor provides the opportunity to enhance soft skills such as coaching, counselling, listening and leadership. As the mentor passes knowledge, he/she can help shape the future of the organization for the better. This is one case of one person making a big difference. If the mentor is successful with helping the employee, they can affect every person in the organization protégée meets. The potential graduate protégée has made it into the organization, moving up in the organization should not be too hard, This is an area where the young employee must put pride aside and realize the path to success will be much quicker and smoother using a mentor.

When a young employee becomes the protégée of a mentor, many benefits will the protégée assimilate easier into the corporate culture. The young employee will have a quicker and easier transition into the organizational workforce. Structured mentorship offers various benefits. According to Marsh (2012:6) these benefits can either be directed towards the organisation or the individual within the organisation. Marsh goes further by listing the following organisational benefits:

- Increased ability to attract, develop, motivate and retain quality employees.
- Improvement of succession planning and talent management within the organisation.
- Retention and sharing of critical business knowledge and intellectual capital.
- Enhancement and transfer of scarce skills
- Improve employee productivity and lastly
- Enhance employee engagement within the organisation

Further research by the American Society for Training and Development (1998) shows that when training interventions are introduced to organisations, it produces an average productivity improvement of 24%. When the same training interventions are introduced with a structured mentoring program, the average productivity improvement can rise up to 88%. Marsh goes further by stating that structured mentoring process clear benefits towards the individual. These benefits are listed below:

- It has an effect of “fast tracking” graduate development and integration into new organisations;
- It empowers employees through effective and objective processes;
- It facilitate effective and measurable job specific competency development, and

- It improves employee's performance and job satisfaction.

The above mentioned information clearly states that the benefits of mentorship take place on the individual as well as the organisational level. In the engineering industry within the public sector and the private sector, the constant transferring of knowledge and skills from more senior engineers to junior engineers are of vital importance to ensure sustainability of organisations. The current lack of good mentorship within public sector and private sector is evident. It is thus of vital importance that any professional development is evident. It is thus of vital importance that any professional development program proposed to this industry includes a good mentorship program. As mentioned above, this will not only be of benefit to engineers working in this environment, but in the long run the organisations will reap the benefits as well.

## 8 Conclusion

Mentoring can be beyond throwing resources at what may be seen as intractable problems. It introduces a personalized element and recognizes the psychosocial impact of poverty and inequalities. It has the potential to bring communities themselves into an analysis of themes of partnership and empowerment. In this way it could provide a means of regenerating community identities and issues.

In terms of the reviewed literature, the following recommendations are made:

I would recommend to all companies to invest in a coaching and/ or mentoring programme, preferably one that will work for that specific business. Organizations need to research other programs, talk to other executives and find the one that fits the company; the programme needs to be flexible and inclusive when matching the mentor and protégée.

The benefits of having active mentoring and coaching programmes in the work place far exceeds expectations and should become part of the culture of an organization. Several mentoring programmes were discussed and their effectiveness substantiated. Knowledge, experience and career development would not fall by the wayside but utilised to develop younger individuals and in so doing benefit the company too.

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