Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Understanding the dynamics and benefits of cross-gender mentoring relationships on the advancement of women

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Abstract

Gender inequality at senior levels continues to plague organisations even though most graduates are women and more women than men are entering the workplace. Mentoring is a powerful tool to facilitate and increase the advancement of women to leadership positions; however, women have barriers to accessing mentoring. Organisations have addressed this through significant investment in formal mentorship programs. Due to the limited number of women in senior positions, women end up in cross-gender mentoring relationships. Mentoring does not always yield positive results for the mentor and protege. Some mentoring experiences are average, or negative, especially in diversified mentoring relationships. Understanding the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relationships will ensure that the designed programs result in effective mentoring outcomes, addressing gender inequality in organisations. Most of the research in this space has investigated the benefits of mentoring for the protege, omitting the mentor's voice.

The objective of this cross-sectional qualitative exploratory research was to understand the dynamics and the benefits of cross-gender mentoring on the advancement of women. A total of 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with men and women involved in mentoring relationships in companies in South Africa.

The study found that the quality of the relationship in cross-gender mentorship resulted in specific outcomes of mentoring, such as career support, psychological support, and role modelling. Cross-gender mentoring relationships can be effective in delivering high-quality mentoring outcomes if the quality of the relationship is high. Furthermore, the study findings revealed that women do not require or desire to be in same-gender mentoring relationships due to a lack of evidence to support matching on gender, queen bee syndrome and female proteges' reluctance to acquire female mentors. Finally, mentors benefit from the relationship through the satisfaction of advancing women's careers, expanding their own network, learning new skills, and receiving friendship from their proteges.

Keywords: cross-gender mentoring, relational mentoring, benefits of mentoring, women's advancement

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Xongitiko Phaleng

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1.1 Introduction

Mentoring is a powerful tool to increase gender equality within organisations by growing female leaders (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Mentoring has become more important because it can contribute to decreasing gender inequality in organisations (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Although progress has been made to address gender inequality, there are still low levels of women in senior management. The most recent World Economic Forum global gender report declares that 132 years are needed to reach gender parity worldwide (World Economic Forum, 2022). Sadly, this has worsened compared to the reported number of pre-2020 statistics, which showed that the gender gap was going to close in 100 years. These losses are due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on women's advancement. Unfortunately, based on the current indications, a girl born today will not experience gender parity in her lifetime. Therefore, there is an urgency to ensure that organisations intentionally support women to grow their careers to senior leadership positions through mentoring. Access to adequate and quality mentorship for women can promote their advancement and increase the number of women in senior leadership (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

1.2 Purpose statement

This research aimed to explore and understand mentoring relationships and outcomes and how gender can impact those outcomes. This study will enrich the mentoring research by first adding to the theoretical framework and second offering suggestions to practitioners on setting up formal mentorship programs. From a theoretical perspective, the traditional mentorship theory first introduced by Kram (1983) acknowledges that social context and culture play a role in how the mentor and protege relate (Zhou et al., 2019). The traditional mentoring theory is limited and does not fully explain the dynamics the mentoring relationships. Although there is a lot of literature published on mentoring that includes hundreds of articles and several metanalysis, there is limited progress in theory development. The reason identified is that the mentoring research has focused on the practicalities of mentoring rather than theory-driven research (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Identifying the components of quality effective mentorship for women can advance the mentorship theory and inform the practitioners in setting up formal mentorship programs for women.

1.3 Background on the problem definition

Access to mentorship is critical for career advancement, and there is a strong argument that mentoring is more important for the advancement of careers for women than it is for men (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Ivey & Dupré, 2020). Representation of women in corporate organisations has improved over recent years. However, there remains a barrier for women to occupy senior levels in organisations (Schock et al., 2019). There are many barriers to the advancement of women to senior leadership, and a lack of access to effective mentorships has been shown to contribute to the lack of progress. Formal mentoring programs have been created in organisations to improve women's access to mentorship and address the barriers stated above regarding female representation in senior management, as mentoring has been found to be more effective at addressing diversity issues than other interventions (Beheshti, 2019). A study conducted at Cornell University found an increase in minorities represented at a senior level from 9% to 24% due to mentorship programs (Beheshti, 2019). The same study also found that retention and promotion levels of mentored minorities were 15% to 38% higher than the unmentored (Beheshti, 2019). Although formal mentoring programs are popular, the success of these programs is varied due to limited research on how they should be set up to ensure optimal effectiveness. The problem in this field is that practice has advanced rapidly without support from empirical research informing the practice (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Therefore, there is a need for additional empirical research into mentoring and its benefits for protege and mentors.

Although women now make up the majority of graduates and constitute almost half of the workforce, they remain underrepresented at the top (Schock et al., 2019). Various barriers prevent women from achieving senior positions in organisations. These gendered forces that impede women's progress can be classified as societal, organisational, and individual factors (Castaño et al., 2019; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). These forces prevent women from accumulating the necessary career capital to ascend to top executive positions. Mentoring can be a powerful tool to increase women's social and career capital by giving them access to challenging assignments and expanding their network (Castaño et al., 2019; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). The societal factors are those early life experiences that condition boys to be more agentic by being self-assured, confident, controlling, and independent. The societal expectation

is that girls should be more communal, kind, accommodating, helpful and concerned with supporting others (Hentschel et al., 2018; Schock et al., 2019). This concurs with the social role theory that men and women display behaviours aligned with societal expectations, where men tend to be concerned with leadership and economic achievement, and women tend to be involved with homemaking and taking care of children (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Women spend twice as much time in unpaid work at home as household work and caring for children as men (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Women, more than men, must balance their career and family responsibilities, making them less likely to fit the "ideal worker" archetype (Poorhosseinzadeh & Strachan, 2021). In some instances, senior roles in organisations are usually attached to longer working hours and travel, which may result in women opting out of those roles to take care of their family responsibilities. In other instances, the decision is made by the company on their behalf because they are married or have children. This opting-out or exclusion results in women accumulating less career capital over time than their male counterparts (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Therefore, mentoring of women and mentoring by other women who have been able to achieve the duality of career and family should be helpful for women.

The individual factors include, but are not limited to, a perceived mismatch between the feminine traits and leadership, lack of role models, and lack of confidence (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). As a consequence of societal norms, women might internalise society's expectations and desire to follow the dominant norms by prioritising caring and nurturing for the family. This translates in the workplace where women are less assertive and less likely to compete for promotions. In organisations, the same behaviours might have different results for men and women; for example, self-promotion could be viewed positively for men and negatively for women (Hentschel et al., 2018). Women are less likely to nominate themselves for promotion if it means that they will compete with someone else (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Organisational factors include organisational selection and promotion practices, unconscious bias, and lack of access to mentoring for women. The mentorship theory states that although mentorship has been shown to have a positive benefit for the careers of individuals by providing them with career and psychological support, women have less access to mentorship than men (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Ivey & Dupré, 2020).

The 2008 financial crisis and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have challenged a typical male's heroic Chief Executive Officer (CEO) persona and highlighted the benefits of transformational, authentic, and inclusive leadership (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Vroman & Danko, 2020). Individuals display different leadership styles; the traditional leadership research characterised a leader as someone who asserts control over followers, which was more aligned with the male stereotype. In recent years different leadership styles have been required to solve complex business challenges. Transformational leadership is one of those leadership styles which encourages communal behaviour, empathy, and building relationships which women are assumed to display more (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Hentschel et al., 2018). Recent examples of women who demonstrated communal behaviour and were successful include the Prime Minister of New Zealand, who handled COVID-19 exceptionally well by displaying compassion, empathy, and clear communication (Vroman & Danko, 2020). Therefore, previously agentic leadership, expected to be displayed by males, was valued positively for men. Women were negatively assessed when they displayed the same agentic behaviour because they did not conform to the expected societal roles (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Currently, organisations are valuing communal behaviour which women display more socially and do not suffer the penalty because these behaviours are expected of women. This is the female leadership advantage hypothesis and suggests that transformational leadership may decrease the biases against female leaders and assist in growing more female leaders (Hentschel et al., 2018). Therefore, there is a benefit for companies to have more women in executive positions.

Considerable resources are invested into formal mentoring programs, with 70% of Fortune 500 companies having a mentoring program (Deng et al., 2022). The success of mentoring programs depends on matching the mentor and protege; however, essential matching factors that result in effective mentoring outcomes are lacking. This research could further inform the practice of formal mentorship programs (Deng et al., 2022).

Mentoring is a senior, more experienced person taking an interest in the career and personal development of a more junior and less experienced individual (Baugh, 2021; Deng et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2019). More than two decades of research exist on mentoring and its benefits for career advancement, promotions and job engagement.

Mentoring theory argues that women receive less mentoring than men due to several barriers, including difficulty accessing mentoring (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). The evidence is sparse on diversity and its impact on mentorship; most previous mentorship studies focused on white males. To address this gap, studies have been conducted investigating mentorship and gender, whether there is a difference in the access to mentorship, and the effectiveness of mentorship between males and females. Due to various factors, senior individuals in companies are predominantly white and male and are often responsible for mentoring junior individuals, including those who might be part of the minority groups. Minorities, for example women, benefit from mentoring experiences by other women because they can provide the role model function, and people feel comfortable learning from someone who has overcome similar challenges. In most situations, the number of women in senior leadership is not enough to mentor junior women through the ranks. Most senior executives are male; mentoring by a senior executive is more beneficial than mentoring by a junior executive as they have more organisational capital and networks. Due to the low number of women in senior leadership, women must access mentorship from male mentors (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). Therefore, women rely on cross-gender mentoring relationships.

The current research was anchored in the mentorship theory described by Kram (1983) in her seminal work; the theory provides the framework to investigate the management problem. The mentoring theory defines mentorship as a hierarchical, one on one, developmental relationship between a senior individual (mentor) and a junior individual (protege) focused on the growth and development of the junior individual (Allen et al., 2017; Ivey & Dupré, 2020). The theory states that there are two mentorship functions: the career and the psychological. The career function is focused on advancing the protege's career through coaching, exposure and visibility, sponsorship, protection, and providing stretch assignments (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). The psychological function focuses on assisting the protege in developing self-worth, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and professional development through counselling, acceptance, confirmation, feedback, and friendship (Allen et al., 2017). Role modelling is an additional function of mentoring; some scholars classify role modelling as a component of psychological function, while others classify it as a separate mentoring function (Baugh, 2021). The mentoring theory has evolved with conceptual drift as mentoring now includes group mentoring rather

than one-to-one relationships and peer-to-peer mentoring, where the hierarchy is removed.

The mentoring field has evolved without the evolution of the theory, due to mentoring research focusing on the practical applications. The traditional mentoring theory fails to address the current phenomenon adequately. Issues with traditional mentorship theory that this study will attempt to improve on are the hierarchical nature of mentoring in traditional mentoring theory, the one way nature of mentoring in traditional mentorship theory and finally and the ability of the traditional mentorship theory to explain the dynamics of diverse mentoring relationships in cross-gender mentoring (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007) .To that end the study will incorporate the concept of relational mentoring that views the mentoring relationship dynamics as important and attempts to understand them. The relational mentoring theory acknowledges that mentoring outcomes are not universal, average outcomes will emerge from average engagements and high-quality outcomes will emerge from high-quality engagements. Therefore, understanding the relationship dynamics and building on that theory in our study will advance theoretical concept of mentoring (Ragins, 2016).

Additionally, mentoring research has concentrated on the protege, their perspective and the benefit that protege can receive from mentoring, leaving out the mentor views and the outcomes for mentors (Allen et al., 2006). This study included mentors, their perspective, and outcomes.

Additionally, practitioners have a surge of interest in mentorship as mentorship programs are instituted to aid individuals' career growth, including women and minorities. Research often does not inform setting up these formal mentorships and there is a serious gap between research and practice (Ivey & Dupré, 2020; Ragins, 2016).

Organisations are increasingly setting up formal mentorship programs to facilitate women attaining leadership positions. These cross-gender mentoring relationships face several challenges. This research will attempt to gain a deeper understanding of these relationships and bring to light what can make them more successful.

1.4 South African context

In the South African context, a mere seven of the top 100 JSE-listed companies have women CEOs in 2022, which represents an 8% increase compared to last year. Additionally, the executive and non-executive levels show a female representation of 15% and 30%, respectively (PwC, 2022). This low level of representation of women exists despite the South African legislative requirement of Broad-based Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act 53 of 2003 and Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. This legislation's objective is to address the past imbalances due to apartheid which kept many people from formal economic activities and occupying senior roles in the industry based on race and gender. This B-BBEE legislation set targets that companies must reach for gender diversity (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

The progress is still slow, and companies face various challenges in attaining the targets; one of them being the shortage of female talent. Many companies in South Africa instituted formal mentorship programs to grow the pipeline and develop succession plans for women to reach senior leadership to adhere to these diversity targets. That mentorship is likely to be cross-gender due to the shortage of women mentors. Race is also an essential factor in South Africa due to its history therefore, South African women are impacted by the intersectionality of race and gender. It is critical to understand the dynamics in these mentoring programs and help inform their success (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

1.5 Conclusion

The study was significant because it focused on understanding the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring in the South African context and discovered new insights to inform the setting up of formal mentorship programs. Effective mentoring programs could contribute to decreasing the gender gap and increase gender equality. The study delimitations are the racial dynamics in mentoring relationships. Although the intersection of gender and race is an essential factor in mentoring in the South African context, the study will not address the impact of race and gender but the impact of gender only on mentoring.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

There continues to be much interest in mentoring from scholars and practitioners because of the well documented benefits for individuals and organisations. This fascination with mentoring is also because many people have had personal experiences mentoring in business or work (Baugh, 2021; Ivey & Dupré, 2020). Sayings such as "Everyone who makes it has a mentor" is famous in the workplace for a good reason (Ragins, 2016). Women have more barriers in accessing quality mentorships while quality mentorship is more critical for women because they face additional barriers in their careers (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). Additionally, women are more likely to be in cross gender mentoring relationships due to the low numbers of women in senior positions. Therefore, understanding the relationship dynamics in cross-gender mentorships is essential to unsure that women are provided with adequate support (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on mentorship and the impact of gender on mentoring relationship dynamics and mentoring outcomes. The theory that formed a base for this enquiry was mentorship theory. The study focuses on barriers that are faced by women in their career progression and the role that mentorship can play in bridging those barriers. The themes derived from the literature review that were explored further are barriers women face in their career progression, mentoring, the positive benefits, inhibitors, and enablers of high-quality mentoring relationships, mentoring outcomes, mentoring and gender issues, and mentoring in the context of culture.

2.2 Barriers to career progression for women addressed by mentoring

2.2.1 Gender and the leadership role

Women are disadvantaged in attaining leadership roles because gender and leadership stereotypes do not favour women. The role congruity theory demonstrated that leadership stereotype is gendered and masculine, resulting in women not being congruent with the leadership role; therefore, it is more difficult for women to advance their careers (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2017; Kubu, 2018). Aker postulated the concept of the ideal worker in the early 1990s. The ideal worker devotes all his time to his work and does not let family or personal commitments interfere with work and therefore is

most likely to be male (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Poorhosseinzadeh & Strachan, 2021). The ideal worker exhibits agency, is assertive, competitive, controlling, and outspoken (Vroman & Danko, 2020). Company cultures are based on unnoticed masculine norms that could marginalise women (Dashper, 2019). Women conform to the behaviours of the ideal worker to be considered leaders; however, when they do that, they suffer a penalty for not conforming to gender stereotypes. When they conform to gender stereotypes and do not show leadership behaviour, it is difficult for them to be promoted. Therefore, this is a double-edged sword that women face in their professional careers (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

Women leaders need the ability to overcome the incongruency by displaying both agentic and communion. This is called androgyny, allowing the women to conform to both leadership and gender roles (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2017). As reported in a study conducted among women to investigate the role congruity theory and leadership emergence and showed that women are seen as leaders when they blend agency and communal behaviour (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2017).

2.2.2 Unpaid work
Women continue to bear the brunt of domestic work and childcare, decreasing their opportunities for advancement. Women spend twice as much time as men on household chores and more than twice on taking care of children. This is the second shift, as women have additional caring responsibilities after work. These extended hours result in a high level of burnout for women and may result in them opting out of leadership roles (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Additionally, the period when women have children is at the same time as them building their careers. Women will suffer a motherhood penalty as they lose an opportunity to accumulate social capital in the workplace during maternity leave. Organisations also have a culture of long, inflexible work hours, which may make it difficult for women to balance their home and work lives; something that is not usually required of men (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Consequently, women might ask for flexible working arrangements to balance work and home responsibilities. This usually comes at an additional penalty as women need to show more commitment; women are overlooked for promotion, excluded from important meetings, and not given access to stretch assignments (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

2.2.3 Lack of access to mentorship and sponsorship

Women lack access to mentorship, and if they do have access, the mentorship quality might be low and ineffective in advancing their careers. Additionally, women have less access to sponsorship, which is critical in driving promotions and access to networks for women (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Mentorship has been suggested to bridge the gap for women. Although mentorship is insufficient if the function of sponsorship is lacking for the advancement of women (Ayyala et al., 2019). Women will end up in cross-gender mentoring relationships because of the higher number of senior males in companies compared to women (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). Female mentorship can be a powerful tool if approached as two-way learning for both parties and empowers women to tackle gender stereotypes and the masculine view of leadership. On the other hand, these mentoring programs could perpetuate the view that something is lacking in women as leaders that must be fixed by them learning from the masculine ways of working. This could potentially result in maintaining the status quo (Dashper, 2019).

2.3 Mentorship

Mentorship is traditionally defined as a relationship between a more senior individual (mentor) and a more junior individual (protege) over a period whose objective is to support the protege's career development, pass knowledge, and provide support. The protege is provided with guidance, support, skills transfer, and access to networks that can help them succeed in an organisation (Allen et al., 2017; Baugh, 2021; Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Ivey & Dupré, 2020). However, this definition of mentorship has evolved to include other developmental relationships, such as peer-to-peer mentoring, where the hierarchy no longer exists, and reverse mentorship, where the younger person is the one who is mentoring the older person. Additionally, group mentorship programmes have also emerged mainly in women's leadership (Baugh, 2021).

There is empirical evidence that mentoring can enhance career development for individuals because it provides and encompasses many different functions to enhance protege's professional, personal, and emotional development (Baugh, 2021; Deng et al., 2022). Kram's (1985) seminal work on mentorship focused on defining a mentor; the functions of a mentor were divided into two broad categories of career support and psychological support (Kram & Isabella, 1985). The career functions defined were focused on supporting the protegee in developing skills necessary to advance in their

career. The mentor can provide coaching, exposure to influential networks, and challenging assignments and help the protegee develop essential skills. Additionally, the mentor offers sponsorship and visibility in the organisation for the protege. The psychological functions include providing friendship, counselling, and facilitating the protege's increase in self-worth and self-efficacy. There are differing views on whether role modelling is part of the psychological function or a separate mentoring function. This is because role modelling is a function determined by the protege and not the mentor (Baugh, 2021).

The career functions of mentoring can aid women in advancing in their careers. The reason is that the career functions include sponsorship, exposure to the mentors' networks, visibility and giving the protege challenging assignments. These functions will help the protege to be more visible and allow them access to resources they would not have had access to on their own. Regarding cross-gender mentorship, males still have access to the networks and hold the highest social capital in organisations that can be useful to the protege. Additionally, the sponsorship function is when the mentor publicly supports the protege for promotions and challenging assignments. It involves the mentor using their social capital for the protege's benefit. The sponsorship function is the one function that is often lacking in mentorship because it takes more commitment to publicly advocate for a protege, especially in formal mentoring relationships (Scheepers et al., 2018).

The psychological function of mentorship is the one that is most influenced by the composition of the mentor and protege pair. The psychological function of mentorship encompasses providing friendship and counselling to assist the protege in developing self-efficacy and increased self-worth (Allen et al., 2017; Fowler et al., 2007). Depending on the composition of the pair (male mentor-female protege, female mentor-female protege), women may receive more psychological support than men. When the feedback is sought from the mentor's perspective, mentors have also reported providing more psychological support to women than men. On the other hand, other scholars have shown no difference in the amount of psychological support given or received by women versus men (Fowler et al., 2007). However, these findings have been criticised because they use instruments designed from predominately male samples, which might miss the gender nuances. Although the results are mixed, the trend is toward more psychological

support being provided if women are involved in the relationship either as mentors or protege. This means that female mentors provide more psychological support to their protege regardless of the protege's gender but especially if the protege is female, and therefore a closer bond and a more profound friendship develops (Fowler et al., 2007). This is due to women being more communal and placing more importance on developing relationships and providing emotional assistance (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2017).

The role modelling function is regarded as the poorer cousin of the mentorship functions, and yet this is the function that is important to female proteges. Role modelling was included as part of the psychological functions in the original seminal work by Kram (1985), but subsequently classified as a distinct function by Scadura (Dickson et al., 2014; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Although there is still an ambiguity in its classification, some scholars measure this function as part of the psychological function, and others measure it as a distinct function. Role modelling is defined as someone who admires another person's career and would like to emulate them, usually, a younger person admiring an older person, but not necessarily (Blake-Beard et al., 2011). Women actively seek out role models, which is thought to be because young women recognise the barriers, they will encounter in growing their careers and rising to the top. The young women emphasize finding people who have been successful to learn from. Although role modelling is higher in same-gender mentorship relationships, women were found to seek role modelling from both males and females. This is thought to be because role modelling relates to leadership skills that can be learnt from either gender. This contrasts with the findings on young men, who did not recognise female mentors as role models (Baugh, 2021; Dickson et al., 2014; Fowler et al., 2007).

It is critical to differentiate mentoring from other developmental relationships, namely supervising, coaching and induction. Supervising could be viewed as a transactional relationship between employee and employer where the supervisor is interested in ensuring the employee fulfils the job requirements. In contrast, mentoring is a more transformational relationship interested in the growth and development of the protege. There is debate on whether the supervisor can also fulfil the mentor role or whether the mentor role must be separate from the supervisor role. One school of thought is that a direct supervisor is not a mentor and the other school of thought is that if an immediate supervisor fulfils the function of mentoring, which are career support, psychological

support, and role modelling, and therefore they should qualify as a mentor(Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). The goals of the organisations might take priority above the goals of the protege in supervisory mentoring, therefore it can be useful in the correct circumstances (Yip & Walker, 2022). However, (Eby et al., 2013) demonstrated likelihood of negative mentoring experiences like abuse, sabotage and bullying were increased when the mentor was also the direct supervisor (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Coaching is a mentoring component; but coaching is a more short-term relationship focused on building job-related skills (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

The benefits of mentoring to the protege are well documented in the literature (Baugh, 2021). The studies focused on the benefits of mentoring by comparing the mentored and the non-mentored in terms of career progression, engagement and retention in organisations that were enhanced in individuals who were mentored. Protege receive objective and subjective benefits from participating in quality mentoring relationships. The objective benefits are higher pay, quicker promotions and advancements in the organisation. The subjective benefits include increased organisational engagement and a more positive attitude toward the organisation (Baugh, 2021). The extent of these benefits depends on the mentorship quality (Deng et al., 2022).

The traditional mentorship theory and definitions first provided by Kram in her seminal work are being challenged due to the evolution of mentoring relationships over time (Kram, 1983, 1985). The traditional mentorship theory views mentorship as a one-way exchange for the benefit of the protege; it involves a different power dynamic, with the mentor being more senior with the power, authority, and control (Baugh, 2021; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Ragins, 2016). This can limit the learning potential, especially in a diverse mentoring relationship (in terms of gender, race, and culture). This traditional mentoring relationship could inadvertently maintain the status quo by maintaining the power dynamics and promoting dependence instead of independence of the protege (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Therefore, alternate forms of mentoring have emerged that focus more on equity, justice, and increasing opportunity for previously marginalised groups. These are group, peer-to-peer, and reverse mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). There is a substantial need for mentoring to advance theory development; only 7.7% of studies conducted in mentoring were focused on theory development (Allen et al., 2008).

2.3.1 Informal mentorship

Informal mentorship is defined as a situation where a mentorship relationship initiates spontaneously between a protege and a mentor or where a protege or a mentor seeks out the relationship based on the need for guidance (Allen et al., 2017; Baugh, 2021; Deng et al., 2022; Stoeger et al., 2021). In contrast to formal mentoring relationships, informal mentoring relations have fewer boundaries supporting the proteges in their professional and personal lives. Secondly, informal mentorship relationships tend to last for a long time, even as the relationship moves from mentoring to friendship (Janssen et al., 2016; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Informal mentorship is more successful than formal mentorship, and this is thought to be due to the matching in those relationships as the mentor and protege choose each other (Baugh, 2021). Proteges in informal mentorships receive higher pay and more promotions and have better job satisfaction than protege in formal mentorship relationships (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). The quality of mentorship depends on how the mentor and the protege relate to each other through mutual identification. Mentors will generally choose proteges who remind them of their younger selves, and proteges will choose mentors who are their desired future selves (Deng et al., 2022).

An additional element is that the mentoring pairs in informal mentorship relationships usually choose each other based on perceived competence. The mentor will identify someone they think has potential and is a rising star and mentor them to reach their full potential. The protege will identify someone they perceive to be competent and skilled to help them grow their career (Deng et al., 2022; Ragins, 2016). This is different to a formal mentorship where a third party creates the match; the mentor might perceive that the protege they have been paired with is someone who has no potential. The protege might perceive the mentor they have been paired with as incompetent or someone they do not admire. This lack of mutual identification and interpersonal comfort may impact the level of career and psychological support provided in the relationship (Ragins, 2016).

Although informal mentorship relationships can provide the protege with positive career outcomes and access to networks and sponsorship (Ragins, 2016), the downside to informal mentorship is that it might be challenging to access senior individuals in organisations, especially for women and minorities. Therefore, it is essential that formal mentorship programs created by organisations to overcome this barrier can provide the

same benefits as informal mentorship. Additionally, because these relationships are not formal, the objectives and expectations might not be clear, resulting in poor quality mentoring and suboptimal outcomes (Ragins, 2016).

Mentoring has a time element to it typically characterised by four distinct phases: the initiation phase, where the protege and mentor engage in assessing the suitability for a mutually beneficial match; the cultivation phase, where most of the knowledge and skills transfer occurs; followed by the separation phase where the mentoring relationship ends and is usually redefined into a long-lasting peer relationship or friendship during the redefinition phase (Allen et al., 2017; Deng et al., 2022; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Informal mentoring occurs over many years, and the phases of mentoring were defined by Kram using studies of people in informal mentorship relationships (Kram, 1983). The initiation phase lasted an average of six months to twelve months, the cultivation phase lasted two years to five years, and the separation phase lasted around two years. This could be another reason for informal mentorship being more successful as the relationships last longer than formal mentorship, which usually spans a period of twelve months for all four phases (Ivey & Dupré, 2020; Kram, 1983).

2.3.2 Formal mentorship

Organisations have seen the benefits of mentoring for individuals and the benefits of mentoring for the organisation (Baugh, 2021). Within formal mentorship, the mentor and protege are assigned to each other by the company for a limited time with specific objectives in mind (Baugh, 2021). Organisations also realise that if individuals are not assisted in accessing mentoring, women and minorities will not have access to mentoring, therefore, will not receive the benefits of quality mentoring and perpetuate the gap in career progression for women and minorities. Organisations benefit from mentoring programs by increasing the socialisation and onboarding of new employees, enhancing learning and skills transfer, increasing job performance, identifying, and accelerating talent career progression, and ensuring that there is a diverse talent pool that includes women and minorities (Allen et al., 2017). The formal mentorship structure is based on the company's goals and needs (Yip & Walker, 2022).

Practitioners have sought to replicate the benefits of informal mentorship programs by creating formal mentorship programs in their organisations (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). This formal matching and clarifying of objectives attempt to overcome the drawbacks of

informal mentorship by creating access for women and minorities to those networks and defining the goals and expectations of the mentorship relationship (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). These involve matching individuals, usually a more senior individual and a junior individual. Usually, this will not be the direct supervisor, and they might be from the same function or different functions. The success of formal mentorship programs is less than that of informal programs, and its difference is thought to be due to optimal matching. It is not clear in the literature which characteristics mentors and protege should be matched on (Ragins, 2016; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

There are various ways in which mentors and protege can be matched. This includes matching surface-level attributes, deep-level attributes, and experiential attributes (Deng et al., 2022). Organisations either conduct the matching on surface-level attributes such as demographic characteristics of gender and race. The results of matching individuals on surface-level attributes have been mixed. The other way that organisations perform the matching is on experiential attributes such as education, training, job function and geographic location. These attributes have also shown a weak link with the success of the mentoring functions provided. The most important matching criteria are the deep-level attributes such as personality, values, and attitudes (Deng et al., 2022). Organisations do not use these in matching, perhaps because they are difficult to assess, more challenging to uncover, and not immediately obvious (Deng et al., 2022). Matching mentors and protege on these deep-level attributes would increase the support received in the formal mentoring relationship, bringing the outcomes closer to the outcomes received in informal mentorship programs (Deng et al., 2022). Menges (2016) found that matching personality, and specifically openness to experiences, improved mentoring outcomes (Menges, 2016). These findings suggest that personality assessment could be conducted before matching happens in formal mentoring programs (Menges, 2016). The success of the mentoring can be increased when both the protege and the mentor perceive that their participation in the mentoring was voluntary and that they were part of the matching process (Allen et al., 2006).

The difference between formal and informal mentorship is in the initiation, structure, and process involved in the two relationships that impact the quality of the outcomes (Deng et al., 2022; Ragins, 2016). Participants in formal mentorship programs do not have the opportunity to create mutual identification; in some programs, the pair will meet for the

first time at their first mentoring session. This results in less identification and less interpersonal comfort, and the protege might not identify the mentor as a role model. The psychological function of mentorship of counselling, providing friendship and acceptance might be less present in formal mentorship than in informal mentorship. Women may need more psychological support and therefore the formal program might fail provide them adequate psychological support (Fowler et al., 2007). Additionally, the structure of the formal mentorship is shorter in duration, lasting about six months to twelve months. This tends to require more time for the mentor to impact the protege. Formal mentorship is good at addressing short-term career development and providing coaching but might be inappropriate for long-term career growth, planning, and helping women in the long term. Informal mentorship can impact over time; often, the relationship will support the protege over the years as they move from one role to another and one company to another. Secondly, the protege might perceive that the mentor is mentoring them out of obligation and to fulfil their job requirements, unlike in informal mentoring, where the mentor is interested in the protege and might see potential in them (Allen et al., 2006).

In today's world, organisations are becoming increasingly geographically dispersed, resulting in colleagues working in different countries worldwide. The implication is that mentoring can take a virtual form with the protege and mentor in different locations. The advantage is that someone in a different location may be a better fit for mentoring a specific protege, especially a woman. In multinational companies, this could open access for women to be mentored by senior individuals in the company. An additional advantage is increasing cross-cultural mentoring by interacting with people from different cultures. The downside of virtual mentoring is that the lack of face-to-face interaction might delay establishing trust and developing chemistry. Additionally, it is hard to appreciate non-verbal cues on a screen and can make communication challenging (Lavin Colky & Young, 2006). Trust is established when people perceive similarities between them, in a formal virtual mentorship program, the mentor and protege develop trust based on working for the same organisation. The organisational trust theory postulates that there is high general trust among strangers who work for the same organisation based on the expectation that each of them has similar values. An essential factor included in supporting high trust in a virtual environment was the

expectation and assurance that confidentiality would be maintained (Lavin Colky & Young, 2006).

A mentor is required to fulfil many roles guiding and developing a career, providing counselling and support and role modelling. If someone provides only career guidance, they are a coach. If someone provides only counselling and support, they are a friend and if someone provides only role modelling, they are an exemplar. Therefore, a mentor must be a coach, a friend and an exemplar (Baugh, 2021). Organisations need to ensure that the mentors in the formal programs are equipped with the skills to fulfil those requirements through training. Mentors can be trained to increase mentor competencies such as building rapport, setting direction through goal identification and management, and sustaining commitment in the mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2005).

Lastly, there are issues related to the process of formal mentorship that may limit each parties' effectiveness. Both parties might be less motivated to engage in this arrangement because of a lack of identification and mutual respect. The mentor will usually get recognition for mentoring the protege and will be recognised by the company. This is a double edge sword. Due to the visibility of the relationship, the mentor may be reluctant to publicly sponsor their protege, offer them challenging assignments or offer them protection due to fear of being accused of favouritism. Additionally, the mentor is usually chosen from a different department in these programs, which might also limit their ability to intervene on behalf of their protege or offer them stretch assignments (Allen et al., 2006; Scheepers et al., 2018).

In conclusion, formal mentorship programs have been designed to overcome the barriers of informal mentorship relationships. Due to various structure and process issues, they cannot provide the full benefits of the informal mentorship program. There is still an opportunity to identify critical matching, structure, and process in formal mentorships to increase their effectiveness (Allen et al., 2006).

2.4 Benefits of mentoring to the mentor

The primary focus of mentoring is to develop the protege according to the traditional mentorship theory. However, there has been speculation and some research on the benefits of mentoring to mentors. These benefits include being recognised by peers as talent growers, creating supporters, and expanding their network. Some studies have

also demonstrated more job performance, increased salary, and promotions for people who are mentors as compared to those who are not (Baugh, 2021). The reciprocal nature of mentoring could result in the mentor learning about technology, and in diverse mentoring relationships, it is an opportunity for the mentor to learn about diversity issues (Ragins, 2016).

The mentorship theory has evolved from the traditional view of mentorship as a process of transferring knowledge from the mentor to the protege. The previous view of this relationship was of the all-knowing mentors who had all the answers and whose role was to transfer knowledge to the protege who did not have any knowledge. The relational view of mentoring now recognises that mentoring is a reciprocal relationship where both mentors and protege benefit (Ragins, 2016). For high-quality mentoring to occur the two-way nature of the relationship must be appreciated, and the relationship should be viewed as less hierarchical and more like a partnership. This is especially critical in diverse mentoring relationships. Unfortunately, most mentoring studies investigate the benefits to the protege and include protege only. Very few studies have sought to explore the benefits to mentors (Baugh, 2021). Including mentors and gaining their insights in a mentoring study is necessary. The current research will include mentors to gain further insight from the mentors' perspective.

Communicating these benefits in formal mentorship programs is important because mentors will understand that they will also benefit from mentoring. A meta-analysis conducted to investigate the benefits associated with the specific mentorship provision demonstrated that firstly when mentors provide the career function it is likely to increase their own career performance. This is because for a mentor to provide career support, they must also be up to date in their subject matter knowledge, which will improve their own performance. Secondly, providing psychological support was associated with increased job performance and commitment to the organisation. This is because providing psychological support includes being a friend and confidant and showing respect and empathy. This results in an emotional connection and a deeper sense of belonging in the organisation for the mentors (Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Sharing this kind of information can increase the willingness and motivation of men to mentor women in formal mentorship programs.

2.5 Negative mentoring experiences

Mentoring relationships do not always have positive outcomes, especially when there is a mismatch between the mentor and protege. If men opt out of mentoring women due to these negative mentoring experiences, this might negatively impact the advancement of women to senior positions (Baugh, 2021). Negative mentoring experience in mentoring are defined as real or perceived issues of mentor-protege relationship negatively impact one or both members' personal or professional growth (Baugh, 2021; Deng et al., 2022). The negative mentoring experience could be distancing, sabotage, exploitation and submissiveness, and overt abuse of power by the mentor. In a cross-gender mentoring relationship, the sexual attraction might develop to the detriment of both parties (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). These negative mentoring experiences result in protege' decreased job satisfaction, withdrawal, and increased staff turnover in the company. Negative mentoring relationships are relatively common, with half of the participants in a study conducted reporting that they had been involved in a negative mentoring experience in their career (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). Considering that many companies set up a formal mentorship program, and how frequently these relationships can have negative consequences, it is important that proper matching is conducted based on empirical research.

2.6 Mentorship and gender

Mentoring is more important in the advancement of women's careers than men's because women face more barriers and obstacles to career progression, and they have been historically excluded and marginalised. The barriers women face in leadership are various and can be classified as societal, organisational, and individual (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Moreover, women face many stereotypes in the workplace and as they ascend to leadership. Women must find a leadership style that will be acceptable to the males who still dominate the senior levels in organisations. Additionally, the women must find a way to access the organisational networks, which might consist of the old boys' club (Baugh, 2021). Women's careers are positively impacted by mentoring in all its forms. Women who are mentored receive higher pay and promotions than women who are not mentored (Welsh & Diehn, 2018).

The amount and quality of mentorship that women receive is less than the amount and quality of mentorship received by men, and the strength of the relationships they can

form with their mentors, especially in cross-gender mentoring relationships (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). The mentoring theory states that women receive less mentoring than men, but research has not confirmed this (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). Although women perceive a barrier in accessing mentorship, a meta-analysis has demonstrated that women have equal access to mentoring as men. These results might be because women invest extra effort in seeking mentorship, or the formal mentorship programs that companies have designed have bridged that gap (Baugh, 2021).

On the other hand, regarding the mentorship functions received, it has been shown that women receive more psychological support in mentoring relationships than men (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). The findings are somewhat controversial as two studies have shown opposite results; one showed that women perceive a mentoring relationship where one does not exist. This might result in women perceiving that they are receiving the same amount of mentoring when they are not. Men and women might benefit differently from mentoring, with women receiving more coaching and men receiving more sponsorship, which translates into their promotion and advancement (Fowler et al., 2007).

Scheepers (2018) stated that sponsorship has occurred when a more senior and influential person publicly supports the promotion of an individual with potential (Scheepers et al., 2018). Additionally, sponsorship involves the sponsored individuals bypassing the established pathways for advancement (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019). The gender difference in mentorship for men and women might lie in the career function of sponsorship. Sponsorship is one of the career functions of mentorship, and it is especially critical in supporting the advancement of women (Scheepers et al., 2018). Sponsorship requires the mentor to use their social capital to sponsor their protege for a senior role publicly. This is a challenge, especially in a formal mentorship relationship. The mentor did not identify or choose the protege themselves; therefore, they may not think that the protege has potential. In some cases, the female protege might have been identified by the company as talented and the mentor is approached to mentor them. The mentor might have negative feelings about this and may not be willing to use their clout to assist the woman to rise through the ranks (Scheepers et al., 2018). Mentoring can be done privately with limited risk, but sponsorship involves publicly supporting a protege and the sponsor might not want to take the additional risk. A further difference between mentorship and sponsorship is that the protege can drive mentorship, but

sponsorship is something that can only be driven by the mentor (Ganiyu et al., 2018). In a study to investigate sponsorship in South Africa, Coloured (ACI) and women in South Africa found that gender did not play a role in choosing a sponsor. Still, there were gendered-based expectations in the relationships. For example, the participants in the study stated that women were more relational and cared for the progress of others (Scheepers et al., 2018).

There is still room to explore further the relationship between mentoring and gender. More research is needed to explore further diversity issues in mentoring (Baugh, 2021). Lack of same-gender mentorships for female surgeons results in feelings of isolation and restricting their career success (Cochran et al., 2019). Mentors and protege involved in diverse mentoring relationships must be cognizant of their own cultural perspectives and preconceived biases for the relationship to succeed (Cochran et al., 2019).

2.6.1 Cross-gender mentoring relationships

Cross-gender mentoring relationships are common in companies because men still occupy the most senior positions and are tasked with mentoring younger females. These cross-gender mentoring relationships pose various additional challenges; one being that of role modelling. As stated previously one of the mentorship functions is role modelling. Cross-gender mentoring relationships have a limited ability to offer the role modelling function for the female protege (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). Leadership emergence is either through the behaviours exhibited or secondly through the perception of social power. Social role theory postulates that gender roles are ascribed by society and in organisations, men are expected to be the breadwinner, and women are expected to be the homemaker. Men are seen to have more agency, and women are seen to have more communion (Dashper, 2019). Agency refers to assertiveness, confidence, and control; communion is more cooperation and being concerned with the welfare of others. It is not only society that ascribes these roles, but individuals also internalize them. Role congruity theory postulates that women are expected to behave in a way that is aligned to communal behaviour and that might limit their potential as leaders and adopting more agency results in a backlash against them for not conforming to the gender role. When women display communal traits, they fail to conform to the leadership role but conform to the gender role. Women leaders must display both agency and communal traits to be recognized as leaders and to avoid backlash (Schock et al., 2019). Consequently, there

might be a challenge for women who are mentored by men if they exhibit their mentors' agentic behaviours which might result in a negative assessment of those women because they are not adhering to societal expectations.

The second challenge is in how the mentor and protege relate to each other, relational mentoring is an extension of the mentoring theory that states that the mentoring outcomes are anchored in the strength of the relationships between the mentor and the protege. It further postulates that a weak relationship results in poor mentoring outcomes and a strong relationship will result in exceptional mentoring outcomes. In cross-gender mentoring relationships in a highly patriarchal society will result in a large power difference between mentor and protege. This might result in low-quality mentoring relationships as there will be less trustor vulnerability (Ragins, 2016).

Lastly, cross-gender mentoring relationships can be misconstrued, leading to gossip and rumours that lead to adverse career outcomes for both parties. In the #metoo era, men are afraid to develop close relationships with young females because of sexual harassment claims (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Read et al., 2020). #Metoo is a slogan that dates back several years to increase awareness around sexual assault and has increased interest in the past few years because of some high-profile cases in the film industry. A study showed that 74% of senior men stated that fear was a barrier to initiatives to advance women in the workplace (Malina et al., 2018).

2.6.2 Females mentoring females

Women benefit more from mentoring than men, and women have more difficulty accessing high-quality mentoring than men. Women are more likely to end up in cross-gender mentoring relationships, which have many challenges and might not result in quality outcomes. Studies have investigated whether women benefit more from being in a same-gender mentoring relationship than in cross-gender mentoring relationships. A study conducted on students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) showed that women are more satisfied in a same-gender mentoring relationship and feel more comfortable with a mentor who is like them and has overcome similar challenges (Blake-Beard et al., 2011). However, the career outcomes are similar and, in some cases, better when males mentor women; this is thought to be because males continue to have the social capital in most organisations which can benefit their protegees (Blake-Beard et al., 2011). Earlier research posited that same-gender

mentoring relationships had the additional benefits of providing role modelling function and less risk of sexual innuendo (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Having multiple mentors as women build their careers is essential as they have different needs at different stages in their career. In the early stages of their career, they may require more coaching and career support, and later, they need more sponsorship and access to networks (Ayyala et al., 2019). A study of faculty members in a University in the United States found that faculty members who had multiple mentors from inside and outside of work had better outcomes in their career advancement than those who had mentors from the university only (Stoeger et al., 2021).

Ragins and Scandura hypothesised that there was a risk associated with mentoring, which is higher for women, especially when they mentor other women. Ragins and Scandura (1994) state that with the lower numbers of women in senior management in organisations, same-gender mentorship is highly visible, and often under scrutiny; senior women may avoid mentoring other women because they perceive the risk of being viewed as "feminist troublemakers" (p.959)." Additionally, women might instead focus on their advancement because of the additional barriers they face (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). However, this hypothesis was not supported in a study that was conducted which showed that there was no perceived greater risk of mentoring for women and women were as likely as men to mentor junior women (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Although the authors admit that the findings might be impacted by the small sample size and the use of a non-validated measuring instrument.

As the number of women increases in corporate and at the senior level, we expect to find more women mentoring other women. Women who mentor other women found it rewarding to contribute to other women's growth and women who were mentored are more likely to mentor other women (Scheepers et al., 2018). In contrast, some senior women exhibit the queen bee syndrome that results in them not wanting to help other women when they get to senior positions. The queen bee is the woman at the top who has been able to rise in industries that is male-dominated and now prevents other women from rising to the top. The queen bee usually adopts more masculine leadership qualities; they believe that they rose to the top on their own merit and effort and do not see the need to help other women (Derks et al., 2016; Scheepers et al., 2018). Additionally, the queen bee will distance herself from other females and instead of

challenging the gender stereotypes in the organisation they assimilate and legitimise the gender hierarchy (Derks et al., 2016).

The queen bee syndrome is a result of gender discrimination and the social identity theory posits that people identify themselves with a gender. In a male-dominated setting where being female has a lower status conferred to it, women suffer an identity crisis. The women deal with the identity crisis by distancing themselves from the group that is perceived to be of lower status and assimilating into the group of higher status. This phenomenon has a detrimental impact on women's advancement (Derks et al., 2016). The lack of female mentors has been identified as one of the reasons that the glass ceiling continues to persist. The consequence of the queen bee syndrome is that it decreases the ability of junior women from advancing their careers, it decreases diversity in organisations and takes away from the company the ability to get a diverse opinion because the women at the top assimilate to the male characteristics and do not bring in that feminine voice. Additionally, queen bees may result in companies concluding that the gender diversity efforts are not working and should be stopped and that the reason that women do not advance in their careers is because of other women and not systemic issues in the organisation (Derks et al., 2016; Ganiyu et al., 2018).

On the other hand, other women in male-dominated industries have been shown to mentor more women. In a study of university faculty, the female faculty reported higher rates of mentoring women than the male faculty members (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). Women's communal traits improve their ability to be effective mentors for other women. The communal traits include empathy, concern for others relational nature and the ability to build strong interpersonal relationships (Kubu, 2018). The strength and quality of the relationship have an impact on the outcomes of mentoring, therefore women being more relational is an advantage.

2.7 Mentoring relationships' context and culture

The mentor and protege relationship is embedded in the social and cultural context. The protege is not only influenced by the mentor, but by other people around them including colleagues, managers, peers, and family (Janssen et al., 2016). Organizational context and culture in the industry influence how mentoring relationships proceed (Zhou et al.,

2019). Social norms and cultural values have been shown to moderate the outcomes of mentoring. Different cultures have varied cultural dimensions, according to Hofstede's theory these include the power distance and collectivism vs individualism. South Africa scores 49 on the power distance which shows that it is an autocratic and hierarchal society (Swartz et al., 2019). These factors can affect the mentoring functions and how the mentor and protege relate to each other. A study conducted in India to explore the mentorship relationship demonstrated that the mentor-protege relationship is influenced by the Indian culture such as paternalism or group similarity preference (Zhou et al., 2019). Research from a Chinese setting demonstrated that mentor-protege relationships might follow the Confucian principle characterized by family-like relationships, which are hierarchal. The mentor feels obliged to take care of the protege like a father would and the protege extends loyalty and agrees to the guidance provided like a child would (Zhou et al., 2019). Recently in the South African setting Scheepers and Mahlangu (2022) demonstrated that black women have distinct mentoring experiences because of the history of colonialism and apartheid. The black women faced a challenge because the intersection of race and gender resulting in them being stereotyped and experience a paternalistic approach to mentoring. Additionally, the black women experience unconscious bias about their place in society, which is perceived not to be a leadership position(Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).These differs from the finding of research conducted in the Western setting where the bulk of the mentorship research is conducted, and mentorship theory was developed.

Race is central to the identity of South Africans due to the legacy of apartheid and racial segregation. The advancement of black women in corporate South Africa was impacted especially for black women who suffered triple discrimination based on their gender, race, and class. This intersectionality introduces additional complications in the mentorship dynamic in South Africa, particularly when black women are mentored by white males (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Additionally, the Employment Equity (EE) Act of 1998 and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act 53 of 2003 were introduced to correct the racial and gender disparities. Companies must adhere to a code that subscribes to the number of women who must be employed. This might result in negativity toward women, as they are perceived as token appointments and reluctance by males to mentor them (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Research on

the influence of culture on mentoring is still low and there is a need to increase that research to add to the body of knowledge (Baugh, 2021).

In conclusion, the literature review has demonstrated that women still face various barriers in advancing their careers to reach the top echelons of the industry. Due to societal, organisational, and individual factors, the odds seem stacked against them. Mentoring is an effective tool to bridge the gap for women and provide them with career, psychological support, and role modelling. Furthermore, is it apparent that the benefits of mentoring are realised when quality mentoring occurs. Additionally mentoring does not occur in a vacuum as it is impacted by factors like gender, social factors, organisational factors, and cultural factors. For mentoring to be an effective tool to advance the career of women we need to understand the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring in the South African context.

Chapter 3: Research questions

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research questions (Table 1). The research aimed to obtain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring in the advancement of women in the workplace in the context of South Africa. This research aims to answer three research questions which have been formulated from the literature reviewed.

3.2 Research questions

3.2.1 Research question 1: What are the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relations?

Mentoring is a useful intervention to support the advancement of women in the workplace. The mentoring functions of career support, psychological support, and role modelling benefit women in navigating various challenges in the workplace (Baugh, 2021). Women can receive different types of mentoring, including formal mentoring or informal mentoring, and in today's world of virtual work mentoring can be delivered in person or virtual (Lavin Colky & Young, 2006). Informal mentoring is more effective than formal mentoring, although women in formal mentoring still perform better than the unmentored. The mentor and the protege both benefit from mentoring, however the benefit depends on the quality of the mentorship (Clutterbuck, 2005). The benefits of mentoring are not guaranteed, in some instances, there could be a negative mentoring outcome (Blake-Beard et al., 2011). Women mentoring other women is limited because of the lower numbers of women in senior positions, reluctance from senior women to mentor other women because they have their own battles to fight and the queen bee syndrome (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Thus cross-gender mentoring relationships are common in the workplace due to organisations setting up these relationships to decrease barriers for women. Women are likely to have male mentors because there are more males in senior positions. The quality of the relationship has been shown to have an impact on the outcomes of mentoring. The quality of the relationship is affected by gender (Eby et al., 2013). The study will seek to understand how gender impacts mentoring relationship dynamic and mentoring outcomes (Fowler et al., 2007). Without a clear understanding of the mentoring relationship dynamics, it will be difficult to set up a successful formal mentoring program (Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019).

An important factor in setting up formal mentorship programs in the workplace is how the mentors and protege should be matched (Menges, 2016). A central factor of a well-functioning mentorship is the establishment of trust through perceived similarity (Evans, 2018). Therefore, it makes sense to most people that same-gender mentorship relationships are more beneficial than cross-gender mentoring relationships (Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Deng et al., 2022). On the contrary, although protege report that they were happier with same-gender mentoring relationships, the outcomes of the mentoring were not better with same-gender mentoring relationships (Blake-Beard et al., 2011).

3.2.2 *Research question 2: What are the benefits of mentoring for female protege in cross-gender mentoring relationships?*

The functions provided by the mentor might be impacted by the type of mentorship, gender, and cultural context. The cross-gender mentoring will also be affected by the possibility of sexual harassment, sexual attraction or the fear of being accused of sexual harassment by the male mentor (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). The study will examine the traditional mentorship functions of career support, psychological support, and role modelling and the extent to which those functions are provided in cross-gender mentorship relationships. Some functions of mentoring such as role modelling might be impacted by cross-gender mentoring and occur less (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). The career functions that will be examined will be sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and providing challenging assignments. The psychological functions that will be assessed will include role modelling, providing acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship (Ragins, 2016; Welsh & Diehn, 2018). The study will gather insights into the experiences of women in cross-gender relationships and whether cross-gender dynamics impacted the extent to which the different mentoring functions were provided.

3.2.3 *Research question 3: How does mentoring benefit the mentors?*

Most mentorship studies have been conducted with protege with a limited number of studies investigating the benefits to the mentors. This is because the traditional mentorship theory views mentorships as a one-way relationship for the benefit of the protege. The relational mentorship theory recognises the reciprocal nature of the mentorship relationship (Read et al., 2020). The changing work environment also recognises that mentors will benefit from mentoring relationships. The current study

explored these benefits (Ragins, 2016). Additionally, this study explored whether there are any additional benefits for male mentors to mentor women. Understanding these benefits might be important in encouraging male leaders to mentor women in the workplace.

Table 1. Research questions

Research questions	Interview questions
Research question 1: 1. What are the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relations?	1. What is your experience with mentorship? 2. How did the mentorship start? 3. Did gender play a role in the dynamics of the mentorship? 4. What is your experience in mentoring women? (For mentors) 5. How do you choose your protege? (For mentors) 6. What is your motivation for mentoring women? (For mentors)
Research question 2: 2. What are the benefits of mentoring for female protege?	7. What are the benefits that you received from mentoring?
Research question 3: 3. How does mentoring benefit the mentors?	8. What benefits do you receive from mentoring?

Chapter 4: Choice of research design

4.1 Research paradigm

4.2 Research methodology and design

4.2.1 Rationale for the chosen method of research

The study was qualitative exploring using interpretivism philosophy. Mentorship has been studied over the last two decades and the benefits are well understood. The researcher believes that some nuances in cross-gender mentoring relationships need to be further explored and understood (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Therefore, the chosen philosophy was interpretivism as it approached the "truth" depending on the context and sought to understand the context and the experiences. Workplaces are complex and unique, men and women in the workplace become social actors based on their gender and they fulfil certain roles. Interpretivism was a good approach for research of that nature (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Unlike the positivism philosophy that seeks to find one truth and generalise the results. An inductive approach was selected. The researcher was attempting to understand the meaning the participants attach to mentoring (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). The inductive approach allowed a closer understanding of the research context. The research was examining mentoring in the context of cross-gender mentoring dyads in South Africa, context is important in this research. Mentoring research over the last two decades has increased based on the seminal work by Kram (1983, 1985). This research was qualitative in nature through in-depth interviews. The research utilized the qualitative method as the research sought to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon in real life. Qualitative research is more flexible, it emphasizes seeking meaning in the experiences rather than measuring and assigning causality, as in quantitative research. The advantage of qualitative research in this setting is that it studies everyday practices in their natural setting using text as material rather than numbers (Flick, 2012). Mentorship research has been predominately quantitative in nature and there is a need for more qualitative studies due to the changing nature of organisations and the workplace (Allen et al., 2008). The original qualitative mentorship study by Kram and Isabella (1985) was conducted in a stable hierarchal, male-dominated workplace which is different to the volatile and complex workplaces of today (Allen et al., 2008). Therefore, the mentoring functions that

were described in the 1980s may be different to the ones provided today. In-depth interviews through qualitative research are therefore essential in mentoring.

The study was a cross-sectional study, due to the time limitations the researcher had it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal study. A cross-sectional study is a snapshot of the phenomena at a point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Most studies conducted in mentoring are cross-sectional studies, the disadvantage of this is that with a cross-sectional study it is not possible to measure the baseline and changes over time during the mentoring period. Longitudinal studies in mentoring are rare; there is, therefore, a need for more longitudinal studies in this field (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019).

The researcher wanted to explore the relationship dynamic in cross-gender mentoring relationships in a new light, therefore the study lent itself to an exploratory approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). A phenomenology study was undertaken as the researcher endeavoured to attain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants involved in cross-gender mentoring relationships. A phenomenology was an appropriate approach for this research as the researcher was interested in getting to the essence of the experience by collecting the views of several participants and finding what is common in the experiences (Creswell et al., 2007).

4.3 Population and sample
The study population comprised individuals who could provide data and who have experience with mentoring relationships. The population of the study consisted of men and women involved in mentoring relationships in companies in South Africa. The men were in middle or senior management and had previously had or were currently in a mentoring relationship with a woman as a mentor. The women were in middle management or senior management and involved in a mentoring relationship currently or in the past as a protege or as a mentor to other women. The study was not focused on a particular industry, participants employed in any industry in the private sector in South Africa were eligible to participate in the study.

4.4 Unit of analysis
The opinions and perceptions of participants of the study were determined as the unit of analysis.

4.5 Sampling method and size

The researcher did not have a full list of men and women who have been involved in mentoring relationships in companies in South Africa, therefore it was not possible to do simple random sampling. The sampling technique that was used was non-probability sampling because of the absence of a sampling frame. Three forms of non-probability sampling were used for this research, because the researcher anticipated that the research participants might be difficult to find a purposive sampling, volunteer and snowball sampling were utilised (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). On the purposive side, the researcher used her judgement to identify men who have been involved in mentoring relationships as mentors and women who have been involved as protege or as mentors to other women in the companies in South Africa. The researcher approached those individuals who fit the criteria and asked them to participate in the research.

The sample size consisted of 16 participants. The typical case for this study was women and men in middle and senior management who were employed in a company in any industry in South Africa. The women were currently or previously involved in a mentoring relationship as a mentee or a protege to other women and the men were currently or previously involved in a cross-gender mentoring relationship as a mentor. In the volunteer sampling, a synopsis of the research proposal defining the required criteria for qualifying as a participant was sent to GIBS MBA WhatsApp groups. The researcher utilized her networks, including the GIBS students and the women leaders' associations that she belongs to. Participants volunteered themselves using the self-selection sampling based on their knowledge of the criteria. Caution should be applied with this method because people who self-select to participate in research might have strong views about the topic compared to people who do not volunteer to participate. This might lead to the conclusion of the research differing from the experiences of the population. The final nonprobability sampling method was snowball sampling, participants were asked to recommend other people within their network who meet the qualifying criteria. The first participant who met the criteria was interviewed, at the end of the interview, they were asked to recommend other participants and assist the researcher to contact them. The next participant was also asked to recommend another participant and assist the researcher to contact them. Therefore the "sample size increased like a snowball that is rolled" (Saunders & Lewis, 2017 p.147). The drawback of snowballing is that it

might result in a sample that is homogenous as the participants are from the same network. In this study, we observe a concentration of participants from two industries due to snowballing sampling.

The sample consisted of 16 participants including nine protege and seven mentors (four male mentors and three female mentors). Six of the protege were black, two Indian and one coloured. The sample consisted of two Indian male mentors, one black male mentor and one white male mentor. The female mentors were two black and one white. All the participants worked for corporations in Johannesburg, South Africa except for four participants. The four participants were South Africans who were currently living and working abroad for multinational companies after being promoted from the South African Affiliate recently. The experiences with mentoring that they provided were based on their experiences while working in South Africa.

The researcher collected data from 16 participants (Table 2), saturation was reached at sample 14 as additional interviewers did not reveal new insights or themes (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

Table 2. Description of participants

Participant	Gender	Race	Age	Mentor/Protege	Position
Participant 1	Female	Coloured	36	Protege 1	Associate director
Participant 2	Female	Black	37	Protege 2	Senior technical advisor
Participant 3	Female	Black	34	Protege 3	Senior mining engineer
Participant 4	Male	Indian	39	Mentor 1	Medical director
Participant 5	Female	White	52	Mentor 2	Market access director
Participant 6	Female	Black	28	Protege 4	Flight operations director

Participant 7	Male	Indian	55	Mentor 3	Chief executive officer
Participant 8	Female	Black	40	Protege 5	HR director
Participant 9	Male	White	42	Mentor 4	HR director
Participant 10	Female	Black	36	Mentor 5	Chief safety officer mining
Participant 11	Female	Indian	53	Protege 6	Senior manager
Participant 12	Female	Black	43	Protege 7	Medical director
Participant 13	Female	Indian	47	Mentor 6**	Vice president
Participant 14	Male	Black	47	Mentor 7	Associate director
Participant 15	Female	Black	43	Protege 8	Associate director
Participant 16	Female	Black	43	Mentor 8	Broadcaster

**This participant had a lot of experience as a protege in cross gender mentoring and as a mentor for other women. She gave perspectives as both a mentor and a protege.

4.6 Measurement instrument

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data. This instrument allowed the researcher to dig deeper, collect richer data and better understand the experiences of women and men involved in the mentoring dyad. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher used a set of questions that were asked in a flexible order. The researcher moved from one question to the other differently in one interview to another if the questions or the themes have been covered. Some questions were omitted or added when relevant to the discussion (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). This differed from a structured interview where every research participant is asked the same questions in the same order.

The interview guide was created based on the literature review and the research questions. The questionnaire included a series of both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions to elicit responses from the participants. The literature review was useful in guiding the questions by helping the researcher know what questions to ask and the answers they should listen for (McCracken, 2016).The interview questions were mapped against the research questions to ensure consistency and completeness.

4.7 Data collection

The participants were contacted via WhatsApp after they indicated their interest in participating in the study or after someone suggested them as possible participants. The participants were given a choice between conducting a face-to-face interview or a virtual interview via Microsoft teams. All the participants elected to conduct the interviews via Microsoft teams. This reflects the post-COVID-19 world as most people are now comfortable engaging virtually. A Microsoft teams meeting was set and confirmed in the participant's calendar via email. There were no connectivity issues during the interviews, both the interviewer and the participants had their camera's on during the interviews. This allowed for better connection and engagement during the discussions. The researcher first created rapport with the participants to make them feel at ease. The purpose of the research was explained, and informed consent was confirmed. The researcher asked for permission to record the interview.

The interview started with biographical questions to ensure that all that information is captured and easily available for the analysis phase of the study. The interviews moved to the least threatening questions and then to more challenging questions. The interviewer began with a series of open-ended questions to get a general view and spontaneous responses from the protege regarding their mentorship experiences. The interviewer asked the participants to tell her about themselves and their roles first. This was an icebreaker question, and it allowed the participants to relax and create rapport with the interviewer. The first question that was asked to the female protege was "Tell me about your experience with mentoring?" This was a very deliberately open-ended question; it gave a chance for the respondents to give their initial views and experience on mentoring without any guidance or pointing towards a certain direction (McCracken, 2016). The first question that was asked to the male and female mentors was "Tell me about your experience with mentoring women?" this was to ensure that the mentors

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focused their answers on mentoring women as this was the focus of the research. The response to this question guided the interview going forward. Several participants provided very comprehensive answers that described the functions of mentoring that their mentor provided and the benefits that they received from the mentoring relationship. In this case, the interviewer did not need to ask specific questions about the mentoring functions and benefits. Other participants were vague in their responses, so the interviewer provided them with prompts to get insights into the mentoring functions and the benefits that they received from mentoring. The interviewer utilised a combination of the grand tour, floating prompts, and planned prompts to gather the necessary data (McCracken, 2016). The grand tour refers to the technique of asking open-ended non-directed questions to allow the participants to provide their unfiltered experiences in their own words. The floating prompts were techniques that the interviewer utilised to encourage the participants to share more which included repeating key terms from the participant's last answer in a questioning manner. In instances where the participants did not provide the answers spontaneously, the interviewer introduced planned prompts to allow them to discuss experiences that did not come spontaneously to mind. These were reserved for near the end of questions (McCracken, 2016).

At the end of the interview, the participants were asked to ask any questions or to provide any additional information about their mentoring experiences that they thought were pertinent and was not covered in the discussion. This allowed the opportunity for them to provide any additional experience and insights. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 60 minutes. After the interview was conducted the participants were thanked for their participation and willingness to share.

4.8 Data analysis and interpretation

The researcher recorded the interviews on her phone during the interview. The recordings were stored in two areas to ensure that there was a backup. One recording was saved on google drive and another recording was saved in a folder on the researcher's computer. The recordings were handed over to professional transcribers for transcribing. The researcher engaged the services of professional transcribers to avoid frustration with the data and familiarity that may impede the analysis process (McCracken, 2016). Three different transcribers were used in the research because the original transcriber that was chosen by the researcher could not deliver the transcriptions

within the agreed timelines. Therefore, the researcher engaged other transcribers in order to meet the transcription timelines. The transcribers were carefully briefed to ensure that the transcription is verbatim and of high quality (McCracken, 2016). The researcher checked the transcripts against the original recording to ensure that the transcripts were accurate.

The approach to the analysis was an inductive thematic approach because the thematic analysis is suited for phenomenology studies. The thematic approach is suitable because of its flexibility for different study designs and for developing insights based on participants experience and incorporating the social and cultural context (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The analysis did not rely on the frequency of the words and phrases to create themes but went beyond understanding the meaning of the words. The themes were not created based purely on counting how many times a phenomenon was mentioned and the outliers were also given importance if they were critical to the research (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).The inductive approach was adopted meaning that the researcher created the themes from the data in the transcripts and not based on a pre-existing theory. Although it is very difficult to adopt a purely inductive approach as the researcher is already influenced by the theory and their views regarding the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The transcripts were uploaded into Atlas.ti software for analysis and coding through the six-step method. Although the steps will be described in a linear fashion, the process was reiterative with the researcher going back and forth as needed. In the first step, the researcher read through all the transcripts to become familiar with the data. This was done by reading through every transcript and focusing on the important statements and interesting quotes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). In the second phase, coding was done the re-reading all the transcripts and applying codes to the data. Initially, 213 codes were generated during this phase. Coding is the process of reading the data, identifying things of interest and tagging this with a label. The codes that were generated were based on the most basic part of the data that the researcher could assess meaningfully. The dataset was coded fully and then the third phase of searching for themes began. The codes were then organised into themes, by analysing them and combining different codes into themes. The process was done by identifying commonalities between the narratives that the participants provided. The frequency of commonality was not the only

reason for creating a theme - themes were also created depending on the importance of the theme. The main themes started to emerge at this stage and the researcher continued to the fourth phase, which was looking at the different codes in the theme and ensuring all the codes in a single theme were coherent. Some themes were found not to be coherent resulting in these codes being moved around from one theme to another and new themes being created. Some codes were found not to fit any of the themes and were allocated to the miscellaneous category. The researcher re-read all the data to ensure that they were properly coded and reviewed the coding again. The fifth step was a refinement of the themes, and each theme was reviewed to ensure that it aligned with the whole dataset and told a story about the data. Within some of the themes, sub-themes were created to give further structure to the data. The final stage was the write-up of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher created aggregate dimensions of the data which were derived from the second order themes based on the codes that were created from the interview transcripts (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Table 3 illustrates how the researcher moved from the codes to the created aggregate themes. The process was inspired by Scheepers and Mahlangu (2022) and four aggregate themes were created: the formality of the mentoring relationship; the cross-gender mentorship relationship quality; women mentoring women and the benefits of mentoring (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

4.9 Data validity, reliability, and bias

The researcher used three methods to increase the quality of the data: credibility; triangulation; and bracketing. The credibility of the data was increased by creating an audit trail, the interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. High-quality transcription was conducted to ensure that the interviews were captured properly.

Data triangulation was achieved by interviewing both women and men in the study. Most studies investigating the role of mentorship for women include women participants only, including men will add an element of triangulation of the data collected.

One of the major challenges with conducting a phenomenology is that the researcher can introduce bias into the research due to their assumptions and opinions that prevent them from getting to the essence of the phenomenon (Sanders, 1982). Bracketing is the

process where the researcher suspends their belief, assumptions, and personal biases to approach the study with newness. This might be difficult to do as the researcher is female, studying a gender-related subject and the researchers' views could potentially introduce bias. However feminist research methodology does not favour bracketing. They encourage the researcher to understand how their personal experiences may influence the research, the interviewer is discouraged from being distanced and "objective," but rather to be involved in a conversation with the participant and limit hierarchy (Harding, 2018).

4.10 Research limitations

The study being cross-sectional in nature is a limitation, longitudinal studies are needed in mentoring. Mentoring is a dynamic process where the mentor and the protege go through various phases in the mentoring relationship. Longitudinal studies would be able to reveal phases in the mentoring relationship where the highest learning or support occurs. A cross-sectional study only gives the "average" experience as we do not know where in the cycle of mentoring the participant is during the time of the research (Allen et al., 2008). The cross-sectional nature of the study is a limitation as mentoring is a process that occurs over time, additional insights would be gained from conducting a longitudinal study.

The qualitative nature of the research limits the ability to determine the cause and effect of the constructs. Mentoring research needs more experimental research designs. It is not surprising that those are rare as mentoring is about the relationship between people in a work setting. Experimental designs are difficult to conduct (Allen et al., 2008). An additional limitation is that phenomenology is perceived to be subjective and might have biases, therefore the process of bracketing is critical to increasing the validity of the study results.

The self-reporting nature of the study is an additional limitation, additional insights would be gained from triangulating the data provided by the respondents with human resource data from the companies that employed the participants for example engagement scores, performance reviews, and talent reviews. The collection of data from multiple sources increases the validity of the results of the study (Allen et al., 2008). Although self-reporting is a method that was used in most of the literature on mentoring, 94% of

studies on mentoring were surveys (Allen et al., 2008). Mentoring research would benefit from varying the data collection methods, including collecting data from multiple sources and including experimental designs. The study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience and therefore self-reporting was appropriate.

The snowballing method was challenging in this study as the participants were concentrated in two industries although the study intended to recruit participants from diverse industries. It will not be possible to generalise the findings of this study as it included limited sectors. The researcher is not experienced in interviewing and this could have impacted the findings.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The findings of the research questions in Chapter 3 are presented in this Chapter. The findings were derived from the research methodology described in Chapter 4 and through the 16 in-depth interviews conducted during the data collection period. The transcripts were uploaded into Atlas.ti software for analysis and coding through the six-step method thematic analysis inductive approach. The thematic approach was chosen because it is suitable for analysing by a beginner researcher (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).The inductive approach resulted in building findings from the interviews without a pre-specified researcher driven focus. This led to emergence of various broad themes.

5.2 Description of the sample

Sixteen interviews were conducted, and the sample consisted of twelve females and four males. There were nine protege and seven mentors; of the mentors four were male and three were female. The proteges were female as the research focuses on understanding the role of mentorship in advancing women's careers. This study focuses on the dynamics of cross-gender mentorship and seeks to understand the benefits that mentors derive from mentoring. Three female mentors were included to gather insights from female mentors and create an opportunity to compare the different insights from male and female mentors. The female proteges had experience with mentorship, and the male and female mentors had experience mentoring women. The sample was derived from a snowballing method. When a participant was interviewed, they were asked to recommend someone with experience with mentorship. This snowball sampling resulted in a concentration of participants from the mining and pharmaceutical industry as participants recommended colleagues and people within their network. This was an unintentional consequence as the study was not sector specific and was not intended to focus on any industry. In the sample, the researcher found a mentor-protege pair to interview as one of the female protege referred their mentor as part of the study. This sample allowed the gathering of rich insights and experiences of mentorship. The participants were from the mining industry, aviation industry, pharmaceutical industry, and broadcasting in different positions including marketing, sales, operations, human resources, and market access.

5.3 Presentation of results

The results are presented based on the research questions in Chapter 3. Four aggregate themes were created to present the results based on the data derived from the interviews (Table 3). The aggregate themes are the formality of the mentoring relationship, the relational quality of cross-gender mentoring, women mentoring women and the benefits of mentoring for the protege and mentor. Figure 1 demonstrates how the thematic analysis was conducted.

Table 3. Themes, categories and codes

Aggregate theme 1	**Formality of mentorship**	
Second order theme 1a	**Advantages and disadvantages of formal mentorship**	
Sub-category 1a	Advantages	Disadvantages
First order concepts	Clear structure and outcomes Company supported protege Virtual mentoring	Mentorship is done for the benefit of the company Lack of input into the matching process HR involvement negatively impacts the dynamics
Second order theme 1b	**Advantages and disadvantages of informal mentoring**	
Sub -category 1b	Advantages	Disadvantages
First order concepts	Motivation for mentoring Choice of mentor and protege Long-term career objectives	Lack of definition and structure Lack of access to mentors
Aggregate theme 2	**Relational quality of cross-gender mentorship**	
Second order theme 2	Enablers and inhibitors of cross-gender mentorship	
Sub -category 2	Enablers	Inhibitors
First order concepts	Maintain professional boundaries Clear objectives Protege drive Two-way exchange	Sexual harassment Cultural mismatch Gender bias Protege entitlement

	Trusting relationship	
	Creation of a safe space	
	Mutual respect, empathy, and conflict resolution skills	
	Feedback	
	Mentor availability	
	Commitment and mentor training	
Aggregate theme 3	**Women mentoring women**	
Second order themes	**The enablers and inhibitors to women mentoring women**	
Sub- category 3	Enablers	Inhibitors
First order concepts	Females require more psychological support Females seek to build lasting relationships Multiple mentors	No matching by gender Queen bee syndrome Women do not want same-gender mentoring Mentoring is not a band-aid for poor diversity in an organisation
Aggregate theme 4	**Benefits of mentoring**	
Second order themes	**Benefits of mentoring to protege and mentor**	
Sub category 4	Protege	Mentor
First order concepts	Career functions: Introduced to network and sponsorship Psychological support Role modelling provided	Mentor satisfaction Mentor learning Mentor expands network Protege offers mentor friendship

Relationship dynamics of cross-gender mentoring

Formality of mentorship

- Advantages of fomal mentoring
  - Clear structure and outcomes
  - Company supported protege
  - Virtual mentoring
- Disadvanatges of formal mentoring
  - Mentorship is done for company benefit
  - Lack of input into the matching process
  - HR involvement changes the relationship dynamics
- Advantages of informal mentoring
  - Motivation for mentoring
  - Choice of mentor
  - Long term objectives
- Disadvantages of informal mentoring
  - Lack of definition
  - Lack of access to mentors

Relational quality of cross gender dynamics

- Enablers of cross-gender relationships
  - Maintain proffessional boundries
  - Clear objectives
  - Protege drive
  - Two-way exchange
  - Trusting relationship
  - Creation of safe space
  - Mutual respect , emphathy,and conflict resolution skills
  - Feedback
  - Mentor availability
  - Comitment and mentor tratining
- Inhibitors of cross-gender relationships
  - Sexual harassment
  - Cultural mismatch
  - Gender bias
  - Protege entitlement

Women Mentoring Women

- Enablers
  - Women require more psychological support
  - Women seek to build lasting relationships
  - Multiple Mentors
- Inhibitors
  - No matching by gender
  - Queen bee syndrome
  - Women do not want same-gender mentoring
  - Mentoring is not a band-aid for poor dirvesity

Benefits of mentoring

- Benefits to protege
  - Career functions provided
  - Psychological support
  - Role modelling
- Benefits to mentor
  - Mentor satisfaction
  - Mentors learning
  - Mentor expands network
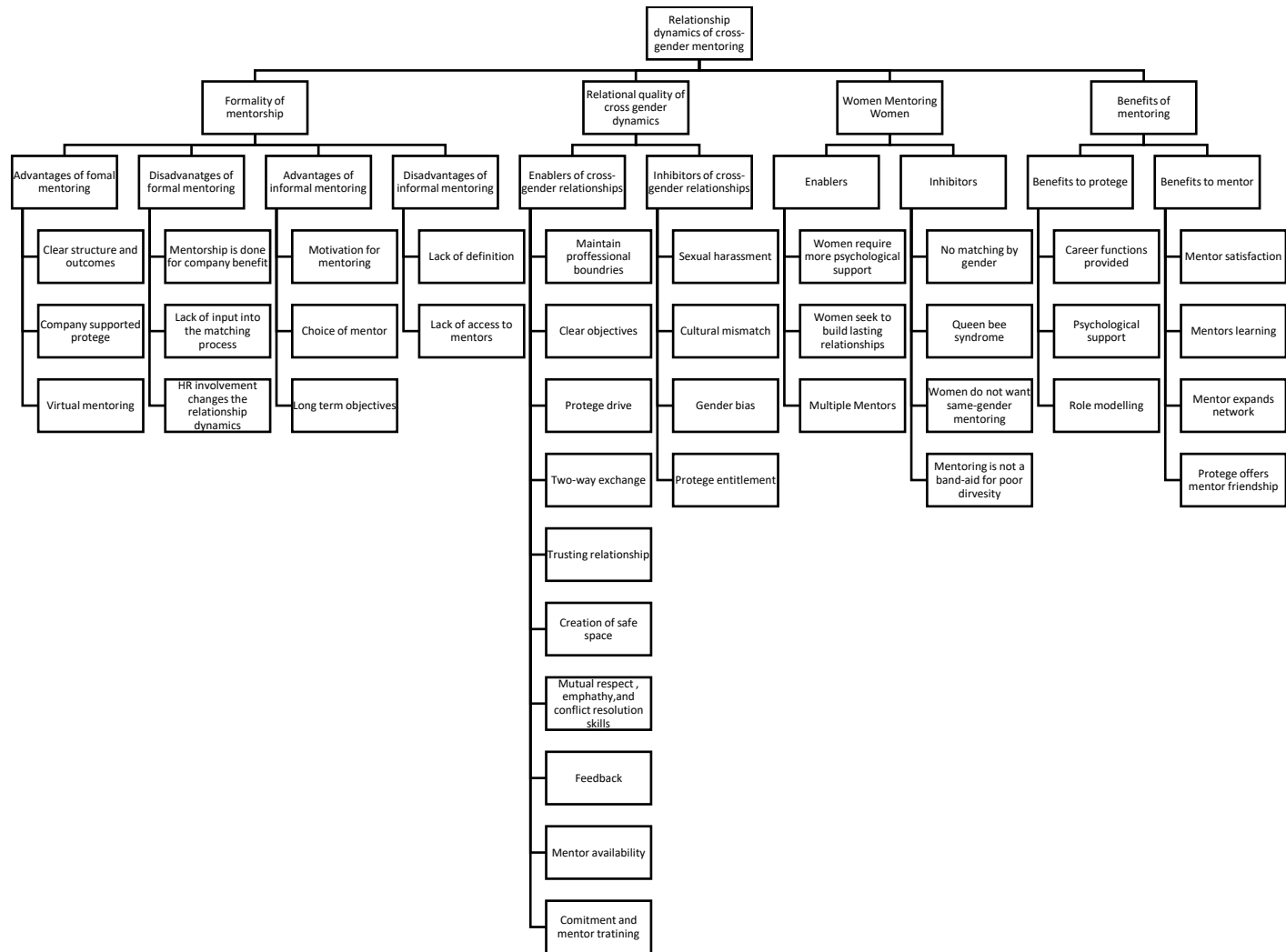 - Protege offers mentor friendship

Figure 1. Relationship dynamics of cross-gender mentorships

5.4 Research question 1: Does traditional mentorship theory explain the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relations?

This research question aimed to understand the experiences that the participants had with mentoring in general and cross-gender mentoring specifically. The two interview questions solicited feedback on the participant's mentoring experience. These open-ended questions allowed the participant to give their unfiltered views and insights. The first question asked the participants to provide their experience with mentorship; the question was set up to allow the participants to give feedback on their involvement in both formal and informal mentorship. The participants were not asked what they thought the benefits of informal mentoring were compared to formal mentoring. The interviewer let the participants express their experiences with both types of mentoring and gathered the information.

5.4.1 Aggregate theme 1: Formality of the mentoring relationship

The first aggregate theme was constructed around the advantages and disadvantages of informal and formal mentorship relationships. Most participants had experience in both. This first aggregate dimension has four second order themes, which were the advantages of formal mentoring, the disadvantages of formal mentoring, the advantages of informal mentoring and the disadvantages of informal mentoring.

5.4.1.1 The second order theme 1a: The advantages and disadvantages of formal mentorship

The second order theme was created on the advantages of formal mentorship, which were clear structure and outcomes, company supported protege and opportunity to have virtual mentoring and increase the number of potential mentors (Table 4).

Table 4. Advantages of formal mentorship

First order concepts 1.1
1. Clear structure and outcomes
2. Company supported protege
3. Virtual mentorship

First order concept 1.1.1: The advantage of formal mentorship is the structure

All the participants had experience with both formal and informal mentorship; the questioning wanted to further explore their experiences with the different types of mentoring experienced and below is a summary of the feedback. When participants were asked, "tell me about your experience with mentorship?" most protege spontaneously gave their experience with informal mentorship, and most of the mentors gave their experience with formal mentorship. There was a clear preference by participants to be involved in informal mentorship relationships rather than formal mentorship relationships. A trend emerged where the mentors, even though they preferred informal mentorship, saw benefits in formal mentorship. The proteges mainly chose informal mentorship. Despite the preference for informal mentorship, clear structure and outcomes were sighted as the benefit of formal mentorship. One protege explained, "We knew that the time frame we defined as a team of mentor-mentee, what the frequency would be, how long the meetings would be, and what our key objectives were. It was quite formal and was through the company" (Protege 1). Another protege supported this view by adding the ability to keep records, clarification of expectations and goals - "I think there is a place for both, the good thing about formal mentorship is that it helps you keep records of these very specific goals, expectations, these are the timelines, so there is a place for that" (Mentor 6).

Although the general sentiment of the participants was a preference for informal mentorship, several participants reported a positive experience with formal mentorship. Formal mentorship was effective when protege wanted to learn new skills as part of onboarding into a new organisation. A protege shared her experience with a formal mentorship that was effective. The formal mentorship assisted with career support and growing technical skills as she explained about her mentor. "And she was that person who would send these nuggets about hard work, send these nuggets about understanding your policies […] So, it was more formalised. But she created the path and understanding and behaviour that I had as a person in how I led myself in all work environments that I worked in. I had that quality of output; I had that understand your portfolio, read on the things that are happening today, build relationships within your environment" (Protege 2).

She continued to explain that she benefited from formal mentorship through clarifying her requirements for her role and creating structure, "My formal mentorship did benefit me in terms of structuring me, making me understand the work environment, what is required of me, how do I behave as a person, and what are my deliverables. But that is a management relationship" (Protege 2). Formal mentorship has been effective as a tool for building female talent as part of inclusion and diversity efforts in companies, as this protege demonstrated a positive formal mentoring experience. "So, one was a formal programme where they identify key talent, key female talent or women talent and then match them with a female leader, and the idea there was sort of about equity, diversity, and inclusion. […] it was a six-month formal programme, and that really was a very, very valuable experience – one that I will cherish for the longest time because I gained and learned so much from this leader" (Protege 5).

Formal mentorships are also set up in companies to address specific needs and this is usually growing certain skills for a protege. This approach can be useful if both parties are clear about the objectives and expectations of the outputs of the mentoring. This mentor shared her experience with this type of mentoring intervention, "For me in terms of mentorships that worked very well, […] it was where I was put together with a gentleman from Middle East-African country. But the mentorship was very much specifically around two aspects of the market access space. He was very clear in terms of his expectations, what we would like to learn more of, what he would like to understand more of" (Mentor 4).

<u>First order concept 1.1.2: Company supported mentorship creates the opportunity for protege</u>

Formal mentorships are set up by companies to address the lack of access to mentorship for marginalised groups such as women and minorities. The theme that emerged was the effectiveness of formal company-supported mentoring; it allowed access to mentoring for people who might otherwise not have access to mentoring. It allowed protege to interact with senior members of the company from different divisions, thereby growing their network and accessing networks that were previously not available to them. The mentorship can be aligned with the company's culture.

A protege stated that the benefit of a formal program was being paired with a mentor from a different department; she said, "Because I sometimes think also with HR, they want to link you to a person within your industry or a person within your kind of work. My mentor is an engineer, I am an environmentalist, two different worlds. But the mentorship has helped because we were using our leadership skills, know-how, business acumen and whatnot for the space" (Protege 2). Another protege said that if the mentor and protege are from the same team, it might result in a negative mentoring experience she cautioned, "And I think that is where these things fall apart. How can organisations prevent that is to make sure that the mentee has input into who is chosen to be their mentor and maybe cross-team mentorships because I think what used to happen at the organisation, they tried to choose people in the same team, and that does not work. I think some type of cross teams might work better or across functions might work better and across geographies might work" (Protege 7).

The motivation for mentoring in a formal program can be different from motivation in the informal mentoring program. In the formal program, the company requires senior people to mentor junior people, which can sometimes make the mentor feel obligated. Interestingly a protege thought the requirement in some organisations for leaders to mentor junior staff was an advantage. She said, "I want to believe that okay, obviously, I do not think, I know that it is a requirement as a leader that you demonstrate that you are grooming and developing your team, so I would think for a start that would be a motivation for leaders to take on these mentorship roles" (Protege 5). The requirement for senior leaders to mentor juniors results in an increased pool of mentors available in the company for formal mentorship programs.

And finally, a mentor mentioned that what he thought advantage of formal mentorship was its ability to be more aligned with the culture and objectives of the organisation; he explained that "No, Certainly, I have been involved in both types of mentorships. If you talk about the organisation one, the formalised form of mentorship, I think it works in a much better way because what happens is also when you are dealing with those individuals, probably there is a lot more alignment into the culture or where people want to go and also the relevant experience that you bring into that kind of relationship" (Mentor 7).

First order concept 1.1.3: Virtual mentorship can be effective

Several participants had been involved in virtual mentoring because they work for multinational companies and were paired with mentors from different countries. There was a debate about the effectiveness of virtual mentoring in delivering the required mentoring functions of career support, psychological support, and role modelling over a screen. The supporters of virtual mentoring reasoned that it is possible to build enough trust and connection to provide the mentoring functions on a screen. The opponents of virtual mentoring stated that a significant function of mentoring is role modelling. It would not be easy to role model a leader whom you have not interacted with. Additionally, they stated that with mentoring in the same space, the mentor could observe the protege and provide them with relevant feedback.

The mentor who supported virtual mentoring stated that provided that the barriers are acknowledged, and tools and resources are used to overcome the obstacles, virtual mentoring could be effective. He explained, "So I think you know, sometimes even the ability to not be face to face, the frequency of meetings, as long as it is very clear that we have this barrier – how do you overcome that barrier – because your mentorship can be across the ocean, and you need to observe that and to utilise a couple of other tools" (Mentor 7). The protege who contradicted these views based the reason on the inability to observe the mentor in action making the mentoring less effective; she argued her point by stating, "So definitely, and I think to a certain extent when I compare that to other kinds of mentorship relationships I have had, that is one of the pieces that was missing in one of them where you are not able to see someone in action, but they are your mentor. And so, the mentorship relationship kind of is limited to them helping you let us say, at a functional technical level, right, imparting the knowledge but never having the opportunity to see them in action" (Protege 5). A mentor disagreed with the protege's view based on the fact that people work in the virtual world and can perform with their managers based on a different geography, "In today's world, if you cannot build trust over a screen, you can't work in a corporate setting because your boss, who is even more important for a trusting relationship, is also going to be on a screen. Both the mentor and the protege must be able to build trust in a virtual setting because it is a key skill in today's corporate world" (Mentor 4).

The second order theme on the disadvantage of formal mentoring was created (Table 5). The participants reported that the disadvantages of formal mentoring were that it could feel forced, and the objective could be related to the company's gain and not the protege. Additionally, the lack of input into the matching process and the involvement of HR was stated as a disadvantage.

Table 5. Disadvantages of formal mentoring

First order concepts 1.2
1. Mentorship was forced and for company benefit
2. Lack of input into matching process
3. HR involvement negatively impacts dynamics of the relationship

First order concept 1.2.1: Formal mentorship can feel forced and for companies' benefit

The results showed several disadvantages to formal mentorship; many participants reported that formal mentorship feels forced at times as both the mentor and the protege might not buy into the idea of the mentorship. Companies may require senior leaders to mentor junior people, which is good as it results in an increased pool of mentors. However, the negative side is that the pool might consist of leaders who are not passionate about mentorship. Many participants expressed this view, with one participant stating that "So I want to say the mentor maybe wasn't necessarily well invested in that decision and so where I have seen it work is when the relationship is organic and it is clear from both mentor and mentee in terms of what the objective of the mentoring session or the mentoring relationship is" (Protege 6).

The consequence of the motivation for mentoring being an obligation is that the mentor might approach the mentoring with a negative attitude which can prevent, a high-quality mentoring relationship from emerging. This protege shared her experience where she felt that the mentorship was forced and created a negative mentoring experience; she commented that "In our mentorship, he sounded constantly irritated and agitated, and it was just uncomfortable" (Protege 1).

An additional consequence of the obligation to mentor was lack of investment in the mentoring relationship from the mentor. The outcome of mentoring depends on the

quality of the relationship, therefore if one or both parties are not invested the mentoring is unlikely to be effective. This protege supported this view by stating, "That was one time I felt it did not really work and I think partly because of the mismatch; it was just someone whose mind was already elsewhere, he was not invested in that relationship, in the programme, in the objectives. He was not invested" (Protege 8).

The company should invest in formal mentorship and ensure that this are integrated as part of a larger company initiative of growing talent. If there is no commitment from the company the mentoring can be perceived as a "tick the box" exercise. A protege demonstrated how she felt that the formal mentorship was designed for the company's benefit for the company to "tick the box" that mentorship had been provided. In support of this view, one protege stated, "To a certain extent, they felt very conventional, you know, like something that someone must do because it is part of their KPIs. So, I do not think that there was actual personal interest in me. It was just something that just had to be done because the program asked for it to happen. It benefited me that someone was asking, someone would check, but at a personal level, it was another box tick exercise" (Protege 3).

Companies have objectives for setting up formal mentoring programs which are the outcomes they can achieve as the following quote illustrates "I don't think it was actually always to empower the person, I think it was more about mentoring you so that we can make you fit into this little peg that we believe the organisation needs and, therefore, once we mentor you, we panel beat you enough to fit into this peg then you will give us what we need you to know, and that's kind of how I got official entry" (Protege 6).

First order concept 1.2.2: Lack of input into the matching process

Lack of protege buy-in was another factor mentioned as negatively impacting the process was that the protege might not buy into the idea of the mentorship. The lack of buy-in results from the protege's perception that they did not participate in the choice of the mentor assigned. One mentor stated, "I think sometimes in that structured process, the mentee is not necessarily open to, or wants, or sees a mentorship need in their lives, but they take it on because it's the right thing to do" (Mentor 2). A protege confirmed the challenges of lack of protege buy-in by giving an example of being paired with someone they did not admire or respect. This resulted in a negative mentoring experience for the

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protege; she said, "Because I did not choose them. Yeah, I was told, "Okay, this person is mentoring. This is the person that is going to help you." And I am just like, why? Because this person had nothing to offer, they did not have more education than me; they did not have more experience than me. They were just, for all intents and purposes, people in the organisation that had a more senior role" (Protege 6).

This participant further stated that matching might have been the problem in her negative mentoring experience. The process by which the mentor and the protege are matched is not always clear to the protege and the mentor; the company often uses matching on experience, which is inappropriate if the mentor and the protege do not have chemistry. The protege related her experience "It wasn't well matched; they matched me with someone who was about to retire, […] he had a, you know like… what is the word I am looking for… he had a 'don't worry about it attitude', […] I did let the programme manager know that this is not working" (Protege 8).

First order concept 1.2.3: HR involvement negatively impacts the relationship dynamics

The involvement of human resources changes the dynamic of the relationship. One protege reported that it felt performative; they felt like they were being assessed; therefore, they could not be authentic and bring their real struggles as the mentor might report back to human resources. The success of mentorship relies on openness and sharing; their absence negatively impacts the mentoring outcomes. To highlight this point, a protege said, "I will be honest with you. Initially, it feels performative. You are trying to put your best foot forward, you know, you do not know what feedback they are going to provide, if ever […] So, for me, any day, the informal one" (Protege 5).

The company oversight was pointed out as a factor that changes the relationship dynamic, which may impact the quality of the connection and the mentoring outcomes. A mentor demonstrated this by stating, "It has always been around; as soon as it is a formalised company process, there is an additional agenda item that comes up. And the mentor, both the mentor and the mentee may have in the back of their minds that there may be some form of oversight or review of this mentoring relationship" (Mentor 4). The participants stated that knowing that the company is involved results in changes to the relationship dynamics and makes them prefer informal mentorship. "So both how the

mentor and the mentee show up at that formalised company-driven process is different, which is why my preference is for the more informal way" (Mentor 4).

This second order theme was constructed on the advantages of informal mentoring, which included the motivation for mentoring, ability to choose each other and capacity to support the protege's long-term career goals (Table 6).

Table 6. Advantages of informal mentorship

First order concepts 1.3
1. Motivation for mentoring
2. Choosing each other has more opportunities for a strong relationship.
3. Long-term career objectives

First order concept 1.3.1: The motivation for the mentoring

The motivation for mentoring emerged as an essential advantage of informal mentoring. The reasons that were given were that the motivation for the mentor to enter these relationships was a sense of purpose and that they saw potential in the protege they chose to mentor. This differed from the previously stated motivation in formal mentorship, where the mentors felt obligated to take on protege. One female mentor who mentors women in the male-dominated mining industry said that her reason for mentoring was to support other women in their growth, "At first, it was about women and maybe in everything that they desired or wanted or aspired to be. For me, it was understanding in mining, we do not necessarily have to fight for everything. There are people like me that will support you" (Mentor 5). Another female mentor added that "My purpose in life is to see people grow and be the best they can possibly be. That is what I am all about. I am all about – and maybe that is why I have so many friends because I genuinely care about people" (Mentor 6). Another mentor's purpose was linked to their previous experience with being mentored and their desire to pay it forward by mentoring other women. They said, "One, just realising that for me to get to where I am, somebody had opened the door, and because positions of influence and power were held by men, it was men that did that – and realising that if the most marginalised members of our society were going to access where I have been, this time a woman will have to hold open a door for other women. And that is what made me make the decision to learn

what it means to walk a mentorship journey with women" (Mentor 8). A vital purpose seems to make a difference in how these mentors approach their protege and ensure that the mentorship is focused on the protege reaching their full potential. One female mentor added, "The question that you asked now is something very close to my heart because, for me, it always speaks to something that is linked to purpose in life. And for me, what is important and what drives me and purpose is about how can I help people to develop in order to become the best versions of themselves and to reach their full potential" (Mentor 2).

And finally, a male mentor motivated by his father's journey wanted to give back through mentoring and stated, "And I certainly attribute myself to a greater extent because of that particular mentorship that my dad just got out of the blue. Probably it was not mentorship; maybe even at that time, nobody talked about mentorship. So that was it, and since the time I joined the industry, I said, Okay, let me continue doing it because there might be many more like that, who might be just waiting for that particular opportunity. Maybe we can turn them into beautiful people" (Mentor 3).

First order concept 1.3.2: Choosing each other has more opportunity for stronger relationship

Mentor and protege choice were stated as an additional advantage of informal mentorship. In certain instances, the protege would approach the mentor because they see something they may be able to learn from them. This factor of the protege and the mentor choosing each other results in an opportunity for a stronger relationship. One protege stated, "I think mostly it developed because of me identifying either a leader or a peer that I worked with and that displayed a quality that I admire or in how they work, how they approach their work, their work ethic, and how they also approach their relationship, their work relationships. […] And so I have watched people, and how they approach working within a matrix, working with cross-functional partners, and based on that almost created that ability, I have gravitated towards those kinds of people, either leaders or peers; proactively approached and asked not necessarily to be mentored but just asked how they did things" (Protege 8).

The protege having input into the mentor choice in formal mentorship relationships to increase the chances of improved mentor and protege connection. The first participant

stated, "And I think that is where these things fall apart. How can organisations prevent that is to make sure that the mentee has input into who is chosen to be their mentor" (Protege 6). The second participant suggested that protege choice can be incorporated into formal mentorship. He suggested that companies could have a pool of mentors that they share with potential protege. The protege could be allowed to select the mentor they feel more connected with and one with the skills that match their developmental needs. He said, "And then the five, potential five, you can pick up five mentees, but it is the mentees who choose you; you do not choose them. So let them choose the mentor they want to have because it is, as I said, it is about what these guys need. There are many people who would say I do not need a mentor, that is fine. So that that is important that if the mentee is allowed to choose as to what they are getting into" (Mentor 3). To demonstrate the above approach as an effective a protege shared her experience of where being part of a process where the protege chose their mentor. "And part of that programme, it was a year programme is you will be paired with a mentor, but the way they did, so one could easily call that a formal mentorship because it is part of a structured programme, etc. But what I thought was beautiful in terms of how they did it. They made available to us a number of potential mentors that you could pair up with, and there was a period of time where you could engage, almost like interviewing each other to see who you felt comfortable or most comfortable with before the actual pairing happens. So, they allowed for that stage of kind of getting to know a person before you can formalise a mentorship relationship, which I thought, and I appreciated quite a bit" (Protege 5). The above demonstrates how human resources can incorporate factors into formal mentorship that increase the likelihood of success.

First order concept 1.3.3: Long-term career support

Informal mentorship is suitable to support women for long-term career goals as these relationships tend to span over a long period of time. Participants expressed that informal mentorship can continue throughout an individual's career, even when they move from one company to another, in contrast to formal mentorship, which is company specific and usually lasts a short period. Informal mentorship is suitable to support women through their career journey while formal mentorship might be ideal for short-term advancement. One mentor highlighted this by saying, "Looking career-wise in terms of what that next big step is and what it might take in terms of behaviour,

performance, collaboration, engagement, innovation, the list goes on, how that individual can get themselves ready for that next big step. I find that to be more of a medium to a long-term rather than a short-term mentorship where there is a defined need" (Mentor 1).

Another protege shared an example of a mentorship they have been involved in since the start of her career that is still active. She said, "So I am a chemical engineer, and my first job was as a process engineer at […], and my boss became my mentor, and he is still my mentor up until today – that was in 1999, he has retired, but we still talk about a whole bunch of different things, and I always learn something from every interaction that I have with him, up until today" (Protege 6).

This second order theme was created on the disadvantages of informal mentorship: lack of definition and structure and lack of access to mentors (Table 7).

Table 7. Disadvantages of informal mentorship

First order concepts 1.4
1. Lack of definition and structure
2. Lack of Access to mentors

First order concept 1.4.1: Lack of structure and definition

Many respondents stated that the mentoring relationship is often not defined; this is a disadvantage because the mentor might not provide the necessary mentorship functions without a definition. This lack of definition highlights an important question about the possibility of a mentorship existence without the acknowledgement of both parties. One participant demonstrated this point by saying," I have one specific person that we have a mentorship relationship with. We never really defined it as a mentorship relationship" (Protege 2). This lack of definition is very common for informal mentorship and can result in negative mentoring experiences stemming from a lack of alignment on the expectations from each other. Another protege remarked, "Okay, I have had not a single mentor where we formally agreed that this was a mentor/mentee relationship" (Protege 6).

A lack of definition leads to a lack of structure; because the relationship has not been defined, a structure is usually not put in place. This is where formal mentorship is strong; it has good structure to clarify expectations. A protege demonstrated this factor by stating, "So when you have a structured mentorship, the formal piece, it is very much structured, you know the places you are going to meet, the timelines you are going to have" (Mentor 7).

Although some participants viewed this lack of structure as advantageous because it allows more holistic and contextually relevant support for the protege. A mentor argued for this view by stating that "informal mentoring sometimes is not structured in a way; it is very spontaneous, and why I say that is because the person in a way admires and respects and looks at you as a person who can help develop skills and competencies" (Mentor 7).

First order concepts 1.4.2: Lack of access to informal mentorship

The most critical drawback of informal mentorship is that it is not readily available, especially to marginalised individuals who need it the most. This is the reason why companies set up formal mentoring programs to ensure access where it is necessary for mentorship. One protege highlighted the difficulty of accessing the correct type of mentorship in an informal mentorship scenario. She said, "I think one of the things for me, as much as I have mentioned some of the mentors that I have had and that they have been good, one of the drawbacks of having organic mentoring relationships, is you tend to go to people where you find it easy, you tend to go to those people, and they may not always meet all of the needs, so the needs that… how do I put it… they may not always be the right people to get you to the next level. And so the drawback of relying on organic relationships like that is that you don't go out of your way to seek other mentors to take you to the next level because that requires a little bit more extra effort on your part" (Protege 8).

5.4.2 Aggregate theme 2: Relational quality of cross-gender mentorship
5.4.2.1 The second order theme 2: Enablers and inhibitors of the cross-gender mentoring relationship

An aggregate theme was constructed on the second order themes inhibitors of and enablers for effective cross gender mentorship.

The second order theme of inhibitors of effective cross gender mentorship was sexual harassment, protege and mentor mismatch, gender bias and protege entitlement (Table 8).

Table 8. The inhibitors of cross-gender mentoring

First order concepts 2.1
1. Sexual harassment in mentorship
2. Cultural mismatch and gender bias
3. Protege Entitlement

First order concept 2.1.1: Sexual harassment

The factor that was raised as the most frequent reason for negative dynamics in a cross-gender mentorship was sexual harassment, the occurrence of sexual harassment or the fear of it occurring or, in the case of male mentors, the fear of being accused of improper behaviour. This can have negative consequences on the mentoring relationship and additionally result in male mentors avoiding mentoring female protege. One female mentor illustrated the impact this had on her resulted in her not seeking out any mentors, "People around me were victimised now, you just wanted mentorship, and now a person asked for sexual favours. Call it an exchange. I give you this; you give me that. So, that was the first issue I had" (Mentor 5). She further elaborated, "So, for me, it was a fear thing – I was just scared - in their positions. I did not attempt – I even developed a – should I say – what is this thing? A motto saying, I had – within everyone, there is something for me to learn so that I would leverage on you, the next person, the next person and not have one person that I looked up to." This is the participant who said she mentors females because she did not receive mentoring in her career. This demonstrates that she was not searching for mentors because she was afraid of sexual harassment, especially because she works in mining, a male-dominated industry. Another participant stated that she did not experience sexual harassment, but she was constantly vigilant to ensure that she did not put herself in a position where she might be vulnerable, she stated "No, you know I wouldn't necessarily say this is an example, but you can get a feel, you know? kind of like, creating some discomfort and I'm not going to take this any further, you know" (Protege 7)?

The study finding demonstrated the sexual harassment can occur in mentoring as a protege provided an example of a time she experienced sexual harassment "he would be that guy who would be fighting for those things. But at the end of my journey, just before I left that company, he was hitting on me, and I was like, wait since when do you look at me like that? I was sitting here thinking that you were doing all these things because you are genuine. You really wanted me to progress. But now that I am leaving, you are showing me that these things did not matter" (Protege 3).

First order concept 2.1.2: Cultural mismatch and gender bias

Two additional factors that were raised were cultural mismatch and gender bias as having negatively impacted the mentoring relationship. Gender bias is prevalent in companies and can occur in mentoring relationships as well. Male mentors may have conscious or unconscious gender bias and apply certain stereotypes to the female protege which my limit the protege ability to grow. One protege shared the unfortunate experience, she was involved in a formal mentoring relationship with a mentor from a country in the Middle East, and she had a negative mentoring experience in what she describes as a cultural mismatch and gender bias displayed by her mentor. She stated that "I said to him, where I am at is a ceiling…And for me to get the experience and exposure I need, I would need to move across the globe. And I felt like that was his trigger. And when I reflect, because I did reflect a lot on that, I wondered if he was upset because he considered me too ambitious […] Does he think this is not for a woman? Does he assume that my role is a mother and therefore that is what I should do? So, is it a sexist thing, or is it that these are his barriers? I ask myself, if my male counterpart was in the situation and had this discussion, how would that differ" (Protege 1)? Negative stereotypes could also occur as it relates to culture. Different cultures have different expectations on the place of women. Some cultures view the women's place to be at home taking care of the children and housework. Women who are ambitious at work might not be aligning with the role expectation and therefore may face backlash. The same participant also reflected on that the negative mentoring experience might have been due to a cultural mismatch "He is a culturally Arab man mentoring a dynamic, charismatic young woman from Africa that has great ambitions. Not to say that he is sexist, I do not think he is that type of man, but I think we should have been matched culturally as well."

First order concept 2.1.3: Protege entitlement

And finally, an additional barrier expressed by mentors was that people should not assume that because senior people in the company mentor them, they will automatically have their careers accelerated. Mentorship incorporates sponsorship which can lead to protege entitlement. Additionally, due to the various legislations that exist such as Broad-Based Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act 53 of 2003 and Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 geared towards increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions, protege might start acting entitled to promotions. He stated that he had detected impatience, especially in the marginalised people who were previously excluded in senior positions to have their careers accelerated at an unreasonable pace. He said, "Okay, some of the difficult experiences. So, one experience that you get in the organisation, many people think that a mentorship relationship is an easy way because now you know somebody who is up there, and that will help them grow their career extraordinarily. So, they can get some undue advantage, and certainly does not work for me. Many times, I have seen people coming across, and then they say, but you know, I have been in touch with this person, but I did not get, you know, I went for that interview, but I did not get a chance and all that. And then you need to have those tough conversations" (Mentor 3).

The second order theme was created on the enablers of cross gender mentoring which were centred behaviours and factors the support high quality mentoring relationship (Table 9).

Table 9. Enablers of cross-gender mentorship

First order concepts 2.2
1. Maintain professional boundaries
2. Clear objectives
3. Protege drive
4. Two-way exchange
5. Trusting relationship
6. Creation of a safe space
7. Mutual respect, empathy and conflict resolution skills
8. Feedback
9. Mentor availability
10. Commitment to the relationship and mentor training

First order concept 2.2.1: Maintaining professional boundaries

The participants emphasised the importance of maintaining professional boundaries in cross-gender mentorships. This is because maintaining professional boundaries is a mitigating factor for one of the inhibitors of high-quality mentorship relationships, which is sexual harassment or sexual attraction. One male mentor said, "Why this is important is because sometimes it is very informal and it can be formal as well, but it has to be in such a way that it remains very professional, whether it is formal or not, it can be very professional" (Mentor 7). Another mentor expressed how he ensures that the professional boundaries are maintained, "There are sensitivities of course around the fact that I am a male and mentoring a female, they are looking at me as an experienced individual, to follow my direction, there have to be very clear guidelines on how I am going to engage with them to ensure that the boundaries are clear. It is very important that the boundaries are very clear so that the other individual does not feel you are overbearing, but at the same time, there will be professional lines" (Mentor 7). He further stressed his point by sharing practical ideas of how the ensures that, "I can pick up a call, for example of my male mentee on a Saturday or Sunday and say 'Hey, look […] And it would probably not look very odd. But if you are calling a female mentee on a Saturday or Sunday, that might look a little bit probably not very appropriate." The sexual

issues do not only pertain to the mentor and the protege, it is also about ensuring that people around them do not perceive any inappropriate behaviour; this includes colleagues and family members. He provided additional information to support his statement: "What I have also found as a mentor is to sometimes explain to my family that I am actually mentoring somebody and therefore, if I get a call, you will understand that there is a mentoring process going on here" (Mentor 7). Additionally, a female protege highlighted how the South African context of the high rate of sexual violence exacerbates the situation, "It has been more challenging, and I do not know if this is the South African context because South Africa is quite sensitised to male-female relationships where sometimes boundaries are crossed from the male perspective, you never really know" (Protege 7). And she also stated that this could limit the mentor and protege engagement "Perception, you then find it very difficult to engage a person or to meet a person face to face right, outside a professional environment, outside of the office to meet for a coffee or for lunch, you know, it becomes difficult, and I think you tend to approach that with a lot of caution based on the points we discussed now."

First order concept 2.2.2: Clear objectives and outcomes

Participants stated that what did make a difference is having very clear objectives for the mentorship. Both mentors and protege agreed that clear goals resulted in more effective mentorship outcomes; one participant said, "So there must be what I would call an established status, where you and the mentee agree that you are going to walk a journey" (Mentor 7). Another one said, "The second piece is that there must be very, very clear roles […] this is the professional journey I want to take, and therefore I believe that you can be my partner in ensuring that I walk through this journey" (Protege 5).

First order concept 2.2.3: Protege drive

Protege drive and motivation were identified as factors that result in a successful mentorship. Multiple times both the mentors and protege said that it is the protege that drives the relationship; if the protege does not drive the relationship, it is unlikely to be successful. One protege said, "But more on the mentee to actually push the relationship because ultimately you are the one who gains the most out of it, I would say." Similarly, another protege emphasised, "because I wanted it to work. As this part of my career, right, everybody is busy, everybody is engaged in a lot of stuff. So, the only reason this

is working is that I make an effort into it working" (Protege 4). Mentors also shared similar sentiments, one mentor stating that with her busy schedule it is difficult to fit in mentoring. Still, she will commit to it if she perceives the protege to have a lot of drive, "So as a mentor, you don't always have the time, and you don't always see the potential at first go, but really it takes somebody presenting themselves to you persistently for you to take notice" (Mentor 8).

First order concept 2.2.4: Two-way exchange

Several participants highlighted the need for a two-way exchange in a mentorship, recognising that both the mentor and the protege benefit from the engagements. One protege said, "And I think that is how any mutual relationship is […] You want to have an equal contribution. You want to share your experiences" (Protege 1). Another protege stated, "And our mentorship is not only one way. I also get to engage him, get to assist him when he has challenges" (Protege 2). Another protege said, "I think definitely trust and friendship and mutual benefit, can never be one way, no relationship works one-way, mutual benefit where we both feel that we are both getting something from the relationship" (Protege 7).

On the other hand, participants highlighted that they found the formal mentorship experience to be a one-way exchange resulting in low quality mentorship; one protege stated that "And it was also one-way because it happened when this person engaged with your work, engaged with how you were doing things and carried you through the process of your work. So, it was very one-way, and it was formalised, it had a time frame, and it had a core duty which had to do with my job." (Protege) Another protege introduces an additional element by stating that the dynamics differ when the line manager is allocated as the mentor. She noted that this made the relationship more one-sided because of the hierarchy that is introduced, "So you know a lot of the line management mentoring was, I believe, very one-sided" (Protege 6).

First order concept 2.2.5: Trusting relationship and safe space

Having a trusting relationship and creating a safe space were mentioned by several participants as important factors. This was also pointed out as the main drawback of formal mentorship. The trust and creation of a safe space results in both mentor and

protege sharing more openly and being vulnerable. One protege demonstrated this by saying, "I think he created a safe space to be vulnerable. In those moments when I did not feel like I showed up very well, in those moments where actually I felt like I did not know what I was doing. He created a space […]" (Protege 5). Similarly, a mentor stated that creating a safe space can result in disclosures that can help in achieving growth for both parties, "individuals so that there is a sense of a level of intimacy that allows them to confide in you in a completely appropriate way as to what their personal and social circumstances are" (Mentor 1). Another protege said, "And I think that is a shared benefit because you can be vulnerable with someone who is not your direct report and who is not within your space seeing your everyday operation" (Protege 2).

Many participants articulated the importance of trust by saying, "Because mentorships can become messy if there's no trust and it's a forced sort of relationship" (Mentor 1). Another one emphasised by saying, "So once that relationship of trust is established, that's when the protege or mentee can then feel open to show their vulnerabilities and to talk about specific examples of how they've had meetings that perhaps haven't gone well or meetings where they didn't shine as much as they wanted to" (Mentor 4). Furthermore, the establishment of the trust is what allows the other mentorship functions such as sponsorship and introduction to network to occur as one participant stated, "once there is a level of trust that has been established, there is the opportunity to tap into those networks that these individuals have" (Mentor 4).

In contrast to formal mentorship, participants stated that the ability to be more authentic is an advantage of the informal mentorship setting. One participant said, "So there's for me sometimes honesty and authenticity to informal mentorships that is more structured and programmed in the process" (Mentor 2). A protege supported this view by stating, "So, I do choose, I must be honest. I will choose somebody whom I believe is authentic. Who actually wants to learn and is not just paying lip service to the mentoring process" (Protege 6).

First order concept 2.2.6: Mutual respect, empathy, and conflict resolution skills

Participants consider mutual respect as an essential ingredient in an effective mentorship relationship stating that "I think there was mutual respect; just as much as I thought they exhibited skills and insights and perspectives that I didn't have that I wanted

to learn from or benefit from – they also, in turn, had identified something in me that they wanted to tap into" (Protege 8). The participants added empathy as very important for mentors especially as it related to men mentoring women. the first one said "trying to understand someone else's context situation, developing your empathy as well because you need to have a certain level of empathy" (Mentor 1). The second one supported this by saying "demonstrating how men mentoring women can leverage empathy in supporting the women even though the women might have experiences that the men do not share. So, my take on that would be for a mentor, one of the key things to being a mentor is empathy. You must be able to put yourself in the shoes of someone else, and only then, in my view, can you be a good mentor. Now, again, that is agnostic of gender" (Mentor 4). He continued to stress his point by sharing that even in same-gender mentoring empathy is required as mentors do not only mentor people who have had the same experiences as them, "Now, the concept that you raised about can a male mentor a female employee who is facing all these additional challenges, led me down the path of, well, for a mentor to be effective, they need to be high on empathy because very rarely will two employees walk exactly the same path with exactly the same challenges. So, empathy is a crucially important component for a mentor to be able to mentor" (Mentor 4).

An additional relational enabler of cross-gender mentorship was the ability to resolve conflict effectively in the relationship through effective use of conflict resolution skills; they said "And constantly going back to what our common ground is, what our vision is, and being able to, I guess, not let things hang essentially because I think sometimes people just hold on to things and they end up […] creating conflicts that really don't matter at the end of the day, but just having that understanding that we are both working towards the same goal ultimately, that's basically what has made it work"(Protege 4).

First order concept 2.2.7: Feedback

Feedback was considered as a critical aspect of an effective relationship. Two-way continuous feedback facilitates learning and growth in the relationship; this was expressed by one mentor, "one of the things in mentorship is the engagement, the ability and maturity for both parties to actually get feedback and sometimes it is not very good feedback or sometimes it cuts a little bit, but even the mentee can actually give feedback

to the mentor" (Mentor 7). They further stated that the feedback should be both ways, and the protege must be open to provide feedback also. They demonstrated that this might be difficult especially if the mentor is a very senior individual by stating, "The other one is solicited feedback from the mentor; be open, do not be[…] And I talked about feedback, the one thing I found some time with mentees is they get very overwhelmed, especially if your mentor is a very senior person, and sometimes you do not have the courage to ask questions you know and sometimes to push back, and to give your mentor the feedback" (Mentor 7).

First order concept 2.2.8: Mentor availability

Additional factors mentioned that create an effective mentorship were regarding the frequency of contact and the mentor's availability to the protege. Protege stated that the frequency of the meetings was related to the need. Some protege said the meeting frequency was every week, "We would have weekly meetings, where we would go and sit for coffee, and I will engage with him" (Protege 2). For others, it was more ad hock meeting like for this protege who said, "So from that, I wouldn't say there were weekly meetings or what, but we would have regular catch-up sessions" (Protege 4). Regardless of the meeting frequency, protege stated it was important that the mentor is available when they need them; this protege said, "Without somebody giving you their time, it is impossible to succeed, and time allocation or time consumption depends on the distance you are having to travel to get to the goal. So, with somebody else, it is a few weeks; with other people, it is a few years" (Mentor 8).

And one protege captured it by saying, "So, I think the openness that it is based on friendship, mutual benefit as well as on trust is what makes it sustainable and also accessibility, you know? There is no long story of "ooooh" I have never even met one of […] PA's, you know, and I think this is what works; I do not want to feel like I am begging for a meeting with some financier who is giving me a million dollars to give me some guidance because you will eventually tire. You will get tired, so the person must be reasonably accessible for the relationship to work" (Protege 7).

First order concept 2.2.9: Commitment to relationship and mentor training

Commitment to the mentorship is another crucial factor to consider for effective mentoring and successful outcomes, and it was recognised by this mentor: "First one is committed, there was commitment. There is no mentorship that is going to work if there is no commitment from the mentor as well as the mentee" (Mentor 7). Although commitment can be challenging for formal mentorship where the mentor is assigned and did not volunteer for mentoring a protege shared their views by saying, "if we want to make the formal mentorship work, rather get people to volunteer for these things instead of assigning them to specific people and making them do it because they have to be measured on them" (Protege 3). On the other hand, this mentor raised the challenge of mentors who volunteer as they may not have the required capabilities and skills to facilitate effective mentorship, "Yeah. One thing that I have been critical of in most corporate settings is mentoring is left to the willing rather than the able. People will volunteer to want to be a mentor because either they have some form of altruistic "I'm giving back" agenda, or they just want to be popular. I do not know. But the ability to mentor has never been a criteria for people to become mentors, even in formalised programs. And that is something that I think can be improved" (Mentor 4). This links in with the concept of training for mentors, which was introduced by other participants as a mechanism for increasing mentor commitment and effectiveness, "I had to go through some formal training just to understand what are the mentor criteria, what are my roles that I have, and after having gone through the sessions finally I agreed to become a mentor within the organisation" (Mentor 1).

Mentor capabilities are often not assessed when setting up programs, the assumption is that people who are senior are capable of being good mentor. However, this is not the case as high quality mentoring requires specific skills that might have to be learnt. This mentor expressed the essential need that the mentoring capabilities be assessed, which he stated as a deficiency in mentoring programs. "I think the requirements for what that mentoring capability is, I think is still too nebulous. I have not seen anything that really distils it. And I think it will be slightly nuanced, company by company. So, organisations would do well to invest in what is the capability required of a mentor at our organisation and define that. Then screen mentors before they just volunteer" (Mentor 4).

5.4.3 Aggregate theme 3: Women mentoring women

The aggregate theme of women mentoring women was constructed with two second order themes of enablers and inhibitors of women mentoring women. Due to the inductive nature of this analysis, this aggregate theme emerged as participants shared their experiences with cross-gender mentoring and provided intriguing insights.

5.4.3.1 The second order theme 3: The enablers and inhibitors to women mentoring women

Second order themes: The second order themes of enablers of women mentoring women consisted of three first order concepts: women require more psychological support, women seek to build lasting relationships, and women have multiple mentors in their careers. These elements emerged female were sharing their experience with mentoring women and therefore included in this category. Additionally, they highlight some aspects that either enhance or decrease the ability of female mentors to mentor other women (Table 10).

Table 10. Enablers of women mentoring women

First order concepts 3.1
1. Women require more psychological support.
2. Women seek to build lasting relationships.
3. Multiple Mentors

First order concept 3.1.1: Female protege require more psychological support

Most mentors mentioned that the female protege needed more psychological support than the male protege. They stated that in the mentoring more time was spent on the psychological functions rather than the instrumental functions of career support. In contrast, they said that in their experience with mentoring men, more time was focused on the instrumental function of career support. One mentor shared her experience where she offered support for confidence and building self-esteem as her female protege lacked in that area, "So you have to really work on building their confidence, helping them to get to know their strengths; they can be very harsh when self-critiquing, and you actually have to help them in that respect, for them to focus on their strength" (Mentor 8). Another mentor stated that the women she mentored had challenges in their career

that related to how they view themselves and she provided psychological support for them, "Whereas with females, I find that a lot of it has to do with the psychological support about how people view themselves, especially in the world of career" (Mentor 2). And another mentor supported this view by explaining women facing different gender-based challenges in the workplace that might decrease their confidence which males do not have to go through, "They require I would say a greater proportion of that psychological self-confidence support compared to the male, compared to most of the male mentees […] It is the broader life lessons because they have to go through multiple challenges, which many of the males do not have" (Mentor 3). In contrast males are more confident and will look to their mentor for skills development rather than psychological support. One mentor said, "So what I found is that with males, male mentees, it is more a case of they would like to get the skills, they are relatively confident about the softer skills and what they have to offer […] it makes more sense, so, therefore, it is building those skill" (Mentor 2).

First order concept 3.1.2: Females seek to build lasting relationships

In discussing the experience in mentoring across the genders, the mentors further stated that males tended to enter a mentoring relationship with a specific goal in mind and the females are more likely to want to build a long-lasting relationship. The communal approach from the female protege was contrasted with the agentic approach from the male protege, "I think it is interesting because my male mentor, mentee, is more interested in how he can benefit from my relationship" (Protege 6). And finally, the idea that men were more transactional in their approach, but females wanted to build lasting relationships was recognised. This is further supported by the finding that the female protege in this cohort had mentoring relationships that spanned decades, "So one big difference that I have seen in my protege is male protege seem to think of it as a relationship to an end. They want a specific outcome. I am engaging with you as a mentor so that I can get promoted to do this next job, and then the relationship is over, whereas my female protege tended to focus more on the psychological dynamic" (Mentor 4). To support the concept, another mentor stated, "I am in a position where I accept that I am in a male-dominated world. Men would come to get something from me, in general, even those that I do not mentor. But women will come to build something" (Mentor 5).

First order concept 3.1.3: Multiple mentors

Women have multiple mentors to assist them throughout their career journey. This could be multiple people that they approach for support in their careers and lives. This mentoring by committee serves to ensure that women can be exposed to different types of mentoring. This could be a formal mentorship they are engaged with at work and informal mentorships that that may have from elsewhere.

Additionally, linked to the earlier point that women enter mentorships to build relationships, they do not discard their mentor but transition them into friends. They said that they have more than one mentor because as they move through their lives, they have accumulated different mentors. "There have always been there as sort of like mentors and guides in my life where if I had to make a big career change or needed consulting on something, they would always be there. There is like a group of three people that I always go to and ask for advice and guidance on how to approach things" (Protege 4).

The second supported this by saying, "When I moved into […] there were two people who had quite an impact on my career, so I had quite a lot of interest in my career when I was there, and it is as a result of them that I ended up in other places. The one I ended up in a role that he was in, and it was not for him; he thought it was for me, and he told his boss, 'This is not for me, but I know a perfect candidate for you" (Mentor 6). The mentorship role is vast including coaching, friendship, sponsorship, and role modelling. It might be challenging to acquire all these functions from one individual, therefore women have multiple mentors so that they cover all the mentoring functions "You know, maybe I would like to say all of them, and I think it comes to the point of why it is important to have multiple mentors, because each of them obviously has a role" (Protege 8).

Finally, the multiple mentors reflect the changing needs the women have as they move through their careers, which might require a mentor with a different skill set. Unlike the male counterparts the women will retain the previous mentors as they acquire new ones resulting in multiple mentors, "I had probably eight or ten mentors, you graduate through, and you keep in touch with different people, but as you move through your career, you realise that okay, probably I need new skill sets or new type of understanding of a

particular thing. So, you pick up new mentors. So, this is a dynamic process linked to the personal development of any person" (Mentor 3).

The second-order theme of inhibitors of women mentoring women had four first order concepts, namely matching should not be done by gender, queen bee syndrome, women are do not want same-gender mentoring and mentoring is not a band-aid for poor diversity in an organisation (Table 11).

Table 11. Inhibitors of women mentoring women

First order concepts 3.2
1. Matching should not be done by gender
2. Queen bee syndrome
3. Females do not want same-gender mentoring
4. Mentoring is not a band-aid for poor diversity in an organisation

First order concept 3.2.1: Not matching by gender

The study found that participants do not want to be matched by gender. Because firstly the protege do not see the benefit of same gender mentoring, and secondly all participants believe that the cross-gender mentoring was effectively fulfilling all the mentoring functions. The participants expressed strongly that mentors and protege should not be matched on gender but rather on other factors like personality or the experience the protege is seeking. They rejected the notion that females needed female mentors to advance their careers. Additionally, the protege did not use gender as a criteria for choosing mentors, "So with my current mentor, I think if I compare my relationship with him to the others that I have had in terms of female mentorship, I honestly think there is space for whether you are being mentored by a female or whether you are being mentored by a male. But for me, having that male perspective, I do not really think I have actually even considered it as a male-female thing" (Protege 4). Further emphasis was put on not matching by surface level similarities like gender by sharing that women need different perspectives in their career and that might include a male perspective at certain points, "I would say I would not just put it down to the gender; the fact is that as human beings, we are at different stages of our professional and personal stage of growth, and we would need differently" (Mentor 7). A male mentor

gave a perspective from his experience of being drawn to female mentors by saying, "Look, I think first and foremost I look at mentorship as a blank page, where two individuals have decided to paint their colours, and they paint their colours based on the partnership and the relationship. It does not matter whether this individual is a female or a male. There has to be a partnership; that agreement can be between a female and a male, a male and a male, or a female and a female. Because here is the thing, I have some of the people in my life who I have admired so much and have mentored me, and they are actually female" (Mentor 7). The participants linked this to empathy and the ability for males to put themselves in the female protege shoes as support for gender matching not being essential, "Can a man put himself in the shoes of a female employee that is facing all of these additional challenges? I think so, yes. I do not agree that you cannot mentor on those specific themes unless you have lived it" (Mentor 4).

Although this finding was nuanced as participants in male dominated industries such as mining still appreciated the importance of having female role models for other women. It did not come out clearly whether they appreciate the role modelling function only without the complete mentoring. Some participants suggested that in male-dominated industries, women must have other female role models and mentors.

One mentor said," Whereas females actually, I think, look at a female mentor more as a role model, especially if you unpack and you connect on these elements, and they see that you know what, it's not only my experience but this woman in this space, she understands" (Mentor 2). Another mentor supported the idea that in male dominated industries it is important for the young women who are just getting started to see someone who has been able to overcome the challenges, "So, when you talk about, specifically when you are talking to the female mentees, there is that particular element always there's that element of doubt that am I going to make it here? Am I in the wrong place? Quite a lot of them would have doubts about that okay, is these people say that all jobs are equal, but are these the jobs which are meant for females? There will be challenges because you join as youngsters and then at a certain stage that you must become a mother, and how that is going to affect their career. Some of these issues never affect any of the males" (Mentor 3).

Another male mentor agreed with the view, and they added another element of the cultural context and how that can show up in the workplace by saying, "Or even how do they, you know in the South African context any young girl growing up in South Africa growing up in that patriarchal culture now coming to the workplace where you have got people much older than you, and you must lead them. How do you manage that intricacy? Specifically, because of the gender, you get it less from the males, much more from the females" (Mentor 3).

First order concept 3.2.2: Queen bee syndrome

Another finding introduced was the concept of the queen bee syndrome. The queen bee was seen as an inhibitor of women mentoring women. The queen bee adopts masculine traits and distance themselves from other women. She expressed that these women were able to attain success in their careers by working hard. The implication was that they were not going to make things easy for other women by assisting them. One mentor said, "I was in a conversation with women who said they hated reporting to women. And the woman said that often when women get to a certain position or rank in the hierarchy, they become these queen bees. And then they almost become unwomanly. The trends that you would identify with a female, the caring part etc., where they feel that they have been there. They got there. They reached that. They worked hard, and therefore they need to keep that almost like a dominant male type of idea. And they actually put other women down" (Mentor 2).

The other female mentor mentioned that she was tougher on the females in her team because she wanted to push them harder to succeed in a male-dominated industry. She was demonstrating queen bee syndrome traits, because she was not treating women the same as the men in her team but she was tougher on them, "So with the females in my team, I think I am tougher. I think tougher with the females in my team, and they say this to me, actually. I want them to be successful; I want them to get over themselves, I want them to get out of the pity party rut that they get into often; they feel sorry for themselves for various reasons" (Mentor 6). Another factor inhibiting women from mentoring women in this study was the perception that there are limited seats at the table for women; therefore, women have to compete with each other. The protege said that she does not have any female mentors, "I think the female mentorships are outside

of the competitive part, but I think we are all trying to find a seat at the table and there is only, so far for me, my experience a female mentor would not have been able to take me, right because they are also trying to find a seat at their own table" (Protege 8).

Although the study did find that some women to seek to mentor other way and grow the next generation of women leaders. One female mentor who mentors women in the male-dominated mining industry said that her reason for mentoring was supporting other women in their growth, "At first, it was about women and maybe in everything that they desired or wanted or aspired to be. For me, it was – understand in mining, we do not necessarily have to fight for everything. There are people like me that will support you" (Mentor 5).

First order concept 3.2.3: Women do not want to be mentored by women

The study found that women surprisingly do not want to be mentored by other women. In addition to the factors identified above, which are not matching by gender, cross-gender mentorship's ability to deliver outcomes and the queen bee syndrome prevent women from accessing mentoring from other women. Women stated that they did not want to be mentored by other women. "Personally, I don't think women necessarily want to be mentored by women. I think they want to be understood by a woman but not necessarily. I don't always think that, and in my particular experience with being mentored by a man, I never found that he didn't, that he discounted the other roles that I played in my life" (Protege 6). However, the experiences of women that other women mentored were found in the study. The outcomes of the experiences varied, some were negative experiences and others were positive experiences. A protege shared a positive experience of been involved in a women mentoring women program. "Women of colour. So ja, she is of Asian background, and so I think that was probably the method to that pairing maybe, I think that was the commonality […] that 'look if we were to have a successful mentoring relationship, we have to talk about the fact that you and I are women of colour navigating this environment, and these are the challenges I have gone through, these are the successes, this is how I have navigated that" (Protege 8).

<u>First order concept 3.2.4: Mentoring is not a band-aid for poor diversity in an organisation</u>

The study found that mentoring and other initiatives supporting diversity and inclusion must be instituted. By itself, mentoring is inadequate to address the challenges that women face in advancing their careers. A male mentor in Human resources offered a view around mentoring programs that have been set up, for example, specifically for women or women of colour, saying that organisations should strive more to create inclusivity and diversity. He stated that he thought that if organisations did that effectively, they would not need to use these mentoring programs as a "band-aid" for poor inclusion and diversity. He said, "Where my head is at is that to create an environment where people break beyond, I mentor people who are like me, you need to create a culture and a climate of inclusivity. And my view is that comes first before the mentoring will follow" (Mentor 4). He added, "My view would be that organisation hasn't focused on fostering an inclusive environment and has tried to Band-Aid that with a mentoring program" (Mentor 4).

The study found that caution must be applied not to exacerbate the challenges women face through gender bias and stereotyping when males mentor women. A protege added that it was important that gender is not over-emphasised when males mentor females; she said, "I think that's something quite important, right? For any male mentor, if you're going to take up a female mentee, treat them like the professional or the person that they are, not through a gender lens, obviously appreciating all that comes with being a female in today's lives, because when you start looking at someone through a gender lens, you can become like, making them feel like they are not as good as a male? imposter syndrome, I guess that's something we have to be careful of" (Protege 7).

5.5 Research question 2: What are the benefits of mentoring for protege?

The aim of research question 2 was to understand what the protege have benefited in the cross-gender mentoring relationships. This question was asked after the protege responded to the first question about their mentoring experience. The protege was asked to detail their benefits from that mentoring experience. This was done to ensure that protege gave feedback based on their experience with mentoring. The researcher did not ask the participants if they received an introduction to the network or

sponsorship. They were asked to name the benefits they received. This was done to avoid leading the participants to a specific answer.

5.5.1 Aggregate theme 4: Benefits of mentoring to protege and mentor
This aggregate theme was created with two second order themes, benefit of mentoring to the protege and benefit of mentoring to the mentor.

The second order theme of benefits of mentoring to the protege has three first order concepts career functions that were provided, psychological functions that were provided and role modelling (Table 12).

Table 12. Benefits of mentoring for the protege

First order concepts 4.1
1. Career functions: Introduced to network and sponsorship
2. Psychological support provided
3. Role modelling provided

First order concepts 4.1.1: Career functions

Introduction to network

Most participants responded that they had been introduced to the mentor's network during the mentoring. One protege stated, "Because he was not just a mentor, he was a mentor actively engaging and participating in making sure that I am a success in what I was doing. Where there was access, he created a platform for access" (Protege 2). Introduction to networks can give female protege access to the "boy's club" and access to information that they would not have had access to. This protege demonstrated this by providing an example of how their mentor created access for her: "I mean, he would call me in meetings that I had no place attending. Executive meetings and board meetings, and he would say no, do not worry, she is here to shadow. She is here to observe, so pretend she is not here he would say to the other board members. she is here to observe, and he did not ask for permission for me to be there" (Protege 5). A mentor also gave an example of how they introduced their protege to their network, one female mentor said, "I have the privilege of taking them to almost every meeting I go to but being in a male-dominated world [...]I'm very inclusive […] you must meet somebody

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at my level, above me, as long as I know that person - let us meet" (Mentor 5). Another mentor added that they introduce the protege to their network to assist where the mentor thinks they are not capable of helping; he said, "I think it is also critical in offering them your network as a leader within the organisation. Sometimes we enter these mentorships thinking that we are probably the best person to give them all the answers and help them with all the problems or challenges that they may face" (Mentor 1).

Sponsorship

Sponsorship was mentioned as an added benefit of mentoring; most participants gave examples of how their mentors have sponsored them in the relationships. The examples of sponsorship were mentioned spontaneously by the participants. Mentors also provided examples of how they sponsored their protege by recommending them for promotions. One mentor said, "So, I would also recommend in the industry, if you are looking for somebody and the first person who comes to my mind is my mentee, and I feel they are ready, they can do this. Sometimes they do not even have to be ready; you just know and understand the desire" (Mentor 5). A mentee demonstrated how mentors opened the door for them to get a job that was originally meant for the mentor. The mentor recommended her instead because he felt she would do much better at the role than him. She said, "I remember he called me up one day and is like ', Are you free? Can you drive to Pretoria?' And I drove to Pretoria, and he introduced me to his boss at the time, and he is like, 'I need you guys to chat' (laughs), and I ended up in this company" (Mentor 6).

In support of the sponsorship function being provided in mentorship, one protege gave an example of how the mentor advocated for them to be included in signature projects in the company, increasing their exposure and visibility, she said: "And also to advocate for me to be either participating in signature projects or you know referring me to others and making sure that my name or my self was visible where it mattered" (Protege 8). Another protege added that this sponsorship was a success in their mentorship. They said, "I think that was a success factor, in terms of the mentorship relationship, was the fact that he was very unapologetic about giving me the exposure and experience that would enable me to grow" (Protege 5). Finally, a mentor brought in the idea of mentors championing their protege in company talent reviews for companies with that system.

He stated that formal mentorship is one way to hold the mentors accountable for providing the sponsorship function to their protege. He shared, "Now, I have also believed very much in formal championing. So when talent reviews are done, a mentor is in the room, they need to champion the individual. Absolutely. So, I will go back to the point of if it is a formalised mentoring process and you are finding that there is mentoring but not championship or sponsorship" (Mentor 4).

Psychological support

The additional benefits protege introduced were related to the mentoring function psychological support that they received in the cross-gender mentoring relationship. The protege gave examples of the support and benefits they received, and the interviewer classified those into different categories. Protege mentioned how cross-gender mentorship increased their technical skills, leadership skills, people management skills, and confidence. A protege remarked, "Definitely psychological. If I had to weigh it I would say 70-30. So more soft skills, social skills, how I should act in the workplace, the level of confidence I should have" (Protege 1).

Several protege provided examples of how mentorship helped them increase resilience and grit, particularly in male-dominated industries and workplaces. A protege explained, "[…] Investment Holdings was the most difficult place I have ever worked for. And she supported me and got me through that, and as a result of that, which I did not realise at the time, I built huge resilience. I am so resilient; I do not get fazed by a lot in the world of business. Not a lot fazes me after that experience. And she supported me. She did not look to get rid of me – because I did not actually suit that culture, it was a very Afrikaans, male-dominated culture – she was Afrikaans, and she was struggling in that culture, okay" (Mentor 6). Another protege gave an example of how the mentor supported them in navigating challenges in the business - "And then there have been mentors to whom I do go and say, 'I'm struggling with 1/2/3 issue, I am struggling with navigating something at work, or I am struggling navigating a relationship either with my manager' and they have been able to share insights that help me approach whatever situation differently or better" (Protege 8). Another protege supported this through her example "he helped me to build grit, you know, he helped me to become less influenced

by the changing winds and the changing moods. He helped; he kept saying to me, "you have what it takes […] just continue to believe in yourself" (Protege 16).

First order concept 4.1.2: Role modelling

Role modelling functions as an essential aspect of mentoring, and women place importance on that function. Our study found that cross-gender mentoring was able to provide role modelling effectively. The protege's response to the enquiry of their male mentors could provide the role model function for them, and most of them agreed that their male mentors could provide the role model function for them. The male mentors were also asked if they could provide the role model function for their female protege; most agreed that they could provide the role model function. One protege proposed, "I do not think that looking for a role model requires a particular gender preference. It all boils down to what it is that you admire in that individual and those things are not gender specific" (Mentor 1). Another supported this by saying that role modelling is not gender dependent, "Gender lens, I think, will be the same; I opted to continue this relationship as I benefit a lot from watching him being a leader, so you know, I don't think it's got any gender lens to that. Moreover, one of the male mentors emphasised, "Now, in terms of the role modelling, I would similarly dispute very passionately that gender has an impact on the ability to role model because how I have kind of distilled the role modelling in a mentorship relationship is through the sharing of examples and stories of when I was in this situation, this is how I handled it. Here are some thoughts. Now that is gender agnostic. So, I would dispute very heavily that role modelling is connected to gender because in the world we work in today, very rarely will you be" (Mentor 4).

5.6 Research question 3: How does mentoring benefit the mentors?
The aim of research question 3 was to identify the benefits of mentoring for mentors. The question related to this allowed participants to verbalise what they considered the benefits of mentorship to be for mentors.

Second order theme of mentoring benefits the mentor we have five first order concepts, mentor satisfied with protege success, learning, expanding network, friendship, and increased promotions (Table 13).

Table 13. Benefits of mentoring for the mentor

First order concepts 4.2
1. Mentor satisfied to see protege succeed.
2. Mentor benefits by learning
3. Expanding mentor network with junior people
4. Protege offers mentor friendship
5. Increased promotions

First order concept 4.1.1: Satisfaction with protege success

Most of the participants stated the benefits of mentoring for the mentor as the satisfaction of seeing their protege succeed. The participants noted that this was the most common benefit for the mentor. It was also linked with the motivation for mentoring. One protege offered, "I think possibly one of the things would be him seeing the results of his work or seeing how far I've come in my career is definitely one of the things" (Protege 4). The mentors also identified this as one of the benefits of mentoring; one mentor commented, "because you are setting up that individual for success. That is also, for me, so satisfying, but I also develop along the way, so there is what I would call a mutual… I am looking for the right word, a mutual benefit" (Mentor 7). One mentor explained, "I actually feel a great sense of satisfaction in being able to do that where that individual today is in a position to pursue opportunities outside of the country or higher up in the organisation" (Mentor 1).

First order concept 4.2.2: Increased learning for the mentor

Many mentors said that learning was a significant benefit for the mentor; they explained that they learned a lot in the mentoring process. The learning included learning additional skills, understanding challenges at the junior levels of the organisations, and understanding how younger people think. Some mentors mentioned that in cross-culture and cross-gender mentoring relationships, there was an opportunity to learn about a different culture and better understand the challenges women face in the workplace. Learning about technology and the latest trends was mentioned as an additional benefit. One mentor pointed out, "I just learn so much. I am able to do my job so effectively; I

know so much because I learn from all these people all day long. I don't have to go and read ten books; I just have a conversation with two people, and it is like reading ten books. And I love learning, I love learning new things, and I learn, I learn about technical stuff at work because they are experts at certain things that I am not, and I learn" (Mentor 6). Another mentor mentioned, "Because then the relationship becomes a learning curve both ways. The mentor then learns, and the mentee also learns" (Mentor 8). A protege supported this view by adding that they think their mentor benefits from interacting with young people and viewing the world through their lens, "My mentor is much older than I am, and so I definitely think he benefits from experiencing or seeing life through a more youthful lens" (Protege 7).

Another mentor said that mentoring helps him stay in touch with the current knowledge as it has been many years since he graduated; he stated, "the second element is obviously there is, if I look, I graduated 25 years back, and then most of our mentees would be a lot younger, who have come out of the university a lot quicker. So, it helps you bridge the understanding gap, you know, as to what clicks with the younger generation and the things that get them moving. What are the things which are worrying them? And helps me because when I go back to the organisation, I fully understand that these might be the issues which might be grappling these guys at the workplace" (Mentor 3).

The idea is that mentoring can assist the mentor in developing more contextual intelligence by understanding the cultural context. He explained, "So, it is that better understanding also helps you specifically, if you ask me, it has helped me, me growing up in India, and now making a career out of South Africa to better understand the culture, the cultural context, many times you do not understand the cultural context at the workplace. Only when you are getting into these informal relationships. That is where you understand the real cultural context of a particular country" (Mentor 3).

One mentor stated that he had benefited from his protege a lot after they had left the company and were working in other companies or industries. He stated that in that case, they would discuss challenges that they were facing that he had not encountered before in his environment. "I would say that I gain quite a lot from informal, I would say, outside workplace mentors. Because what happens is every now and then, it throws you new

challenges, and you come to know about new complex situations which you may not face at the workplace. So certainly, challenges even some of the views I may have forced me to think in very different ways, or just forces you to think that okay, what would you do in a situation like that?" (Mentor 3).

And a final benefit mentioned for male mentors with female protege was the ability to understand the challenges women face in the industry; he said, "Maybe I am male, and you are female. It helps me understand that side of you to say how do females actually perform? What are some of the things, the barriers that affect them in their performance and so forth? So, it helps me get to know you on that level and get to understand some of the challenges" (Protege 3).

First order concept 4.2.3: Expanding network

An additional benefit of mentoring for the mentor was the ability to expand their network. They mentioned that the more people they mentor and develop into different roles in different companies, their network grows. One mentor declared, "I gained a resource in them as they scaled in their careers. Many of them I cannot afford their services now, and they are 'there' as and when needed. So, I gained industry allies" (Mentor 8). She continued to add, "Oh ja, and another very important thing is it has also enlarged my network, with them going into the different industries it has also given me exposure into those industries which has given me access into those networks" (Mentor 8).

First order concept 4.2.4: Protege offers mentor friendship

A protege added that they offer the mentor friendship and an opportunity to let their guard down. She shared that her relationship with her mentor has transitioned into a friendship where they support each other through challenges in the workplace. She related, "Because as leaders, I know for myself, when I was in local government I could not be seen as tired, I could not be seen as weak or as having had a heavy week because there was so much riding on being young, black, and a leader in a politically infused space with no political backing. So, you had to have a certain facade that had to be kept at all times, regardless of how you felt as a human being. So, I think for him as well, probably in his first few months, or few years in his new role, he needed someone

to say, I am tired, I really do not want to be in this space right now" (Protege 2). She also added and supported what had been stated above that the protege helps the mentor understand what is going on in the organisation and seek advice from the Protege. She expressed, "And I think that also he thought, this is a relatable person who I can ask a few things because he would ask, how do you think I must engage the employees in this week? What do you think would make these guys happy" (Protege 2)?

First order concept 3.4.5: Increased promotion for mentor

A benefit of formal mentorship is that it can result in promotions for the mentors if their protege is performing well. Mentoring and growing talent might be linked to the mentor's performance goals in an organisation. Therefore, their mentoring directly impacts their goal assessment, remuneration, and career progression. This might also explain the preference for formal mentoring by mentors. One mentor affirmed, "So, there will be support and structure into it that sometimes the more your mentees get the promotion it reflects on you, and you can also get an opportunity" (Mentor 5).

In conclusion based on findings of this study four aggregate dimensions were created formality of mentorship, the relational quality of cross gender mentorship, women mentoring other women and the benefits of mentoring for the protege and mentor. The findings identified several factors that impact the relationship dynamics of cross-gender mentoring and the benefits for both mentor and protege.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the insights discovered through the interviews will be discussed, compared, and contrasted with the findings presented in the literature review in Chapter 2. The discussion of the results will contribute to answering the research questions presented in Chapter 3. The findings of this research will shed light on the benefits and dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relationships.

6.2 Research question 1

Research question 1: What are the dynamics of cross-gender mentoring relations?

Research question 1 sought to understand the dynamics of the relationship between mentors and protege within cross-gender mentorship based on their experiences. Without a deep understanding of the dynamics, it is difficult to determine what can be improved to achieve the benefits (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019).

Three aggregate themes emerged in answering this question, further illustrating the complex nature of mentorship relationships. The aggregate themes were the formality of mentoring, the enablers, and inhibitors of cross-gender mentorship, and women mentoring women.

6.2.1 Aggregate theme 1: Formality of mentorship

There was a clear preference for informal mentoring relationships for both mentors and protege. The preference for informal mentorship was because when two parties entered the relationship voluntarily their motivation was that they perceived that they will be able to extract value from the relationship. The mentor identifies the protege as talented and wants to see them reach their full potential. The mentor might also be motivated by a desire to grow the next generation of leaders. Another reason for the preference for informal mentorship was that the mentor and the protege choose each other. Studies have shown that the mentor and protege choose each other based on the perceiving similarity between them. Mentors also choose protege who remind them of their younger selves and protege chose mentors who represent the ideal that they are aiming toward (Deng et al., 2022). This choice plays a critical role in the development of mentorship relationships. It accelerates the creation of trust and thus in formal mentorship, this absence of choice has a negative impact on the development of the relationship (Allen

et al., 2006). The motivation for mentoring was an additional factor in the participant's preference for informal mentorship. Mentors stated that the reason for mentoring was a sense of purpose and identifying potential in the protege. This finding is congruent with findings of another study conducted looking at the mentor's motives for mentoring and found that improving conditions for others was one of the motives for mentoring (Baugh, 2021).

The last factor that was identified as influencing the preference for informal mentorship is the length of the relationship and its suitability to support long-term career objectives. The protege stated that they had been with the mentors for many years. This is supported by Kram's stages of mentorship which lasted over a longer period and evolved over the years (Kram, 1983). This is also the challenge for formal mentorship because formal mentorship is over six months to a year (Ivey & Dupré, 2020). In contrast, the study found that the disadvantages of informal mentorship were the lack of structure and definition which were strengths of formal mentorship.

Most of the proteges in the informal mentorship stated that the relationship with the mentor was not defined. This lack of definition may affect the outcomes because it is difficult to have clear goals and objectives in the absence of a definition. This is supported by evidence showing that women perceived a mentoring relationship where one does not exist. Women would perceive a senior individual who performed certain functions as a mentor, and that same senior individual would not perceive them as a protege. The implication is that the women would not receive important mentoring functions such as protection, access to networks and sponsorship (Welsh & Diehn, 2018). This is mitigated in formal mentorship as the relationship is clearly defined therefore aligning expectations between mentor and protege.

To conclude, there was a clear preference for informal mentorship by the mentors and protege, thus the formal mentorship that is set up by the company should ensure that the motivation for mentoring is a sense of purpose and growing talent rather than ticking the box. There should be an opportunity for mentors and protege to choose each other and to support long-term career growth and shatter the glass ceiling the length of formal mentorships should be increased to longer than a year.

However, although male mentors preferred informal mentoring, they are the ones who expressed the benefits of formal mentorship. The study found that the advantages of formal mentorship were the clear structure and objectives, the support from the company of the mentorship and the possibility to access more mentors through virtual mentorship programs. The preference of formal mentoring by mentors in cross gender mentorship is aligned literature demonstrating that male mentors prefer the formal company mentoring structure as they perceive that it decreases the likelihood of false sexual harassment claims (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).In the design of formal mentorship, the company usually states the frequency and the length of the engagement between the two parties. This has a positive impact on mentoring outcomes as the frequency of engagements has been shown to be correlated with mentoring outcomes of career support and psychological support (Eby et al., 2013). Proteges in formal mentoring programs with frequent interaction with mentor were more satisfied with the mentoring and reported more psychological support (Allen et al., 2006).

This contrasts with informal mentorship, where the lack of structure might result in infrequent interactions. The support from the company can increase the commitment from both parties because this mentorship could be part of both the protege and mentor performance goals, resulting in a benefit for them both if the mentorship is shown to have an impact. This finding is confirmed in literature, mentors and proteges were more committed to the company and had stronger bonds with the company (Ghosh & Reio, 2013).

Virtual mentoring was an exciting finding in this study. There were differing views on its effectiveness; some proteges who experienced it found it to have limited effectiveness. They expressed that it was difficult for them to receive the role modelling function in this setting. Another protege reported a negative virtual mentoring experience with a mentor from a different culture in a different country. This protege did not attribute their negative mentoring experience to the mentoring being virtual, but attributed it to gender bias and cultural mismatch. Two mentors reported that they had a great experience with virtual mentoring.

These findings are not surprising as the literature stated that it is hard to establish trust in virtual mentoring and trust is one of the most critical factors of an effective mentorship

(Lavin Colky & Young, 2006). Virtual mentoring can be effective and offers several advantages, such as access to a bigger mentor pool and cross-cultural learning. Organisations that are geographically dispersed use virtual mentoring as a tool for talent management. Evans (2018) found in a study investigating trust in a formal virtual mentorship program that it was possible to establish trust. They said that trust is built on the perception of similarity, as people tend to trust people who are like them. The fact that the mentor and protege were in the same company was an accelerator of trust building. The mentor and protege perceive that working in a company with the same culture, they have an affinity and are more likely to trust each other. Another factor that resulted in high trust was the training of both the mentor and protege on active listening, empathy, and connection strategies (Evans, 2018). More companies are geographically dispersed, and virtual mentoring will become more commonplace; therefore, our insights into the outcomes of virtual mentoring need to increase. The traditional mentoring theory might have limited applications in the virtual setting.

The disadvantages of formal mentorship in this research were based on firstly, the perception that formal mentorship might be done for the benefit of the organisation rather than the protege. Secondly, the lack of input into the matching process created an additional challenge, leading to a lack of buy-in from the protege and the perception that the relationship is forced. Thirdly the study found that the involvement of human resources negatively impacted the relationship in formal mentoring as it introduces a lack of trust and an inability to form authentic relationships and a safe space. These findings are aligned with the literature showing a general preference for informal mentorship, although some results showed no difference (Baugh, 2021). Regarding the first disadvantage, it is true that formal mentorships are set up for the company's benefit. Companies set up these programs to develop and grow talent significantly growing diverse talent. Mentoring is also used to increase the company's performance; as the employees improve their skills, their performance increases. Additionally, mentoring increases engagement within the company and decreases turnover intentions (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019). Although the benefits for the company are a vital part of the formal mentorship program, the protege must perceive that their development is also a major reason the mentoring was set up. This can be achieved through protege involvement in the process of matching. Additionally, it is essential that the mentors

understand that they can learn and grow in mentoring junior colleagues; the two-way nature of the relationship should be emphasised. This will improve the mentor's commitment to the protege as they will understand that mentoring is a win-win situation.

The second disadvantage of lack of protege buy in due to the perception that they were not involved in the matching processes. This is important as it negatively impacts the relationship between the mentor and protege, in turn impacting the outcomes of mentoring where the mentoring functions do not occur. In certain situations, this can lead to a negative mentoring experience (Allen et al., 2006).

The third disadvantage found in our study of human resource's involvement having a negative impact on mentoring is essential for formal mentorship, and it is also related to the protege perception of the motivation for the mentoring. The results of our study show that the protege is not entirely authentic and does not fully disclose their challenges if they think that the discussions in the mentorship will be discussed with human resources. Additionally, the protege do not fully engage if they perceive that the objective of the mentoring is to shape them into a specific mould. This is supported by current literature attesting that confidentiality is critical to building trust, which is essential to effective mentorship. Thus, in setting up formal mentorship companies must ensure that the mentor and protege understand that the discussions in the mentoring sessions should be bound by confidentiality (Ragins, 2016).

Multiple studies show that protege receive better outcomes for career and psychological functions in informal mentoring compared to formal mentoring. However, Scheepers and Mahlangu (2022) recently reported results from their study that showed a preference for formal mentoring by male mentors who were mentoring black females (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). The male mentors preferred formal mentoring because of the structure and their perceived lower risk of being accused of sexual harassment in a company-sponsored mentoring relationship. This is aligned with and supported by the findings in our study, which showed the clear structure as an advantage of formal mentoring. The conclusions of their research might be because their sample consisted of male mentors and did not have female protege and the sample in this research. There are pros and cons to the two forms of mentoring, and the protege's lack of buy-in has

been associated with the protege not being willing to learn or meet the objectives of the mentorship. This can often lead to negative mentoring experiences (Baugh, 2021).

In conclusion, there are pros and cons for both formal and informal mentoring and both mentoring relationships have their benefits in the appropriate setting. The findings in this study indicate a preference for informal mentoring because of the better outcomes which are related to how the mentor and the protege develop a high-quality relationship. Women should be involved in both formal and informal mentoring relationships to achieve the maximum benefit in growing their careers. The outcomes that can be derived from a mentoring relationship are related to the quality of the relationship rather than the mentoring being formal or informal. With the correct resources, organisations can set up formal mentoring relationships that are of high quality and can result in the same outcomes as informal mentorships.

The relationship dynamics of cross gender mentoring are the central aspect of this study therefore a conceptual framework (Figure 2) was created using the findings in the study to describe the aspects that impact the cross-gender mentoring relationship. This conceptual model was based on the model created by Scheepers and Mahlangu (2022), with some adjustments to represent our findings more accurately. The dynamics are impacted by the first aggregate theme formality of the mentoring program. The advantages of the formal and informal mentorship enhance the dynamics of the cross-gender mentorship represented by arrows towards the centre of the circle and a plus sign indicating a positive impact. The disadvantages of formal and informal mentorship decrease the quality of the cross-gender mentorship represented by an arrow pointing towards the circle with a minus sign representing the decrease.

6.2.2 Aggregate theme 2: Relational quality of cross-gender mentoring relationships
Cross-gender mentoring relationships face challenges, although they can also yield tremendous benefits for both the mentor and the protege. This study has uncovered a consistent theme which is that relationship quality determines the outcomes of mentoring rather than the composition of the mentor and protege. High-quality cross-gender mentoring relationships have better results than low-quality same-gender relationships.

The motivators and inhibitors of cross-gender mentoring was found while exploring the dynamics of cross-gender mentorship. Positive relational aspects emerged as enablers of effective mentoring in this study. Participants expressed positive relational elements such as trust, respect, empathy, a safe space, and vulnerability as important. This finding is in keeping with the concept of relational mentoring, which posits that the quality of the relationship between the mentor and protege determines the mentoring outcomes. Although traditionally mentorship relationships are viewed as hierarchal, transactional, and one-way relationships. Relational mentoring argues that for the mentoring outcomes to occur, a high-quality relationship with all the hallmarks of high quality should be present. Ragins (2016) states that the current literature does not emphasise enough the impact of the quality of relationships on the outcomes. Mentoring can be a transformational relationship with growth and learning. Ragins (2016) stated that trust in mentoring relationships develops over time, with each mentoring episode in a process where both parties conduct personal disclosures, sharing their vulnerabilities. Maintaining confidentiality will encourage the partners to disclose further, leading to an environment where they feel accepted and valued (Ragins, 2016). Consequently, the increased trust leads to increased authenticity in the mentoring relationship; authenticity is the ability to bring our whole selves into the relationship (Ragins, 2016). Being authentic was a challenge in formal mentoring relationships for various reasons, including a lack of chemistry between the parties. Literature shows that the development of trust is linked to perceived similarity, meaning people trust those they perceive to be like them. Perceived similarity does not have to be an actual similarity. This has implications for cross-gender mentoring as it might take longer for trust to develop between males and females as they perceive themselves to be different (Ragins, 2016).

Creating a safe space was a finding linked to trust and experiencing psychological safety. Protege reported that safe space was created that allowed them to share their challenges with their mentors. This is a positive outcome of mentoring; one of the psychological functions is acceptance and counselling. Literature states that creating a safe space enhances feelings of being accepted and validates the protege, increasing the protege's self-efficacy and job performance (Ragins, 2016). Mentors and protege can be trained in formal programs to create a safe space by increasing their active and empathetic listening and improving communication skills. Both parties must develop

empathy and perspective-taking. Baugh introduces the idea of perspective taking as more than just the mentor putting themselves in the protege's shoes or vice versa but thinking about how the protege feels rather than how they would feel if they were in the protege's shoes (Baugh, 2021).

Creating a safe space is essential in cross-gender mentorship; women experience stereotypes and discrimination in the workplace that make it difficult for them to develop a professional identity and show up authentically. Women are constantly balancing not being too feminine because that may limit their advancement into leadership roles and not being too masculine as they may face backlash for not conforming to gender roles. Additionally, women in male-dominated workplaces face the additional pressure of being in the spotlight because they are in the minority and face additional scrutiny. Safe mentoring relationships can offer women a space to be authentic and accepted. They can also learn coping strategies from their mentors (Ragins, 2016).

The two-way nature of successful mentorship in our study has far-reaching implications and can improve the mentoring outcomes of formal mentorship programs that companies invest in. The findings in our study indicates that both mentors and protege prefer a two-way relationship where there is mutual learning and mutual benefit. Our analysis also shows that formal mentoring is perceived as one-way. This is due to the hierarchal nature of the relationship, primarily for the benefit of the protege. Ragins (2016) highlighted that the traditional mentorship relationship approached mentorship as a teacher-student relationship where the mentor (the teacher) remains on a pedestal, knows everything, and has a specific lesson plan. And the protege's (student) role is to be obedient and loyal to the teacher. This approach has limitations as it keeps the mentor aloof and prevents the mentor and protege from forming close connections, creating a safe space of mutual learning and benefit (Ragins, 2016). Additionally, Scheepers and Mahlangu (2022) found in their study that there was a parental relationship between the male mentors and the protege. In this study, male mentors reported that female protege did not drive the relationship and lacked confidence. They argue that this parental relationship has a negative consequence, reinforcing the power differentials between male mentors and female protege (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). A fundamental mindset shift is required to change these one-way hierarchal low-quality mentorship relationships into two-way power-sharing high-quality relationships. The

change must come from the mentor and the protege; the mentor needs to come down from the pedestal and view the protege as someone with expertise and knowledge and someone whom the mentors can learn from. The protege needs to take responsibility and drive the relationship. Companies can include as part of the setting up the formal mentorship training for both the mentor and the protege on these relational aspects and equip them with tools to increase the chances of the mentoring relationship being high quality and resulting in exceptional mentoring outcomes (Ragins, 2016; Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

Giving and receiving honest feedback was an important finding in the study. Receiving feedback is one of the components of mentoring functioning. This finding is supported by Clutterbuck (2005), the ability to receive and provide feedback is a difficult skill to master. Women generally receive less helpful feedback in the workplace. Mentoring relationships can create an opportunity for women to receive feedback that will help them improve their performance. The feedback had to be two-way, in keeping with the nature of the relationship. The protege should be able to give feedback to the mentor to aid the mentors learning (Clutterbuck, 2005).

The study results demonstrate that the protege must drive the mentoring relationship to be successful. This is supported by literature in a study that attempted to create a framework for protege competencies for a high-quality mentoring relationship. Protege drive, proactiveness, and initiative in setting up engagements were part of the required competencies (Clutterbuck, 2005). One of the themes that emerged in a study conducted with white male mentors who mentored black women was that the protege were not driving the mentoring relationships. This finding might be related to the parental and hierarchal nature of the mentoring relationships described in that setting (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Reducing the hierarchal nature of the mentoring relationship can also lead to increased protege pro-activeness.

The frequency of interaction is defined by either the number of interactions or the amount of time with the mentors per month. The protege expressed that the mentor's availability and accessibility to the protege was an enabler of an effective mentorship relationship. This is aligned with the literature Eby (2013), in their metanalysis, demonstrated that interaction frequency was found to be moderately correlated with protege perception of

career support, psychological support, and the quality of the relationship (Eby et al., 2013). Relationships take time to develop; therefore, the more frequently the interaction, the more opportunity for the protege and mentor to support each other (Eby et al., 2013). This is an advantage of formal mentorship, as interaction frequency is included in setting up mentorship.

Mentor competencies and commitment were additional enablers for effective mentoring. The study found that the mentor commitment was better in informal mentorship relationships, which is thought to be because in informal mentorships, the mentor chose to enter the mentoring and choose their protege. In formal mentorship, the commitment might be lacking because mentors must take on a protege as a requirement of their role and they might not see the potential in the protege assigned to them. Another factor is that mentorship is left to the willing and not the capable. In some companies, mentors and protege are thrown together without any prior training. Therefore, training is crucial to ensure that the mentors have the skills to mentor the protege effectively. This finding is supported in the literature as creating an effective mentor-protege relationship requires both to have skills. The mentor skills are to respond effectively to the protege's needs and to have an interest and commitment to developing others (Clutterbuck, 2005).

Sexual harassment, perceived or real, was the major deterrent for cross-gender mentoring relationships. The findings were on the male mentors and female protege sides. The male mentors were afraid of engagements with female protege outside working hours or in settings outside the office because they might be accused of sexual harassment. The female protege were equally fearful of those engagements because people within the organisation might perceive their relationship with their male mentor to be more than just business. This may limit the ability of the mentoring functions to be provided. Therefore, the study found that it is essential to have professional boundaries in cross-gender relationships; this is linked to the finding that although male mentors see the benefits of informal mentorship, they prefer formal mentorship. This finding aligns with the literature findings that perceived or actual sexual harassment is a deterrent for cross-gender mentorship (Baugh, 2021; Read et al., 2020). Scheepers and Mahlangu found a clear preference for formal mentorship for male mentors because the mentors perceive that the formal structure will protect them against false claims of sexual harassment during these regular interactions with female protege (Scheepers &

Mahlangu, 2022). Therefore professional boundaries are important in a mentoring relationship coupled with the establishment of trust and clear objectives of the mentoring.

The study results reported some negative cross-gender mentoring consequences, including gender bias and protege entitlement. Research confirms that gender bias can occur within mentoring relationships, especially if mentors do not have adequate competencies to be engaged in cross-gender mentoring or if they apply the traditional mentoring approach of a hierarchal one-way exchange with the protege. This can additionally have the negative impact of perpetuating gender stereotypes, holding back women instead of the intended consequence of advancing women. Scheepers and Mahlangu showed in a recent study that male mentors might have unconscious bias that is stereotyping their protege. Therefore, it is recommended that mentors increase their awareness of unconscious bias (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022).

Protege entitlement also emerged as a negative consequence of mentoring. This aligned with the finding in this recent study that protege might feel entitled to career acceleration. This can also negatively impact protege as their advancement within the company may be attributed to sponsorship and mentoring rather than their own abilities (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Legislation such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) and the Employment Equity (EE) Act of 1998 are in place to increase the number of previously disadvantaged individuals in companies. Therefore, mentored women might be perceived to advance because of legislative requirements rather than merit (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). Additionally, this finding is related to issues of organisational justice for the distribution of resources such as mentoring. Very little research has been done on the effect of mentoring on the unmentored. With organisations creating formal mentorship programs for marginalised individuals who have limited access to mentoring, the unmentored may perceive this to be an unfair advantage. The protege receive the benefits of mentoring and may have access to resources that the unmentored do not have. Therefore, this might worsen the protege entitlement and perception that their advancement was not based on merit. In conclusion, it is critical that as organisations set up formal mentorship programs, they ensure that employees have access fair access to the program (Ivey & Dupré, 2020).

In summary of aggregate theme 2, relational quality of cross gender mentorship has enablers and inhibitors. This is represented in Figure 2: The enablers are related to the quality of the relationship between the mentor and protege and this is represented by an arrow towards the circle and a plus sign. The enablers of a high-quality cross gender mentoring relationship are maintaining professional boundaries, clear objectives, protege drive, trust, mutual respect, empathy, two-way exchange, feedback, and creating of a safe. Mentor availability, commitment and mentor training were also enablers of a high-quality cross gender mentoring relationship. The quality of the cross-gender relationship is inhibited by the following aspects sexual harassment (real or perceived), gender or cultural bias and protege entitlement. The inhibitors are represented by an arrow towards the circle with a minus sign. The circular arrows between the inhibitors and the enablers were created to illustrate the relationship as the enablers can mitigate the inhibitors for example high trust, mutual respect and a safe space can mitigate the risk of sexual harassment (real or perceived).

6.2.3 Aggregate theme 3: Women mentoring women
The results in our study demonstrated participants' ambivalent attitude toward women mentoring other women. The proteges in the study reported that they did not have a desire to be mentored by other women and the men in the study declared that a man can provide the necessary mentoring functions for women. Additionally, the proteges stated their difficulties in obtaining women mentors in organisations due to the queen bee syndrome.

The above findings were supported by matching as an important theme. The study found that matching significantly affects the relationship and the mentoring outcomes. The participants agreed that matching should not be done on gender alone. The study found that where there was a negative mentoring experience, it was due to poor matching, either poor cultural or personality matching. This challenge is more pronounced in formal mentorships as the matching is usually done by a third party, typically human resources, which further introduces a negative dynamic in the relationship. These results corroborate other existing studies that have concluded that matching in formal mentorship should be conducted on deep-level similarities such as personality and personal values rather than surface-level similarities such as gender and race. Deng (2021) recently reviewed the evidence around matching and the results show an

inconsistent and weak effect on mentoring outcomes and surface-level similarities. This meta-analysis study by Eby (2013) further states that, surface-level similarities are more associated with psychological support rather than career support and role modelling. These findings support the findings in this study, where the participants emphasised that their male mentors were able to provide the role modelling function. In contrast, deep-level similarities such as personality show a strong and consistent association with positive mentoring outcomes (Deng et al., 2022; Eby et al., 2013). This matching of deep-level characteristics is critical in formal mentorship. It will increase mutual identification and similarity attraction because people have more positive relationships with people who are like them rather than those who are dissimilar. The personality trait most associated with effective mentoring relationships is openness to experiences, as these facilitate learning which is essential in mentoring (Menges, 2016). Hence these findings have a pertinent implication for human resource practitioners setting up formal mentorship programs, mainly because in some instances, when these programs are set up for marginalised individuals such as women and racial minorities, they might be set up on surface-level similarities.

The study found no need to match mentors and protege by gender. Additionally, female protege did not necessarily want to be mentored by other women; they found positive mentoring outcomes with the male mentors, including providing the role model function. The mentors and protege stated that a male could be a great mentor for a female, especially if they have empathy to understand the additional challenges women face. However, the female role model was still important, especially in male-dominated industries. This finding contradicts existing literature which states that women are in cross-gender mentoring relationships because of a lack of women at senior levels in organisations; however, these findings suggest that women are in cross-gender mentoring relationships because they prefer them. This finding should be interpreted with caution, bearing in mind that this study includes protege in cross-gender relationships. The findings might differ in a study focused on protege in same-gender relationships. These findings contradict the literature that women prefer to be mentored by other women due to identification and their perception that another woman will better understand the barriers they encounter in building their careers. Scholars and practitioners have emphasised the need to have women mentor other women. The

motivation for this is that this will offer younger women role models and assist them in feeling isolated in male-dominated industries (Read et al., 2020). Additionally, women whom other women mentor reported that they will also mentor other women; in doing so, a chain reaction of females mentoring other females can start in the next generation of female leaders (Scheepers et al., 2018). However, other studies have reported that protege in cross-gender mentoring preferred them (Blake-Beard et al., 2011). Considering all these findings gender of the mentor does not seem to impact the satisfaction and outcomes of the mentoring. This also supports the earlier discussion about not matching surface-level attributes but deep-level attributes for effective mentoring.

Moreover, the risk of mentoring has been hypothesised as being more significant for women than it is for men, although studies did not support this hypothesis. The hypothesis is that the risk for women to mentor other women was seen as forming "female power coalitions" and therefore stalling their advancement. Additionally, it was thought that a low number of women in senior positions might carry a high load of mentoring many junior women. This might result in senior women avoiding the mentoring burden and concentrating on their careers (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). This hypothesis was refuted as a study found that women's intentions to mentor were the same as the males, and they did not face any additional risk in mentoring other women (Ragins & Scandura, 1994).

The queen bee syndrome is another finding this research supported. The study found that women did not approach other females for mentoring because they perceived them as competition or because the senior women in the organisations were not supporting junior females. This is in keeping with current literature that the queen bee syndrome hurts gender diversity in organisations. The present study's findings suggest that it might also be limiting women's access to mentoring (Derks et al., 2016). The queen bee might also avoid mentoring other women because they fear being viewed as unfairly promoting other women (Read et al., 2020). It should be noted that existing literature does not show queen bee syndrome as a sign of hostility and competitiveness among women but as a consequence of gender discrimination. The queen bee syndrome exists in environments with high gender discrimination. The queen bee uses this to survive in this environment by adopting the characteristics of the dominant group to fit in as per the

social identity theory (Derks et al., 2016). Evidence supporting this is that queen bee syndrome or self-distancing does not only occur in women; it is seen commonly in groups negatively stereotyped and who find themselves among the dominant group or if they want to advance themselves. For example, this phenomenon has been seen in African American students in predominantly white universities, where they attempt to assimilate and distance themselves from their race by "acting white." Therefore, contrary to popular belief that queen bee syndrome is a sign of women's hostility and inability to work together and support each other, it is in fact, a survival technique for women against gender discrimination (Derks et al., 2016).

Additionally, the findings in the study show that women require and receive more psychological support. This was reported from both the mentor and protege perspectives. The mentors stated that they tended to provide more psychological support to female protege than male protege. The protege indicated that they received more psychological support in their mentoring relationships. The impact of gender on mentoring outcomes was introduced by Kram (1983) in her seminal work that showed that cross-gender mentoring relationships might result in lower mentoring outcomes due to the limited ability of the mentor and protege to form close relationships (Kram, 1983). However, the results were based on a small sample size from one company. Since then, results on the impact of gender on mentoring outcomes have been mixed. Studies that reported a gender difference tended to say that women received more psychological support and men received more career support. In contrast, some studies showed no difference in the mentoring outcomes based on gender. An essential factor to note is that the studies that showed a difference in the impact of gender tended to be qualitative, and the studies that showed no difference were quantitative. Fowler (2007) suggested that this difference might be due to the quantitative studies using measuring instruments that were designed from a sample that mainly had males. This instrument might be inadequate in detecting these gender differences (Fowler et al., 2007).Studies also report more psychological support when women are involved in a mentoring relationship, either as a mentor or a protege. This is thought to be because women generally are more communal and place a great emphasis on developing relationships and emotional support (Fowler et al., 2007).

Building from the above, the study found that the women proteges tended to value the relationship more than the male proteges; this was a finding based on feedback from both the male and female mentors. The women in mentoring put much emphasis on building more lasting relationships rather than transactional relationships. Women are more communal than men, and they are also expected to display more caring and nurturing behaviours than men. This is advantageous as it relates to relational mentoring, as relationships are more important to women (Ragins & Scandura, 1994).

The majority of proteges in this study had multiple mentors throughout their careers. This finding is aligned with the literature suggesting that people, not just women, should have multiple mentors because one's needs change throughout one's career, and different support is needed at different stages. Mentorship is also very broad, covering various functions such as career advancement, psychological support, and role modelling. It might be challenging to find one individual to fulfil all those functions for some people. Therefore, they could access that support through several different individuals; this is called mentorship by committee. Additionally, women might be involved in work-based formal mentorship, and to supplement that mentorship, they are encouraged to seek out informal mentors outside of work (Read et al., 2020). In conclusion, no additional benefit has been identified for same-gender mentoring relationships and therefore organisations should focus on deep-level similarities rather than surface-level similarities when setting up formal mentorship programs (Menges, 2016).

An additional theme was related to the fact that mentorship alone is limited in addressing the barriers women face in the workplace and breaking the glass ceiling. Mentorship cannot be used as a band-aid for discriminatory culture and practices in organisations. The mentorship programs must be accompanied by policy changes and the commitment of the company to improve diversity (Ganiyu et al., 2018). Formal mentoring programs instituted for women may provide the message that women are the problem and not biased practices in the workplace. This creates a paradox because mentoring is a powerful tool for advancing the career of women but at the same time, it might send the message that women need to be fixed for them to become desired leaders (Dashper, 2019).

Finally, the data above may be interpreted as concluding that organisations should not be setting up women only mentoring programs. However, Dashper (2019) reminded us that gender fatigue and gender neutrality is an important factor in organisations. Gender fatigue is a situation where individuals admit that gender discrimination exits but deny that they have experienced it. Gender neutrality is the attitude that gender discrimination is a factor of the past and has been addressed. Therefore, people believe that organisations are gender blind and gender neutral resulting in eliminating the need for women only based mentoring programs (Dashper, 2019).

The aggregate theme 3 of women mentoring women emerged from our data and we have included it in the conceptual framework (Figure 2) and this is our study's contribution to the conceptual framework. Our interpretation of this aggregate theme is that is has a two-way relationship with cross gender mentoring and is represented by two-way arrow. The inhibitors of women mentoring women such as no need to match by gender and queen bee syndrome are related to the emergence of cross gender mentoring. This means although a factor might be an inhibitor for women mentoring women, it is an enablers for cross gender mentoring. The enablers of women mentoring women such as women offering and requiring more psychological support and women more likely to build lasting relationship can decrease cross gender mentoring relationships this is represented by a two-way arrow.

6.2 Research question 2

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of mentoring for protege in cross-gender mentoring relationships?

Research question number 2 was asked to collect insights from the protege on the benefits they received from cross-gender mentoring. This forms part of aggregate theme 4, the benefits of mentoring to the protege and mentor.

The protege reported benefiting by receiving career functions from the mentorship. The career functions included an introduction to the mentor's network and sponsorship. The study also found that the provision of these career functions resulted in protege reporting a positive mentorship experience. In contrast, those who reported a negative mentorship experience also noted the absence of these career functions. Career function is associated with higher compensation and quicker promotions, with protege who receive

career functions earning more and getting quicker promotions than the unmentored (Baugh, 2021). Women who have male mentors earn 10% more than women without male mentors (Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022). The findings that the male mentors introduced the protege to their networks align with the literature. This is an important function because women are not progressing in their careers because they do not have access to the "old boys' clubs." Introduction to the network for protege decreases feelings of isolation, offers opportunities to collaborate with other colleagues, and can allow the protege access to helpful information that they would not have been able to access without the network (Ganiyu et al., 2018). The protege reported that they received sponsorship from the male mentors. Sponsorship is significant for the advancement of women's careers. Sponsorship can help women navigate barriers such as the glass ceiling and the "old boys' clubs." Sponsorship helps women navigate the glass ceiling by supporting them publicly for promotions; it can help access the "old boys' clubs" by the sponsor introducing women to the network (Scheepers et al., 2018). Most of the protege who reported sponsorship in this study were in informal mentorship. Sponsorship in formal mentorships is more challenging due to the requirement for publicly supporting the protege. In cross-gender mentorship, this might be interpreted to mean favouritism or that the relationship between the mentor and protege is improper(Scheepers et al., 2018). Therefore this study confirms that career function is provided in a cross-gender mentoring relationship.

An additional benefit that the protege received was psychological support which included supporting the protege in increasing their confidence and offering friendship. The psychological function of mentoring includes counselling and offering acceptance. These results are supported by literature demonstrating that psychological support occurs in cross-gender mentoring relationships. Psychological support was associated more with life-work balance and confidence than promotions (Baugh, 2021). The psychological function increases the proteges' self-efficacy, increasing work performance. The literature is mixed on whether male mentors provide less psychological support than female mentors, with some studies confirming the hypothesis and some showing no difference (Fowler et al., 2007). Although the meta-analysis by Eby found no association between gender and the provision of any mentoring functions including psychological function (Eby et al., 2013).

Role modelling was an additional benefit of cross-gender mentorship. The participants reported that the male mentor was able to serve as a role model for a female protege. This is consistent with existing literature that shows that role modelling is not gender specific; protege in cross-gender mentoring relationships also experience role modelling. This finding is linked to the fact that the mentorship function is weakly associated with surface-level similarities rather than deep-level similarities. This means that role modelling can occur in cross-gender mentoring if there is a deep similarity in personality, attitude, and values (Menges, 2016). Therefore the role modelling function can occur in cross-gender mentoring relationships.

Figure 2 represent this in the framework by arrows that point outward from the central quality of cross gender mentoring relationship towards the benefits representing an outcome for the protege. The higher the quality of the relationship, the more effective is the mentoring as demonstrated by the benefits.

6.3 Research question 3

Research question 3: What are the benefits of mentoring for mentors in cross-gender mentoring relationships?

Research question number 3 was asked to collect insights from the protege and mentors on the benefits that mentors received from cross-gender mentoring. The research question investigates the reciprocal nature of the mentorship relationship. This forms part of aggregate theme 4, the benefits of mentoring to the protege and mentor

The traditional theory posits that mentorship is a one-way relationship that benefits the protege. However, scholars have recently recognised mentorship as a relationship that can benefit both parties (Ragins, 2016). The benefits identified for the mentor in this study are the rewarding experience of the protege's success, mentor learning, mentor growing their network with junior colleagues, protege offering mentor friendship and getting promotions.

The mentor benefits by seeing the protege succeed in their career. This is linked with the motivation for mentoring, which sees potential in the protege. Mentors enter mentoring because they are to share their knowledge and leave a legacy. This finding is confirmed in the existing literature. Baugh (2021) stated that mentoring is a rewarding

experience for the mentor. Additionally, when the protege succeeds, it can lead to the mentor's success because he will be viewed as a talent grower. This is incredibly impactful in formal mentoring as this mentorship might be a component of the mentor's goals (Baugh, 2021).

Another benefit for the mentor that was identified was mentor learning. The mentors and protege stated that the mentor learned through the mentoring process. The learnings identified included learning about technology and how junior people in the organisation think. Cross-gender mentoring relationships allow the mentor to learn about the challenges of women in companies and understand diversity issues (Baugh, 2021). Mentor learning is enhanced when the mentor shifts their focus from the hierarchal one-way relationship to a two-way relationship (Ragins, 2016). The mentor also benefits by expanding their network with junior employees and gaining supporters in the organisations' junior levels. Our study found that the protege offered their mentors information about what was happening in the company, helping them keep their fingers on the pulse. One mentor mentioned that they would consult their protege if they had essential company issues to address to find out how the message was landing in the organisation. This is consistent with current literature stating that mentoring is a two-way path to grow the mentor's network (Baugh, 2021). Therefore, the benefit of learning for the mentor should be recognised and highlighted in mentor training to understand what they will be gaining in this arrangement.

Our study found that protege offer mentors friendship and support. The mentor can use the protege as a sounding board, and the relationship can offer both parties a safe space and opportunity to be vulnerable. The relational mentorship approach supports these findings as it states that in high-quality mentorship relationships, there is authenticity, mutual sharing, and trust (Ragins, 2016). The provision of friendship is recognised as something the mentor provides to the protege in a traditional mentorship relationship, but this provision of friendship can be two ways. The traditional mentorship theory recognises that the mentoring relationship transitions through phases to eventually the phase where the mentor and protege are friends (Kram, 1983; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). However, this does not imply that mentors and protege should engage in a relationship focused on friendship and spending time together without objectives. Mentorship is a professional relationship with clear goals and outcomes. Befriending the protege could

have the unintended consequences of making the mentor less effective, and without professional boundaries, it might lead to sexual attraction and sexual relationships between the mentor and protege in cross-gender relationships (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Therefore, providing friendship in mentoring can go both ways, but professional boundaries should be maintained to avoid making the mentorship ineffective or creating a negative mentoring experience.

Increased promotions for the mentor were an additional finding in this study, keeping with the literature. Although most studies investigating benefits for mentors have concentrated on the subjective benefits, there have been studies that investigated objective benefits. One study found that mentoring was associated with higher salaries for mentors and a higher number of promotions (Baugh, 2021).

Figure 2 represents this in the framework by arrows that point outward from the central quality of cross gender mentoring relationship towards the benefits representing an outcome for the mentor. The higher the quality of the relationship, the more effective is the mentoring as demonstrated by the benefits.

In conclusion the findings of this study have shown that cross gender mentoring can be effective in providing career, psychological and role modelling for the proteges ultimately resulting in the advancement in organisations. Several factors were identified that enable and inhibit the relationship dynamics in cross-gender mentoring. The formality of mentoring affects the relationship dynamics with the informal mentorship being preferred because the mentor and protege voluntarily enter the relationship, they have a choice on the mentor or protege and the relationship is more suited to support long term career growth for women. The formal mentoring is preferred by mentors because of the clear structure and outcomes which also perceived to decrease the risk of sexual harassment (real or perceived). Enablers of the cross-gender mentoring are related to how the mentor and protege relate through the sharing of power, creation of trust and safe space of mutual respect and two-way exchange. The main inhibitors of the cross-gender mentoring is sexual harassment (real or perceived), gender bias, cultural mismatch and protege entitlement. Additional findings are that women do not necessarily want to be mentored by other women and both the mentor and protege benefit from high quality cross gender mentoring.
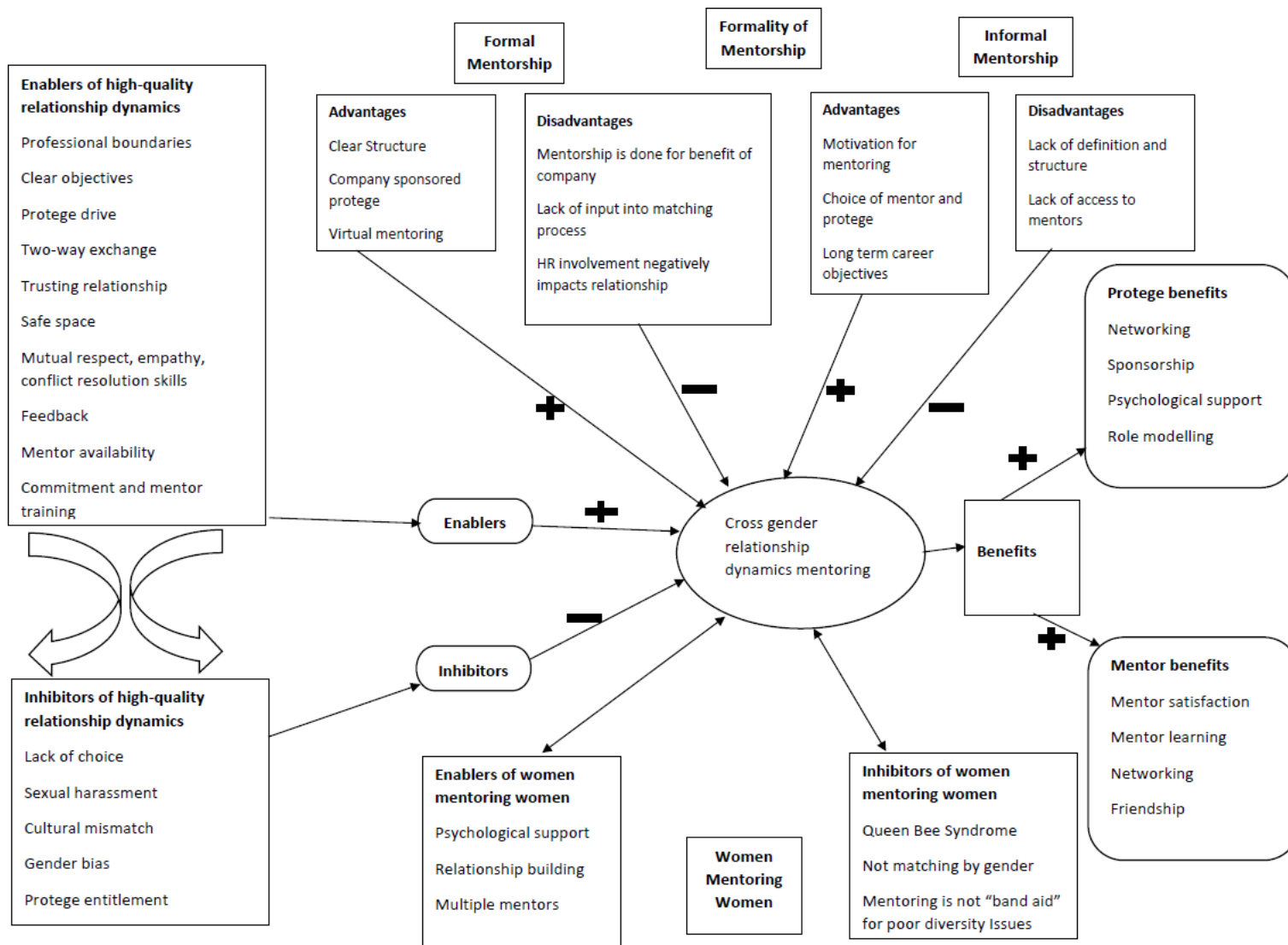
Enablers of high-quality relationship dynamics

Professional boundaries

Clear objectives

Protege drive

Two-way exchange

Trusting relationship

Safe space

Mutual respect, empathy, conflict resolution skills

Feedback

Mentor availability

Commitment and mentor training

Inhibitors of high-quality relationship dynamics

Lack of choice

Sexual harassment

Cultural mismatch

Gender bias

Protege entitlement

Formal Mentorship

Advantages

Clear Structure

Company sponsored protege

Virtual mentoring

Disadvantages

Mentorship is done for benefit of company

Lack of input into matching process

HR involvement negatively impacts relationship

Formality of Mentorship

Informal Mentorship

Advantages

Motivation for mentoring

Choice of mentor and protege

Long term career objectives

Disadvantages

Lack of definition and structure

Lack of access to mentors

Enablers

Inhibitors

+

−

+

−

+

−

Cross gender relationship dynamics mentoring

Benefits

+

+

Protege benefits

Networking

Sponsorship

Psychological support

Role modelling

Mentor benefits

Mentor satisfaction

Mentor learning

Networking

Friendship

Enablers of women mentoring women

Psychological support

Relationship building

Multiple mentors

Women Mentoring Women

Inhibitors of women mentoring women

Queen Bee Syndrome

Not matching by gender

Mentoring is not "band aid" for poor diversity Issues

Figure 2. Model developed from findings

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Gender equality and the representation of women in senior leadership are still challenging in most organisations. The benefits of gender representation are well recognised as gender-diverse companies perform better than their peers. Mentorship is a powerful tool to address the gender gap and develop and increase the pipeline of women leaders. Women face many challenges in their advancement to the top: societal, organisational, and individual factors. Mentorship has the potential to transform women, increase their skill levels, increase their self-efficacy and agency, and equip them with the tools to thrive in male-dominated environments (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

This study explored the relationship dynamics of cross gender mentoring in the advancement of women and the benefits for the mentor. The study adopted the qualitative methods through in-depth interviews where mentors and proteges shared their experiences. The analysis identified four aggregate themes of formality of mentoring, relational quality, women mentoring women and benefits of mentoring to mentor and protege.

The benefits of mentoring are achieved with high-quality mentoring relationships; therefore, organisations should focus on the quality of mentoring relationships for success in setting up mentorship programs. Quality of mentoring varies from low quality, which can even be a negative experience, to high quality. The quality of the mentoring relationship can be enhanced by shifting from a one-way relationship to a two-way relationship underpinned by trust, and empathy, and creating a safe space for learning, sharing, and growing (Ragins, 2016).

Findings from this study have implications for women who would like to advance their careers, for senior males in organisations as they consider mentoring women, and for organisations as they set up formal mentoring programs.

7.2 The formality of mentorship

There are advantages and disadvantages to both formal and informal mentorship. Although informal mentorship tends to be of higher quality and with more effective outcomes than formal mentorship, this is based on the relationship quality rather than the formality of the mentorship. A high-quality formal mentorship could yield better

outcomes regarding career functions, psychological functions, and role modelling than a low-quality informal mentorship (Ragins, 2016). The study concludes that organisations should continue to invest in high-quality mentoring programs to produce high-quality mentoring outcomes. In addition to the benefit of creating access to mentorship for marginalised groups such as women who have barriers to accessing informal mentorship. Organisations benefit from setting up formal mentorship by increasing the mentoring culture, building future mentors, and encouraging individuals to engage in informal mentorships. Ragins (2016) concludes that "formal mentoring relationships are not the ugly stepsisters of informal relationships, rather their close cousins that can provide unique resources and benefits" (p. 242). Our findings also support that women do not have to choose. In fact, they should engage in both types of mentoring in their development (Ragins, 2016).

7.3 Relational quality of cross-gender mentoring relationships

Cross-gender mentoring can be a transformative experience and offers an exceptional opportunity for women to advance their careers and break the glass ceiling, ultimately resulting in more gender equality in the workplace. Although these cross-gender mentoring relationships are confronted with challenges, mainly sexual harassment, and fear of being accused of sexual harassment, gender bias and cultural mismatch, these challenges are not insurmountable (Baugh, 2021). The challenges can be mitigated by nurturing a high-quality mentoring experience underpinned by trust, mutual respect, two-way exchange and commitment to each other's growth and learning. The benefit was experienced when the relationships were non-hierarchical in nature, with sharing of power and where both the mentors and the protege were open to learning. The relationship was more effective when it was a two-way exchange acknowledging that the female protege is not an "empty vessel that is filled" (p. 232) with knowledge from the mentor but an equal partner who can contribute positively to the mentoring relationship (Ragins, 2016). The protege and mentors benefitted from relational mentoring rather than traditional mentorship. Relational mentoring is a paradigm shift that transforms organisations and individuals' views of mentorship. Diversified mentoring relationships have a benefit beyond the learning and growth of the individuals involved but it can be a more effective tool for increasing diversity in organisations than diversity training. It creates an opportunity for diverse organisation members to engage

in intense relationships of mutual benefit. These relationships can provide safe spaces and thriving mechanisms for marginalised individuals. Therefore, organisations should invest in these diversified mentoring relationships as they set up formal mentorship programs; they should not match protege and mentors on gender and hope for the best. But they should acknowledge the challenges and then equip the mentors and protege with skills to overcome those challenges whilst ensuring that the environment in the company is also conducive to creating high-quality mentoring relationships (Ragins, 2016).

7.4 Women mentoring women

Perhaps the most intriguing of the study findings is that the proteges in this study do not recognise the benefits of being mentored by other women, nor do they desire to acquire women mentors. This is the most significant contribution of our study to the existing body of evidence, and it has far-reaching implications.

Women need multiple mentors throughout their careers, and they should be encouraged to acquire multiple mentors. There is still a challenge in women mentoring women due to the low numbers of women in senior leadership and queen bee syndrome. Creating positive mentoring experiences through relational mentoring for women will create female mentors of the future who will be willing to mentor other women. These findings elegantly illustrate the difficulty in addressing gender discrimination within the workplace. Women downplay and turn a blind eye to the masculine norms in organisations to assimilate and succeed. The gendered workplace is accepted as normal, and the requirement is on the women to adapt to the masculine leadership characteristics. Dashper (2019) demonstrated that even when women-only mentoring programs were set up to address gender discrimination issues in the workplace, those programs were met with ambivalent attitudes by both men and women. These programs are criticised for being sexist, supporting women and leaving men out, therefore not addressing diversity. Consequently, this can result in protege distancing themselves from women-only mentoring programs and supporting the idea that the workplace is gender-neutral, and that opportunities exist equally for everyone (Dashper, 2019). The above challenge can be addressed paradoxically through high-quality mentorships that can help individuals appreciate the challenges of gender discrimination through frequent interactions with women (Ragins, 2016).

7.5 Benefits of mentoring for protege and mentor

Our study confirmed the transcendent benefits of cross-gender mentoring to the protege and highlighted the additional benefits for mentors in high-quality mentoring relationships. Relational mentoring results in a metamorphic change that does not only impact the individuals in their workplaces but also in other spheres of life. Women can transform how they approach their careers, and gain access to life-changing resources. They build self-efficacy and increase their sense of agency. Mentors can have a life-changing learning experience that can re-energise them and propel their careers further (Ragins, 2016). Carter and Youssef-Morgan (2019) stated that high-quality formal mentorship programs increase the psychological capital of the protege through the development of hope, efficacy, and resilience, and optimism resulting in the emergence of "the HERO within" (p387).

7.6 Theoretical contribution

The findings of this research add to the mentorship theory by confirming the benefits of cross-gender mentorship resulting in career functions, psychological functions, and role modelling. The current mentoring research has a skewed emphasis on mentoring outcomes without emphasis on the relationship and how the outcomes are derived. This study adds to the mentoring literature by focusing on the relational nature of mentoring. This study contributes to the relational mentorship theory and provides understanding of the dynamics of cross-gender mentorship, the enablers, and inhibitors of high-quality outcomes.

Additionally, the finding that women do not want to be mentored by other women introduces an important element into mentoring theory. The current literature leans towards viewing cross- gender mentorship as a necessary evil because of lack of senior women in leadership to mentor other women. However, the results of this study suggest that because matching does not need to be done on gender and cross gender mentoring can deliver required benefit for women. Women do not see the value of same-gender mentoring. They value of women mentoring other women should be explored further.

Additionally, it expands our knowledge on the benefits that mentors can receive from mentoring shifting the mentoring paradigm from one-way to two-way. Our study has demonstrated that mentorship is a transformational experience for mentors that can

result in new perspective for their careers. Perhaps this study can inspire a change where mentorship is not only viewed as a tool to develop protege but as a powerful mechanism to transform all individuals and therefore the organisation.

7.7 Implications for management and other relevant stakeholders

7.7.1 Organisations

A mentorship is a powerful tool for the advancement of women, and formal mentorship programs are essential in organisations. High-quality results are derived from programs that are thoughtfully designed and managed (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019). In setting up formal mentorship, companies should match the mentor and protege with deep-level similarities like personality. They should allow a chance for mentors and protege to choose each other. This could mean that the company conducts a personality assessment for both mentor and protege and then have a list of mentors for each protege and a list of protege for each mentor (Menges, 2016). Then the protege should have an opportunity to meet several mentors and vice versa. After this brief meeting, the protege and mentor can then be paired. The mentoring objectives should be clarified for both the mentor and protege. Training should be provided for both parties to ensure that the functions and outcomes of mentoring are understood. The organisation should create a relational mentoring culture through training of both mentors and protege on the need for a two-way relationship with less hierarchy and more power sharing. Companies should provide continuous monitoring of the mentorships without intruding on the relationships or breaking any confidentiality (Clutterbuck, 2005; Ragins, 2016).

7.7.2 Women protege

The implications for the women proteges in the knowledge of how to cross-gender mentorship can contribute to their success. Women need to note that not all mentorships are created with the same high-quality outputs that emerge from high-quality relationships. Protege should equip themselves with the competencies to benefit from mentoring, such as being proactive in reaching out to mentors, managing mentoring relationships, developing listening skills and soliciting helpful feedback from their mentors. Additionally, women should acquire multiple mentors throughout their careers. The research informs women of the mentoring outcomes they should expect from high quality mentoring. This will allow women to be more vigilant and recognise when the

mentoring relationships they are engaged in are not providing the necessary mentoring outcomes.

7.7.3 Mentors
Mentors should enter mentoring relationships with a desire to learn and grow as they support the protege learning. Mentors should let go of the "God Father" approach to mentoring, giving out favours and expecting loyalty and obedience in return. They should approach the relationship as a two-way give and take, build trust, create a safe space, and develop communication and relationship skills (Ragins, 2016).

Males should mentor junior females, in addition to the mentoring that they might be assigned by their company. They should identify female proteges with potential and mentor them informally. Additionally, mentors can increase their skills as mentors through training and acquiring knowledge on creating high quality mentoring relationships.

7.8 Limitations of research
The study has a relatively small sample size therefore, conclusions cannot be made on such a complex subject as mentoring and results should be confirmed with a larger sample size. The study being cross-sectional in nature is a limitation; longitudinal studies are would be more suited to show changes over time. Mentoring is a dynamic process where the mentor and the protege go through various phases in the mentoring relationship.

The self-reporting nature of the study is an additional limitation; additional insights gained from triangulating the data provided by the respondents with human resource data from the companies that employed the participants, for example, engagement scores, performance reviews, and talent reviews could have added value.

The study could additionally have bias as it recruited participants who had been involved in cross-gender mentoring, participants who had positive outcomes with cross-gender mentoring could have self-selected, resulting in skewed results. This might have been the reason for the findings of women mentoring other women.

The snowballing method was challenging in this study as the participants were concentrated in two industries, although the study intended to recruit participants from

diverse industries. It will not be possible to generalise the findings of this study as it included limited sectors.

7.9 Suggestions for future research

Although this study found that women do not desire to be mentored by other women, this was not the focus of the study. A study focused on understanding the dynamics and benefits of same gender mentorship for women, that includes higher numbers of women mentors and proteges should be conducted. This study indicated that there might be differences based on industry as male dominated industry such as mining showed the need for female role models, this study should be repeated in different industries such as male dominated industry to investigate the dynamics of these relationships.

A study to explore the relational mentoring in the context of intersection of race and gender would be informative in the South African context as this study only investigated the impact of gender.

7.10 Conclusion

Access to high quality mentoring can contribute to the advancement of women and increase the number of women in senior management. Women have challenges accessing informal mentorship due to "old boys' club" mentality, fewer numbers of senior women and queen bee syndrome. Formal mentorships can alleviate this challenge by providing women with mentorship. Women are likely to end up in cross gender mentoring relationships and our study has demonstrated that this can be transformative, provided these mentorships are of high quality with the focus on trust, empathy, two-way exchange, and mutual growth and learning for both the mentor and protege. The study findings can equip companies to design extraordinary mentoring relationships rather than ordinary mentoring relationships (Ragins, 2016). Companies must continue to invest in high quality mentoring programs alongside other measures that decrease marginalisation of women in the workplace. With these measures in place a girl born today might see gender equality in her lifetime.

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Appendix 1: Consistency matrix

RESEARCH QUESTION	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	ANALYSIS
Does traditional mentorship theory explain the dynamics of cross gender mentoring relations?	Baugh, 2021; Blake-Beard et al., 2011; Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Clutterbuck, 2005; Deng et al., 2022; Derks et al., 2016; Eby et al., 2013; Evans, 2018; Fowler et al., 2007; Lavin Colky & Young, 2006; Menges, 2016; Ragins & Scandura, 1994	In depth Questionnaire: Question 1-6	Analysis of both open-ended questions
What are the benefits of mentoring for protegees?	Ragins, 2016; Scheepers & Mahlangu, 2022; Welsh & Diehn, 2018	In depth Questionnaire: Question 7	Analysis of both open-ended questions
How does mentoring benefit the mentors?	Ragins, 2016; Read et al., 2020	In depth Questionnaire: Question 8	Analysis of open-ended questions to derive themes

Appendix 2: Consent form

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

*I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA. I am conducting research on the dynamics of cross gender mentoring on the advancement of women. I am looking for women who have been involved in cross gender mentorship relationships as mentees, and men who have been involved in mentoring relationships as mentors to interview. Our interview is expected to last about 60 minutes and will help us understand if mentorship can help advance the advancement of women. **Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty**. All data will be reported without identifiers. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.*

Researcher name: Xongitiko Phaleng   *Research Supervisor: Dr Michele Ruiters*
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Appendix 3: Interview guide

General Questions

1. Age:

2. Gender: Male /Female /Non-binary

3. Race:

-Black /African

-White

-Indian

- Coloured

-Would rather not say

4. Industry

5. Years of experience

6. What is your experience with mentoring?

7. How did the mentorship start?

8. Did gender play a role in the dynamics of the mentorship?

9. What is your experience in mentoring women? (For mentors)

10. How do you choose your proteges? (For mentors)

11. What is your motivation for mentoring women? (For mentors)

12. What are the benefits you received from mentoring?