

**The nature and perceived value of mentoring for established business owner-  
managers in South Africa**

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

11 November 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

In order to effectively support entrepreneurs and SMEs, it is important to consider their unique needs dependent on their phase of business and their geographical context. The study argues for the need to focus on established businesses as a distinct subset of SMEs. Since mentorship is widely used as a tool to support entrepreneurs and SMEs, this study focused its efforts on understanding mentorship in the context of established business owner-managers. The study adopts a broad view of mentoring as it occurs in the context of an individual's developmental network. It explores concepts such as the nature of challenges faced by established business owner-managers, individual dyads in developmental networks, mentor functions played by these dyads and the perceived value of the support received by established business owner-managers.

The study adopted a qualitative approach with narrative research as its mode of enquiry. A total of 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with established business owner-managers in South Africa.

The findings lead to the development of a conceptual framework that can be used by practitioners focused on SME development to effectively support established business owner-managers. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the body of mentoring literature a rich and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the business-related challenges faced by established business owner-managers and how these challenges can be overcome by cultivating a developmental network.

## **KEYWORDS**

Entrepreneurship, Mentoring, Established Business, Mentor Functions, Developmental Networks

## **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.*

Sadaf Vahedna

11 November 2019

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# 1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This research studies the phenomenon of mentorship and its perceived value among established business owner-managers in South Africa. The study used an inductive qualitative approach to explore an under-researched area, mentoring, in a new context, established businesses in South Africa.

The study adopts a broad view of mentoring as it occurs in the context of an individual's developmental network. It explores concepts such as: the nature of challenges faced by established business owner-managers; how these challenges are overcome through support from an individual's developmental network; individual dyads in developmental networks; mentor functions played by these dyads; and the perceived value of the mentoring support received by established business owner-managers.

This study makes a theoretical contribution, through the development of a conceptual framework that explains the mentoring phenomenon as it occurs among an established business owner-manager's developmental network. The framework outlines the various factors that determine how an established business owner-manager seeks and receives mentorship, and how these factors influence each other to determine the nature of mentoring relationships an established business owner-manager engages in to overcome challenges and fulfil their mentoring needs.

The study also makes a practical contribution, wherein the conceptual framework derived from the findings can be used by established business owner-managers, as well as governmental agencies and SME development organisations to take a holistic approach in supporting and fulfilling the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers in order to help such businesses survive and thrive in the volatile South African context.

The methodological contribution of the study lies in the way the research was conducted. In contrast to prior research conducted in the field of mentoring in an organisational and entrepreneurial context, this study uses narrative research as its mode of enquiry with conventional qualitative content analysis to analyse data.

This chapter outlines the need for the research, based on the existing economic problems within South Africa. Mentorship is widely used as a tool to grow and develop entrepreneurs in South Africa, but it is yet under-researched as a phenomenon, especially in the context

of established businesses in an emerging economy. This chapter further argues the importance of studying mentorship as a tool for supporting owner-managers in the established phase of business.

## **1.1 Contextual Background to the Research**

South Africa is currently experiencing low levels of economic growth, having found itself in a recession in early 2018, resulting in an overall annual GDP growth rate of 0.8% by the end of 2018 (Stats SA, 2019). This phenomenon has exacerbated the long-standing problem of unemployment, with official unemployment rates sitting at 27.1% at the end of 2018 (Stats SA, 2019) and at 37% when discouraged work seekers are included in the data set (SEDA, 2019).

Many economists believe that one of the ways in which high unemployment rates can be addressed is through the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Kongolo, 2010; Ngek, 2014). SMEs account for 65% of total employment in South Africa (SEDA, 2019). However, a report by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) highlighted that South Africa's entrepreneurial activities remain persistently low when compared with the other countries surveyed in the report (Herrington, Kew, & Mwanga, 2018). The new SME failure rate in South Africa is one of the highest in the world (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011; Herrington et al., 2018). The third quarter of 2018 found SMEs reporting a decline in annual turnover rates by 9% and profitability by 25% (SEDA, 2019).

A further cause for concern in the GEM report was that the rate of *established businesses* (the percentage of adults running a business that has been operational and paying salaries for more than 3.5 years) in South Africa has dropped 26% since 2015 and is currently five times lower than the percentage of established businesses on the African continent (Herrington et al., 2018). The same GEM study also found that year on year, there is a decline in the number of established businesses in South Africa, as many of these businesses are being discontinued, or failing (Herrington et al., 2018). This phenomenon may be further contributing to the unemployment problems in the South African economy.

In order to strengthen the economy, the South African government has invested in and incentivised the creation and support of SMEs, through passing legislation which supports venture capital investment, along with Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment

(BBBEE) regulations. BBBEE regulations encourage economic engagements between large companies and previously disadvantaged individuals through the BBBEE rating system (Ndedi, 2009; Pooe, 2016). Many of these approaches are targeted at nascent entrepreneurs or new businesses. However, approximately 70% to 80% of new businesses fail within the first five years (Friedrich, 2016). Furthermore, 40% of the success of small businesses is correlated with personal characteristics of the entrepreneur (Friedrich, 2016), which may be difficult to determine upfront. Hence the focus on nascent entrepreneurs and new business owners may be seen as a risky approach. Internationally policy makers are now considering the more effective utilisation of resources by focusing on entrepreneurs with prior business experience (Westhead, Ucbasaran, Wright, & Binks, 2005). Thus, government and SME development programmes may derive higher returns on their investments by focusing on growing and preserving more firmly established SMEs in South Africa.

## **1.2 Mentorship as a Tool to Support Entrepreneurs and SMEs**

A South African study has shown that mentoring entrepreneurs in formal programmes, including one-on-one support derived from mentoring increases the confidence and risk taking ability of the entrepreneur (Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

Many BBBEE programmes use mentorship as a tool for entrepreneur development within Enterprise and Supplier Development programmes run by corporations and government in South Africa ('Small Business Development | South African Government', n.d.). In a paper that studied 142 capacity development providers for small business in South Africa, 50% use mentoring and network based support as a tool to grow and support entrepreneurs and small businesses (ANDE Global, 2017). Despite the widespread use of mentoring as a tool for entrepreneurial development, entrepreneurial mentoring research is still in its infancy (St-Jean & Audet, 2013; Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). Much of the extant literature on entrepreneurial mentoring focuses on mentoring nascent or novice entrepreneurs in the context of formal mentoring programmes (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; Elliott, Anis, & Mavriplis, 2016; St-Jean & Audet, 2009, 2013). Hence, this is an area of study that needs to be undertaken to further add to the existing literature.

Understanding the mentorship of South African entrepreneurs and small business owners is especially important given that a recent GEM report found that the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) in South Africa uses mentors to help small businesses grow

but that “shamefully” many of their business advisors and mentors have never run businesses themselves before (Herrington et al., 2018). This suggests that while mentorship is being used a tool to support entrepreneurs and SMEs, it is being done so ineffectively.

### **1.3 Motivation for the Study**

The contextual problem underpinning this research can be defined as follows: Government focuses on the creation of new enterprises to address the problems of unemployment and economic development. However, new businesses often have a high failure rate (Friedrich, 2016), and policy makers may find a greater return on investments made in such initiatives by focusing on supporting entrepreneurs who have already proven their entrepreneurial capabilities and established successful businesses. Such established business owner-managers may need support to survive and thrive in dynamic business environments. One effective tool that can be used to support established business owner managers is mentorship, especially since the role of mentoring in an entrepreneurial context is primarily to prevent business failure (Bisk, 2002). Given the increasing business discontinuance rate of established businesses in South Africa (Herrington et al., 2018), mentoring can be seen as a support mechanism to prevent such businesses from failing and further contributing to the unemployment problem in the country. These findings combined with the ineffective implementation of mentoring programmes by governmental agencies in South Africa (Herrington et al., 2018), underline **the business need** for researching and understanding mentorship as a support mechanism for established businesses in South Africa.

Entrepreneurial mentoring has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to support, build and develop entrepreneurs. But to date, much of the research on mentoring has been conducted in academic, youth and organisational contexts (Allen, Eby, O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008; Chandler, Kram, & Yip, 2011; Dobrow, Chandler, Murphy, & Kram, 2012; Kay & Wallace, 2009; Kram & Ragins, 2007; Matlay & Gimmon, 2015; McKinsey, 2016; Murphy & Kram, 2017). Mentoring in entrepreneurial contexts has only started to be examined systematically recently, and mostly in the context of novice or new entrepreneurs (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; Kubberoed & Hagen, 2015; Memon, Zaidi, Rozan, Ismail, & Uddin, 2014; St-Jean, 2011; St-Jean, Radu-Lefebvre, & Mathieu, 2018; Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). Entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group and they have different needs that vary in accordance with the stage of business they are operating in

(Memon et al., 2014). Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills that are needed in emerging markets, such as South Africa, may differ from the entrepreneurial skills needed in more developed markets (Mamabolo, Myres, & Kele, 2017a). Hence, the research that is conducted on mentoring in different contexts may not be entirely applicable to entrepreneurs and business owners in the established phase of business in South Africa.

Within the mentoring literature, there has been a call for research to be conducted into the nature of developmental networks from the perspective of both mentors and protégés (Dobrow et al., 2012; Janssen, Vuuren, & Jong, 2015), the effects posed by individual factors such as education on mentoring outcomes (Chandler et al., 2011), and the nature of mentorship in various geographical contexts (Dobrow et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is a call for an exploration of the behaviours and mentor functions played by the individual dyads within the developmental network (Janssen et al., 2015).

Mentoring research has also been criticised because of its empirical approach with little focus on theory building (Janssen et al., 2015), and there is disagreement in academic circles on the functions played by mentors (Allen & Eby, 2010). Based on the call for further research on the subject of mentorship and developmental networks, combined with the lack of relevant literature in the context of mentoring for established businesses signifies **the theoretical need** for this research to be conducted.

By studying the nature and perceived value of mentorship as experienced by established business owner-managers, this study contributes to the design and implementation of better support structures for such individuals to survive and thrive in dynamic business environments – preventing the loss of jobs and possibly even leading to the creation of more jobs in a troubled and competitive economy.

Although this research was conducted in the context of the South African economy, its import has value on the global scale too. Major global economies, such as those of the United States of America and China, have also been experiencing slower growth rates in their respective economies (SEDA, 2019). The decline in the growth rate of these two major economies has compounded home-grown economic issues faced by other countries (SEDA, 2019). In light of these economic woes, the growth and sustainability of the SME sector is not only critical for South Africa, but also for the rest of the world.

Considering the argument above, this study took an exploratory approach to studying mentorship in the context of established business owner-managers in South Africa.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Research**

The aim of this research was to understand the nature and perceived value of mentorship among established South African business owner-managers: aiming to deepen the conceptual understanding of the role of mentorship; the functions it plays in a business owner's life; and the value it adds in terms of the learning and growth of such individuals.

The objectives of the research are to understand the following:

- I. The mentoring needs of established business owner-managers.
- II. Whether there were any key relationships that fulfilled these mentoring needs.
- III. The key support functions played by these relationships that allow an owner-manager of an established business to overcome challenges in business.
- IV. The outcomes and perceived value of these relationships based on the types of support received by an established business owner-manager.

Given the paucity of literature in the context of entrepreneurial mentoring, and specifically mentoring in the context of established businesses, this study takes an exploratory approach to the topic.

## **2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Based on the research objectives outlined in Section 1.4, this section aims to deepen the conceptual understanding of mentorship.

The literature review starts by exploring the concept of mentorship and the evolution of this concept over the years. This literature review draws on multiple theories from literature in order to inform the areas being investigated. This is because much of the extant literature on mentoring has focused on organisational mentoring, with limited literature in the context of entrepreneurial mentoring. Although the mentoring of entrepreneurs is under-researched and under-theorised, the mainstream mentoring literature is still relevant to gain an understanding of the core practice.

Extant literature on the different contexts of mentoring are presented, followed by an examination of factors that influence an adult's mentoring needs, such as their background, as well as the outcomes of mentoring for protégés in different contexts. Specific attention is given to literature on entrepreneurial mentoring where it is available, to examine what is known, and what is yet to be studied, in the context of the established business owner-manager in South Africa. The literature review is structured based on the research objectives outlined in Section 1.4. A graphical representation expressing the layout of the research, connecting it to the purpose of the research is outlined in Figure 1.

## **Understanding Mentorship**

- 2.1 A Conceptual Understanding of Mentorship
- 2.2 The Various Forms of Mentorship
  - 2.2.1 Traditional Forms of Mentorship
  - 2.2.2 Formal and Informal Mentors
  - 2.2.3 The Evolution of the Way Mentorship is Understood

## **The Mentoring Needs of Established Business Owner-Managers**

- 2.3.1 Mentoring Entrepreneurs
- 2.3.2 The Changing Needs of Entrepreneurs Through Different Phases of Growth
- 2.3.3 An Entrepreneur's Background as an Influencer of Challenges in Business
- 2.3.4 Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurs and Business Owner-Managers

## **Key Relationships that Fulfill the Mentoring Needs of Established Business Owner-Managers**

- 2.4 Networks and Mentor Functions
  - 2.4.1 Key Developmental Relationships

## **Key Support Functions Played by Mentors**

- 2.4.2 Functions Played by Mentors
- 2.4.3 Mentor Functions for Entrepreneurs

## **Understanding The Outcomes and Perceived Value of Mentoring**

- 2.5 Mentoring Outcomes

Figure 1: Layout of Literature Review

The review concludes with a summary of the literature, as well as what is yet to be discovered in the field of mentorship. This process allowed for the formulation of the primary research questions which are then outlined and detailed in Chapter Three.

## **2.1 A Conceptual Understanding of Mentorship**

The origins of the word mentor can be traced to Homer's 'The Odyssey'. In The Odyssey, Odysseus places Mentor in charge of Telemachus, his son, with Mentor being responsible for Telemachus' education, and the development of his identity and personality (St-Jean & Audet; 2012). Although this example shows that mentoring is an ancient concept, more recently, the value of mentorship has been touted repeatedly for adult learning and development (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; Kram, 1983; McKinsey, 2016). Mentorship has been found to be an intense and powerful means for stimulating development, involving high levels of emotional involvement and influence (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007).

Given the largely individualised relationships that can take shape between mentors and protégés in different disciplines and settings, many scholars do not agree on a single definition for the term (Jacobi, 1991). The literature on mentoring lacks a consistent definition, and there are over 50 definitions of the term present in the extant literature on the subject (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

Kram (1983), in her seminal work on organisational mentorship, defines mentors as highly experienced professionals or peers that help a novice orient himself toward the work, culture and standards of an organisation. Some researchers describe mentorship as an emotionally deep relationship that takes shape between an experienced individual and his or her less experienced counterpart, while others see it in less emotionally rich terms (Allen & Eby, 2010). Mentoring has been described in literature sometimes in terms of the role played by a person and other times as a concept or process carried out by many people acting as mentors to a single protégé (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Crisp and Cruz (2009) found that despite the lack of consensus on a given definition of mentorship, there are three aspects of mentoring that researchers agree about: mentoring relationships are focused on the growth and accomplishment of an individual including various forms of assistance; mentoring experiences include broad forms of support, including assistance with personal and professional career development; and mentoring relationships are personal and reciprocal.

Allen and Eby (2010) found that areas of disagreement on mentoring include: the emotional richness of a mentoring relationship; the age difference between a mentor and a protégé; the duration of the relationship; and the specific functions provided by mentors.

Despite the lack of consensus on a definition of mentorship, the essence of mentoring lies in a learning partnership between individuals (Allen & Eby, 2010). Although specific functions of a mentor can vary, they can be grouped in to career-related and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985).

## **2.2 Various Forms of Mentorship**

This section explores the various forms of mentorship as outlined in extant literature. Traditional theories on mentorship are outlined, followed by an exploration of how the understanding of mentorship has evolved towards the current thinking around mentorship as a concept.

### **2.2.1 Traditional Models of Mentorship**

Traditional models of mentoring focus on the transmission of knowledge from a more experienced and more powerful mentor to their less experienced protégé. There is often a difference in status between the parties engaged in such a relationship (Jones & Brown, 2011). Kram (1983), found that mentoring plays two main functions for a protégé in an organisational context: *career-enhancing functions* and *psychosocial functions*. Both the mentor and protégé benefit from the dyadic relationship. Mentors gain the respect of their peers by mentoring; they gain the loyalty and support of their protégé; as well as internal satisfaction in enabling the success of another (Kram, 1983). The study was based on the observation of relationships between senior managers as mentors and their subordinates as protégés, which entailed studying the phenomenon in a context of dyadic, high-power differences between mentor and protégé.

### **2.2.2 Formal and Informal Mentors**

There has been an increase in mentoring programmes in corporate, professional and educational settings, which has led to rich literature on mentoring in these areas (McKinsey, 2016). Mentoring relationships can take on various forms: they can be of long duration or short-lived; planned or spontaneous (Crisp & Cruz, 2009); and the relationship can take shape either formally or informally. Formal mentoring relationships are often

arranged externally by a programme co-ordinator, whereas informal mentoring relationships take hold when two people are attracted to each other (Blake-Beard, 2007) and a mentoring relationship forms organically.

Informal mentoring is considered to be more effective than formal mentoring for adult learning and development (Bynum, 2015; Murphy & Kram, 2017). These informal relationships form spontaneously and are less structured than formal mentoring relationships (Bynum, 2015). Informal mentoring relationships are more intense than formal mentoring relationships because the scope is unbounded by a third party (Janssen et al., 2015). On the other hand, formal mentoring relationships tend to be more structured and often only last for a definitive period (Bisk, 2002). An advantage of formal mentoring relationships is that they are often easier to form than informal ones (Murphy & Kram, 2014).

Both formal and informal mentoring relationships have been shown to contribute to the learning and development of an entrepreneur (Bynum, 2015). However, most of the extant literature on mentoring entrepreneurs focuses on formal mentoring (Blake-Beard, 2007; El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; St-Jean & Audet, 2009, 2012; St-Jean et al., 2018). This bias in the literature could be due to the fact that informal mentoring is often not recognised or acknowledged as mentoring by both members in the relationship (Janssen et al., 2015). For example, within peer mentoring, an entrepreneur may not identify a peer as a mentor but may only recognise the peer as one who has greatly contributed to their personal and career growth (Bynum, 2015). This lack of recognition of mentoring could explain the paucity in the literature on informal mentoring in an entrepreneurial context. Hence, this study took an approach where all potential mentoring relationships were analysed, even if they were not recognised as such by the subjects of this research.

### ***2.2.3 The Evolution of the Way Mentorship is Understood***

After her initial research on mentorship in an organisational context, Kram (1985) went on to study different forms of mentorship, and found that peer relationships could serve some critical functions for mentorship. The lack of a power differential in peer relationships could encourage collaboration, communication and mutual support. This study formed the basis for exploring mentorship in informal settings, in which the protégé and mentor relationship was mutual, and the roles of the two were deemed interchangeable in accordance with the needs and priorities of both parties. Subsequent studies conducted in the field of

mentorship found that mentorship could be profitably analysed with the theory of developmental networks (Higgins & Kram, 2001), as well as by way of social capital (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007) and social networks (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007) theory.

#### **2.2.4 *Developmental Networks as a Form of Mentorship***

Since the publication of Kram (1985), research in the mentoring field has advanced to the point of examining the support provided to people through considering the constellation of experts and individuals who influence another person, from different life domains (Dobrow et al., 2012). These support networks have been called “developmental networks”.

Developmental networks are defined as networks of individuals who are actively involved in supporting other individuals or supporting a leader’s career and identity development (Ghosh, Haynes, & Kram, 2013). Developers can be supervisors, peers, subordinates as well as family members and the greater community (Dobrow et al., 2012). There has been a call from scholars in the field to examine the nature of such developmental networks, both from the perspective of mentors as well as protégés (Dobrow et al., 2012). Mentoring received through an individual’s developmental network can incorporate formal and informal mentoring.

It is important to note that there are varying perspectives on mentoring networks. Multiple studies (Chandler et al., 2011; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Janssen et al., 2015) have been conducted on mentoring networks, but these differ in their chosen definitions for what constitutes true mentor networks. Some scholars have stated that true mentoring networks comprise only those who take an active interest in advancing a protégé through high levels of career and psychosocial support (Dobrow et al., 2012); while other scholars consider mentoring networks as comprising of a continuum of relationships that offer varying types of support based on the needs of individuals (Dobrow et al., 2012). Some of these studies have failed to consider family members and friends as part of mentoring networks (Dobrow et al., 2012). Studies that include the full continuum of relationships as part of mentoring networks are conceptually closer to the current thinking of mentorship in the context of developmental networks (Dobrow et al., 2012). To date, most of the research on developmental networks study the structural characteristics of the network such as network diversity and range, and its influence on outcomes for proteges (Janssen et al., 2015). Few studies have focused on the individual dyads that make up these networks (Janssen et al., 2015). Specifically, the behaviours and support functions in the

individual dyads within the developmental network remain unexplored (Janssen et al., 2015). Hence, this research fills the gap in the available literature by studying the functions played by individual dyads within developmental networks, in the context of established business owner-managers.

### **2.2.5 *Linking Social Capital and Social Networks Theory to Mentorship***

The literature on developmental networks as contributors to adult learning and development has theoretical features in common with research that has been conducted in the field of social capital (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Furthermore, scholars studying traditional mentoring have also linked the concept of formal and informal mentoring to social capital theory (Allen & Eby, 2010; Kay & Wallace, 2009). The term social capital denotes benefits that are accrued by individuals from investments made in social ties, in order to gain access to the information, knowledge or resources of others (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Another field of study closely related to social capital theory is social networks theory (Greve & Salaff, 2003). Networking is a form of developing social capital (Casson & Della Giusta, 2007). Social networks theory and social capital theory are closely related; and, although there is no consensus on the definition of the terms, social network theory concerns itself with the study of network structure, while social capital theory concerns itself with the study of the resources available to individuals through their network structures (Greve & Salaff, 2003).

Hezlett and Gibson (2007) conducted a study that linked the concepts of social capital theory to mentorship. They found that social capital constructs are often a determining factor of mentoring variables, ultimately influencing an individual's career success. Many of the benefits outlined in the literature on social capital overlap with constructs in the literature of mentoring (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Kay & Wallace, 2009). Hence, Hezlett and Gibson (2007) propose that mentoring ought to be seen as a potent form of social capital.

## **2.3 Understanding the Mentoring Needs of Entrepreneurs and Business Owner-Managers**

This section follows on from the previous section, which explored the conceptual understanding of mentorship based in extant literature and linked it to an understanding of mentoring in an entrepreneurial context. The literature reviewed in this section speaks to the research objectives outlined in Section 1.4 – namely exploring extant literature on

the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers. In order to form a basic understanding of the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers, literature in the context of entrepreneurship has been reviewed along with relevant research conducted in the field of established businesses and other related contexts such as SMEs.

Mentoring has largely been studied in educational, psychological and organisational contexts (Jacobi, 1991). However, in the contemporary context, mentoring has become an increasingly popular tool for entrepreneurial development, in spite of limited research that has been conducted on the role of mentorship in entrepreneurial contexts (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; St-Jean & Audet, 2009, 2013). Hence, this literature review draws on multiple available theories in the organisational and nascent entrepreneurship fields to develop a tentative understanding of this subject.

### **2.3.1 *Mentoring Entrepreneurs***

For the purposes of this study, entrepreneurship will be defined as, "Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business" (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, n.d., para. 2). The GEM definition on entrepreneurship has been used because it has evolved in order to understand the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in the context of its role in economic development, and was not theoretically defined as is the case with other definitions (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, n.d.). Furthermore, an increasing number of scholars studying entrepreneurship are using the GEM definitions as a basis for their studies (Mamabolo, Myres, & Kele, 2017b). Thus, based on the GEM definitions of entrepreneurship, this study has included individuals who may have joined an existing business venture in order to lead, grow and run a business with an owner's stake.

Many researchers report a lack of resources during an entrepreneur's preliminary start-up phase (Ali, 2018; Herrington et al., 2018; Kay & Wallace, 2009; St-Jean & Audet, 2012, 2013). Entrepreneurs are not always experienced or skilled enough to deal with such challenges (St-Jean & Audet, 2013), indicating that entrepreneurs often seem to need mentors. Mentoring entrepreneurs is distinct from career related mentoring in large organisations, since protégés will often manage their own businesses, and mentors are not always hierarchically positioned above their protégés (St-Jean, 2011).

St-Jean (2011) describes entrepreneur mentoring, in formal mentoring programmes, as a support relationship between a more experienced entrepreneur and a novice entrepreneur, in which the experienced entrepreneur helps the novice develop as a person. This description of mentorship recognises the novice as an entrepreneur and an individual, in which context the focus is placed not just on helping the novice entrepreneur succeed in business, but also in helping them develop personally as an individual. This description is more in line with the traditional philosophy around mentorship, which is dyadic and top-down, and which tends to oversimplify the relationship (Jones & Brown, 2011). This approach also looks at relationships distinguished by a one-way flow of information, in which reciprocity is not considered (Jones & Brown, 2011).

True mentors are said to offer the broadest range of career-related and psychological support (Dobrow et al., 2012). Given the demanding nature of careers today, one mentor may not be able to fulfil all of his protégé's developmental needs (Murphy & Kram, 2014). This observation is also applicable to entrepreneurs, who may form developmental networks, with a wide variety of individuals, that fulfil their various needs at different stages of their business and career development. Each entrepreneur is unique and has different needs depending on the stage of business and life they are in, the industry they operate in, economic conditions as well as other personal and emotional considerations (Memon et al., 2014). Furthermore, since entrepreneurship is a multidisciplinary area, entrepreneurs need mentors who have diverse skills and experiences, in order to support the entrepreneur effectively (Deepali, Jain, & Chaudhary, 2017).

### ***2.3.2 The Changing Needs of Entrepreneurs Through Different Phases of Growth***

Literature on entrepreneurship distinguishes between novice, serial, portfolio and habitual entrepreneurs (Westhead et al., 2005). Novice entrepreneurs are described as individuals who are new at running businesses and currently own a major stake in an organisation; however, calling an entrepreneur a novice entrepreneur despite having run a business for 20 years seems inappropriate (Ucbasaran, Westhead, & Wright, 2014). Thus, this study will distinguish between types of entrepreneurs based on definitions and classifications of an SME or new business from the GEM (Bosma & Kelley, 2019) report. These classifications are used because they are empirically tested, rather than theoretically derived (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). The report categorises entrepreneurial activity as follows: a nascent entrepreneur: one who is involved in setting up a business; an owner-manager of a new business: owner-managers between the ages of 18–64 years who are

operational and paying salaries or any other payments for up to 42 months; and an owner-manager of an established business: owner-managers between the ages of 18–64 who have paid salaries for over 42 months.

Based on the above definitions, it is possible that the mentoring of established business owner-managers has been studied as part of a larger group of small and medium enterprises (Barrett, 2006; Moulson & Davis, 2018; Sharafizad, 2018; Zhang & Hamilton, 2009). However, most of the literature on small business mentoring does not distinguish between the mentoring of nascent entrepreneurs, new business owners and established business owners. Based on the GEM definitions of established businesses, individuals involved in running such established businesses will be termed “established business owner-managers” throughout this study.

Nascent stage entrepreneurs are focused on new venture creation, putting together a start-up team and organising start-up capital (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). New business stage entrepreneurs are focused on running day-to-day business operations, implementing systems and processes and hiring employees, while established phase entrepreneurs differ in that they are focused on owning and managing their businesses, looking for new opportunities in the environment, implementing quality control and refining processes, while trying to maintain stable employment within their businesses (Mamabolo et al., 2017b).

Entrepreneurs need effective support mechanisms at all stages of the entrepreneurial process, not just at the nascent stage (St-Jean & Audet, 2012). Since entrepreneurs have different activities at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey, their learning and development needs may be different (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). Furthermore, while mentoring has been studied in the context of nascent entrepreneurs thus far, it is possible that the findings on mentoring nascent or new businesses cannot be generalised to established businesses as well.

### **2.3.3 *An Entrepreneur’s Background as an Influencer of Challenges in Business***

Mentoring experiences have been studied from an ecological systems perspective too. This perspective allows mentoring to be studied as a phenomenon that occurs at the intersection of complex systems that influence an individual’s psychology (Chandler et al., 2011).

In the literature on mentoring, an individual's socioeconomic status has been shown to affect the types of relationships they can form and benefit from (Kram & Ragins, 2007). For instance, individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to attract relationships with other individuals of higher socioeconomic status (Kram & Ragins, 2007). This circumstance becomes more relevant in an entrepreneurial context, as it influences an entrepreneur's ability to form and leverage relationships with other successful entrepreneurs and high-powered individuals.

Most of the studies that have been conducted on organisational mentoring have focused on demographic and personality variables (Janssen et al., 2015). Variables such as the educational background and overall competence of individuals have been given less attention (Chandler et al., 2011). Hence, further research is needed to understand how such factors affect mentoring outcomes (Chandler et al., 2011). From an ecological systems perspective, these factors may influence an entrepreneur's ability to form developmental networks, as well as influence their learning and development needs.

Drawing from the literature on social capital theory, a study by Terjesen and Sullivan (2011) considered the prior employment or work experience in entrepreneurship in terms of the social capital benefits offered. They found that many entrepreneurs were likely to use formal mentors from their prior workplace to help them in business, while some entrepreneurs use colleagues and other work relationships from their previous employment experience as key developmental relationships they relied on to learn and grow in an entrepreneurial setting (Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011).

A meta-analytical review conducted on human capital and entrepreneurial success found that human capital factors influence entrepreneurial success only if the entrepreneur is able to successfully apply the human capital to the tasks they need to undertake in an entrepreneurial setting (Marvel, Davis, & Sproul, 2016; Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011). Understanding an entrepreneur's human capital, such as their educational attainments and prior employment and entrepreneurial experience, is important, not just because it can be conceived as a predominant factor in contributing to their success, but also because it helps understand the task-related skills they possess that facilitate or hinder their ability to run and grow their own ventures (Marvel et al., 2016).

#### **2.3.4 Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurs and Business Owner-Managers**

Entrepreneurs and business owners often hold leadership positions within the organisations they have founded and/or run (St-Jean, 2011). Due to the rapid pace of change in the external environment, rapid developments in technology and increased diversity in today's workforce, individuals in leadership positions often face new developmental challenges in task-related roles and responsibilities (Ghosh et al., 2013). Additionally, in an entrepreneurial context, survival, growth and a changing environment can bring about new business-related challenges and require business owner-managers to change the nature of their roles in the business (Phelps, Adams, & Bessant, 2007).

Research on mentoring has found that informal mentoring relationships are most likely need driven (Janssen et al., 2015). In order to understand the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers, it is essential to first establish the challenges they face in business. Exploring these business-related challenges will in turn provide greater insight into their mentoring, learning and development needs. While research in the field of organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring has explored a variety of factors, such as mentoring outcomes (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; St-Jean & Audet, 2012), mentor functions (Dobrow et al., 2012; Kram, 1983; Moulson & Davis, 2018; St-Jean, 2011), individual personality and demographic variables (St-Jean et al., 2018) as well as the range and diversity of networks (Allen & Eby, 2010; Kram & Ragins, 2007), limited research to date explicitly addresses the mentoring needs of individuals in entrepreneurial contexts. Thus, this was an area of research undertaken by this study.

#### **2.3.5 How Entrepreneurs and Business Owner-Managers Contend with Challenges in Business**

In order to deal with business-related challenges, entrepreneurs often need to acquire new skills and knowledge, primarily through self-directed learning (Young & Sexton, 2003). Mentoring literature on the learning practices of established business owner-managers is limited. This section focuses mainly on how entrepreneurs deal with new challenges that they may not have encountered before, as opposed to facing situations in which they can draw from prior employment and entrepreneurial experience and education to inform decisions.

The most important aspect that entrepreneurs deal with in learning, is challenges they face in “learning how to learn” (Young & Sexton, 2003). Entrepreneurs often deal with environments that are ambiguous and constantly changing (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Mentoring and networks research done in the context of women owners of businesses suggested that they primarily learn by conducting online research and e-learning, attend seminars and events, approach individuals within their networks for knowledge and hire for skills they may not possess (Sharafizad, 2018). Interestingly, this study also found that women small business owners did not engage much in learning from mentors (Sharafizad, 2018).

Other research conducted on entrepreneurs in various phases of business found that entrepreneurs may choose to deal with challenges by reading books and learning from their own activities in business, or from ‘learning by doing’ (A. Mamabolo et al., 2017).

Furthermore, entrepreneurs, especially in the established phases of a business, turn to family and friends as a source of developing their knowledge and skills (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). In contexts where entrepreneurs come from families with entrepreneurial experience, they rely even more on their family as a source of skills (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). Established business owner-managers also turn more to mentors and coaches as sources from which they can acquire new skills. The explanation offered for this tendency is that nascent entrepreneurs may be overconfident in their abilities, believing that they do not need mentors or coaches, or perhaps do not have the right networks and connections with other entrepreneurs from which to receive the requisite mentorship and coaching (Mamabolo et al., 2017b).

The literature on this topic reveals that entrepreneurs, and especially established business owner-managers, tend to use people in the networks to learn, more than entrepreneurs in the nascent and new phases of a business (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). The various findings from literature have been collated and represented in Table 1.

Table 1: How Business Owner-Managers Deal with Challenges in Business

Process to Deal with Challenges	Source
Reading books	Mamabolo et al. (2017b)
Searching online (online forums, e-learning)	Mamabolo et al. (2017b)
Turning to mentors and coaches	Mamabolo et al. (2017b)
Learning by doing	Mamabolo et al. (2017b)
Turning to family, friends and other social actors	Mamabolo et al. (2017b); Sharafizad (2018)
Turning to business associates	Sharafizad (2018)
Hiring others with skill	Sharafizad (2018)
Attending seminars and events	Sharafizad (2018)

Note: Adapted from Mamabolo et al., (2017b) and Sharafizad (2018)

Although not mentioned in the entrepreneurial mentoring literature, one factor related to the relative success of an entrepreneur in situations where they face challenges, is their resilience (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Duchek, 2018). Resilience is often described as owing to a combination of resourcefulness, hardiness and optimism, which together enable entrepreneurs to overcome challenges (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Duchek, 2018). Of these three factors, an entrepreneur's resourcefulness was found to be the most important factor in ultimately determining their ability to overcome adversity (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Resourcefulness is described as the entrepreneur's ability to make use of their skills, abilities and resources to overcome the challenges they face (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Thus, the practices entrepreneurs engage in the effort to overcome business-related challenges can be seen as a function of their underlying resourcefulness.

This study undertook to investigate how established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business and to confirm if this involved turning to other people (mentors, coaches, family and friends) for support.

## 2.4 Developmental Networks and Mentor Functions

This section reviews extant literature relating to research objectives outlined in Section 1.4. These are namely to explore the literature on how individuals (in different contexts) may use key relationships to fulfil their mentoring needs. It also explores extant literature

on how these key relationships play specific support functions that enable individuals to meet their mentoring needs.

To do this effectively, this section's analysis begins by examining key developmental relationships derived from the literature on organisational mentoring and developmental networks. Next, it looks at the mentor functions and support models in both organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring literature in order to learn about the potential functions these networks can play to fulfil an individual's mentoring needs.

Entrepreneurs use their networks as learning habitats to access resources and identify opportunities. (Bowey & Easton, 2007). Furthermore, entrepreneurs have been found to feel more secure in relationships that mix socialising activities with their business life (Bowey & Easton, 2007). Thus, when considering an entrepreneur's developmental network, aspects of personal development and psychological support from non-work-related networks can be viewed as important contributions to their professional and entrepreneurial development as well.

#### **2.4.1 Key Developmental Relationships**

Higgins and Kram (2001) reconceptualised mentoring in an organisational context to develop the theory of "developmental networks" that go far beyond the traditional hierarchical mentoring relationship. A key question they sought to answer in their research concerned *who* the social actors were that provided individuals with mentoring functions such as career and psychosocial support.

Similarly, in order to understand the nature of mentoring in an entrepreneurial context, it becomes imperative to understand the key individuals that provide established business owner-managers with career-related and psychosocial support in their lives.

Kram (1985) recognised that individuals draw upon a constellation of relationships that fulfil mentoring functions in their lives. In addition to traditional mentoring relationships, these relationships can include family members, peers/co-workers, subordinates, supervisors and friends. Another study conducted by Allen and Finkelstein (2003), also in an organisational context, focused on the sources of support used by professionals that helped them "learn, grow and develop on the job". This study included relationship-based and non-relationship-based sources of support in the study. This study found that people-

based sources of support were more influential than the initial study conducted by Kram (1983). These findings have been collated and are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2: Sources of Support for Individuals in Organisations*

<b>Allen and Finkelstein (2003)</b>	<b>Kram (1983)</b>
Co-workers	Co-workers
Members in professional associations	
Family members	Family members
Outside friends	Outside friends
Supervisors	Supervisors
Subordinates and support staff	Subordinates and support staff
Religion	

*Note: Sources of support for individuals from Allen and Finkelstein (2003) and Kram, (1983)*

Subsequent research that has been undertaken in the field of organisational mentoring has identified another peripheral source of support through role models in the public sphere, whom an individual may not have met in person, or may have only imagined (Dobrow et al., 2012).

While multiple studies have identified social networks in an entrepreneurial context broadly, most of these studies have analysed these networks at an abstract level, and few studies detail specific relationships that are used by entrepreneurs and business owners.

It is important to note that the role of family members has been studied and repeatedly recognised as a key support relationship for entrepreneurs and business owners. Family members have been found to provide entrepreneurs with social, task-related and financial support, especially in the nascent phase of a business (Edelman, Manolova, Shirokova, & Tsukanova, 2016). However, the other types of support and associated outcomes for an individual have not been studied deeply in the context of developmental networks (Chandler et al., 2011).

Thus, this research undertook an exploration on the key developmental relationships within an established business owner-manager's network, and the types of mentoring support offered by the individual dyads in their networks. Key developmental relationships

in this study are defined as the relationships that comprise an individual's developmental network. The individuals providing support within these developmental networks can be considered mentors or developers.

#### **2.4.2 Support Functions Played by Mentors**

The most prominent work on mentor functions was conducted by Kram (1983) in an organisational context where mentor functions were grouped in to psychosocial and career functions. Career enhancing functions are defined as types of support offered by a mentor-figure that help a protégé “learn the ropes” (Kram & Ragins, 2007). The career enhancing functions of a mentor include *sponsorship (advocating on behalf of the entrepreneur to others), coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work or protection* (Kram, 1983). The psychosocial functions of a mentor are those functions which use trust and intimacy in a relationship to help a protégé with *personal growth, identity development, self-efficacy and self-worth* (Kram & Ragins, 2007). These functions can include *role-modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship* (Kram, 1983).

Further research on mentor functions have expanded on the range of mentor functions that can be accessed by an individual. Several studies have proposed that role modelling is a third, distinct type of support separate from psychosocial functions, and that role modelling includes two sub-functions which are *career behaviours to emulate, and work ethics and values* (Dobrow et al., 2012). Some scholars have proposed a new sub-function for career support termed *freedom and opportunity for skill development*, and a new subfunction under psychosocial support that has been termed *inspiration and motivation* (Dobrow et al., 2012).

In line with the development of the “developmental networks” construct, the understanding of the roots of mentor functions has also evolved (Kram & Ragins, 2007). The career and psychosocial functions played by mentor-like figures has different and independent roots. Furthermore, Kram and Ragins (2007) found that both career and psychosocial functions can be offered by the same or different mentor-like figures to varying degrees and ranges. The types of support that are offered by mentor-like figures is dependant both on the protégé's needs as well as the ability and motivation of the mentor to provide these types of support (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Finally, actors within an individual's life may provide

these functions without being considered mentors, in line with developmental network theory discussed previously (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

### **2.4.3 Mentor Functions for Entrepreneurs**

As stated previously, much of the research on mentoring has been conducted in youth development, organisational and educational settings (St-Jean & Audet, 2013). Limited research has been done on the functions played by mentors in an entrepreneurial context.

Since entrepreneurial mentoring may be different to mentoring in other contexts, the available literature on mentor functions for novice entrepreneurs has been reviewed. It is important to note that most of the studies that have been conducted in an entrepreneurial context have oriented themselves toward nascent or novice entrepreneurs alone.

St-Jean (2011) found that many of the mentor functions identified by Kram (1983) could apply to novice entrepreneurs in formal mentoring programmes. These mentoring functions in entrepreneurial contexts can be referred to with the headings career/business-related, psychological and role modelling.

The psychological functions of a mentor for novice entrepreneurs include the *mentor as a reflector*, which entails a mentor acting as a mirror: giving feedback to the novice entrepreneur on their business plan, and the image that the entrepreneur portrays to others (St-Jean, 2011). The mentor also plays a role in providing *reassurance* to the entrepreneur. This helps the entrepreneur through difficult times and alleviates stress by putting things in perspective. Mentors provide *motivation* to entrepreneurs, encouraging them and allowing them to build self-confidence. In addition, mentors act as *confidants*, in which a relationship of trust develops over time, as the novice entrepreneur comes to trust their mentor as they would a friend (St-Jean, 2011).

The career-related functions of a mentor in an entrepreneurial context include the mentor acting as an *integrator* who helps the novice integrate into their business community by providing contacts and making important introductions (St-Jean, 2011). The mentor provides the novice entrepreneur with *information support*, such as laws that they need to be aware of, business management skills, industry information, and so on. A mentor *confronts* the novice entrepreneur when necessary, through challenging assumptions and ideas with the intention of strengthening and developing them. Further, the mentor acts

as a *guide*, helping the novice entrepreneur improve problem comprehension, helping the entrepreneur by, making suggestions and giving advice when necessary (St-Jean, 2011).

Finally, a mentor acts as a *role model* to a novice entrepreneur. The entrepreneur learns by listening to the mentor's stories and experiences, trying to emulate the behaviours that precipitated in the mentor's success (St-Jean, 2011).

St-Jean's (2011) adaptation of Kram's (1983) model is useful to understand the mentoring needs of entrepreneurs. These mentoring needs may or may not be fulfilled by a single individual, as has been seen from the literature on mentoring in other contexts.

The literature on developmental networks makes a key distinction between the functions played by social networks and developmental networks. Although the literature recognises the conceptual closeness of the two constructs, some authors claim that social networks are conceptually distinct, since friendship networks may provide psychosocial support but no career-related support, while advice networks may provide career-related support but no psychosocial support (Dobrow et al., 2012). However, no consensus on this issue has emerged, with numerous other authors recognising that both career and psychosocial functions are not mutually exclusive, and can in fact be offered by a single mentor-like figure (Dobrow et al., 2012). Table 3 collates and presents the literature reviewed on mentor functions in organisational and entrepreneurial contexts.

Table 3: Mentor Functions in Organisational and Entrepreneurial Contexts

Type of Function	Mentor Function	Context	Source
<b>Career/ Business Related</b>			
	Sponsorship	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Coaching	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Exposure-and-visibility (similar to integration and socialisation in an entrepreneurial context)	Organisational Entrepreneurial	Kram (1983); St-Jean (2011)
	Offering challenging work	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Offering protection	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Opportunity for skills development	Organisational	Dobrow et al. (2012)
	Information support (technical information, business management information)	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)
	Confrontation (challenging ideas)	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)
	Guide (problem solving, advice)	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)
<b>Psychosocial Functions</b>			
	Acceptance and confirmation	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Counselling	Organisational	Kram (1983)
	Friendship (confidant in entrepreneurial literature)	Organisational Entrepreneurial	Kram (1983); St-Jean (2011)
	Inspiration and motivation	Organisational	Dobrow et al. (2012)
	Reflector	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)
	Reassurance	Organisational	St-Jean (2011)
	Motivation	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)
<b>Role Modelling</b>			
	Career behaviours to emulate	Organisational	Dobrow et al. (2012)
	Work ethics and values	Organisational	Dobrow et al. (2012)
	Story telling (sharing experiences)	Entrepreneurial	St-Jean (2011)

Note: Brackets represent similar terms used in an entrepreneurial context. See reference list for references.

As is seen from Table 3, many of the mentoring functions in entrepreneurial contexts have been based on the original research conducted by Kram (1983) in an organisational context. The research on mentor functions for entrepreneurs conducted by St-Jean (2011), was conducted in the context of a formal mentoring programme and thus, the inclusion of informal mentors may reveal many more or different mentoring functions in an entrepreneurial context. Furthermore, recently, there has been a call for further research on mentoring needs and how they are fulfilled by the various mentoring relationships (Janssen et al., 2015). Thus, this is an area of research that was explored further in this study.

## **2.5 Understanding the Outcomes of Mentoring**

The fourth research objective outlined in Section 1.4, was to understand the outcomes and perceived value of mentoring as experienced by established business owner-managers in South Africa. In light of this research question, this section explores extant literature on the mentoring outcomes in various contexts, in order to further strengthen the understanding of the concepts.

Since mentoring has been seen as a tool for adult learning and development, it seems natural that there are multiple studies that have been done on mentoring outcomes and benefits, for the protégés as well as the mentors involved (Allen & Eby, 2010; Kram & Ragins, 2007; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; St-Jean & Audet, 2013). Much of the research conducted thus far has been in an organisational context with limited research available in the entrepreneurial context, with a greater focus placed on the outcomes for protégés than those for mentors.

Drawing on relevant available literature, outcomes and benefits for protégés will be outlined in this section.

### **2.5.1 *Mentoring Outcomes for Proteges***

In the literature on mentoring, the most prominent review of literature for mentoring outcomes in an organisational and youth mentoring context was conducted by Allen and Eby (2010). Outcomes can be defined as the benefits that are accrued by a protégé resulting from mentoring relationships (Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

Allen and Eby (2010), gathered data from multiple studies to outline the specific benefits accrued by protégés engaged in formal or informal mentoring relationships. Their findings derived from studying mentoring in an organisational context, have been summarised and categorised based on their observed psychosocial, career-related, and role-modelling benefits in Table 4.

*Table 4: Mentoring Outcomes for Protégés in an Organisational Context*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Psychosocial Benefits</b>		
	Self-efficacy	Improvement in one’s belief in their own abilities to achieve their goals.
	Work-life balance	Improving the attainment of work-life balance which ultimately leads to increased job and life satisfaction.
	Goal achievement	Learning how to better achieve goals.
	Alleviating anxiety	
	Risk-taking confidence	Enhanced confidence which enables risk taking for goal achievement.
	Credibility and reputation	Improved credibility due to a mentor managing a protégé’s reputation.
	Power and confidence	Improved power and confidence by association with a mentor who can be a powerful ally in an organisation.
	Psychological health	Better psychological health through a positive attitude cultivated by a mentor.
<b>Career Benefits</b>		
	Attracting decision makers	The ability to attract decision makers in the organisation especially if associated with an influential mentor.
	Improved salary and promotions	The ability to get promotions by learning ingratiation.
	Improved technical knowledge	Better technical knowledge about the job and organisation.
	Knowledge, skills and abilities	Improved human capital outcomes through the development of one’s knowledge, skills and abilities by a mentor.
	Opportunity spotting and grabbing	The ability to take advantage of opportunities brought about through other mentor functions such as socialisation and integration.
<b>Role Modelling</b>		
	Motivation and identity development	Improved motivational and self-definitional aspects through a role model’s influence.

*Note: Mentoring Outcomes Adapted From Allen and Eby (2010)*

Some of the mentoring outcomes from an organisational context may not be relevant to entrepreneurial mentoring. However, most of the outcomes can be adapted and understood in an entrepreneurial context. For example, while Allen and Eby (2010) spoke of the improved credibility and reputation for a protégé within an organisational context, their discussion may be applicable in an entrepreneurial context too, in which a protégé gains improved credibility in the industry they are operating in.

The most relevant study for mentoring outcomes in an entrepreneurial context, was conducted by Kunaka and Moos (2019) in South Africa. The authors in the study conducted a survey with 209 entrepreneurs and small business owners. While this study was not directed toward established business owner-managers alone, the scope of the study was close enough to draw on. Much of the focus in the study was on human capital and business outcomes, with a limited focus on psychosocial outcomes. The study categorised outcomes based on social cognitive theory into *skills-transfer outcomes*, *knowledge-transfer outcomes*, *entrepreneur resilience outcomes* and *business outcomes* (Kunaka & Moos, 2019). The results of their study, along with relevant and detailed descriptions, are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Mentoring Outcomes for Protégés in an Entrepreneurial Context.

Categories	Outcomes	Description
<b>Skills transfer</b>		
	Opportunity identification and evaluation	Spot opportunities and evaluate if they are worth pursuing
	Clear business vision	Create a desirable vision for the business through reflecting on actions
	Business management abilities	Provide direction for the business and ensure the meaningful contributions of staff
	Goal achievement	Achieve planned goals
	Networking	Form better connections with people and organisations that may be useful to the business
<b>Knowledge transfer</b>		
	Understanding accounts	Improved financial literacy to read and understand the business' accounts
	Managing operations	Run day to day activities better so as to manage production and distribution and relate better to customers
	Human resource management	Better management of staff such as recruitment, selection and development
<b>Entrepreneur resilience</b>		
	Validation of self-image	Improved feelings of capability and motivation to persevere
	Self-efficacy and confidence	Improved belief in one's own ability to achieve
	Fostering entrepreneurial culture	Improved sense of authenticity as an entrepreneur
	Personal development	Improved self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses
<b>Business outcomes</b>		
	Better productivity levels	Better efficiency in tasks
	Better after sales follow-up	Improved customer service and follow up after the sale has been made
	Improve product range	Increased range of products offered to market
	Increase in revenue	Increased sales
	Increase in profitability	Improved bottom line and retained earnings
	Reduced costs	Reduction in expenses
	Improves rates of business survival	The building of a sustainable business

Note: Mentoring Outcomes Adapted From Kunaka & Moos (2019)

A comparison of the differences in outcomes in an organisational context versus an entrepreneurial context reveals that there are some common outcomes from mentoring in both contexts, such as improvements in self-image, better self-efficacy and confidence, the ability to improve networks and spot and evaluate opportunities, along with the ability to derive better work-related and technical know-how. Outcomes such as improved revenues, profitability and reduced costs in an entrepreneurial context could be equated with better salaries and promotional opportunities in an organisational context. However, there are noteworthy differences in the outcomes of the two contexts, particularly as concerns the management skills that are involved. This is to be expected, as entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers enjoy differing ranges of responsibilities and roles they can occupy, in comparison with individuals who are employed in organisational settings. This finding further supports the view that the research that has been conducted on employees in organisational contexts may not be entirely applicable to entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This research was undertaken to explore the nature and perceived value of mentoring, and how it occurs among established business owner-managers through developmental networks. This type of mentoring could be formal or informal, traditional or non-traditional, with single, multiple mentors or social actors forming part of an entrepreneur's or business owner-manager's developmental network.

In order to understand the nature of such mentoring, it was imperative to understand it in context. Entrepreneurs are not a homogenous entity, and their backgrounds and phases of business greatly influence the challenges they face in business, the types of support they seek and specifically how these needs are met through the mentor functions played by key developmental relationships in their lives.

The literature on mentoring that has been reviewed thus far has mainly been conducted in the field of organisational contexts and entrepreneurial mentoring for new businesses. Some literature on human capital and social capital theory has been drawn on in order to gain insights into the role of developmental networks.

Based on the call for research on: the nature of developmental networks, especially in different contexts (Dobrow et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2015); the need for a focus on

theory building in mentorship (Janssen et al., 2015); the disagreement on mentor functions played by mentors and developers (Allen & Eby, 2010); and the need for an exploration of the behaviours and mentor functions in individual dyads of developmental networks (Janssen et al., 2015), this research undertook to address these gaps in the literature reviewed.

Furthermore, in light of the research objectives outlined in Section 1.4 and the limited availability of literature in the areas outlined, this research adopted an exploratory approach to examine the nature and perceived value of mentorship for established business owner-managers in South Africa.

The research objectives, along with the review of literature and the uncovering of the paucity of literature in certain areas led to the development of the research questions as outlined in Chapter Three.

### **3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

These research questions were formed based on the research objectives and the availability of literature in the literature review. The goal of the research was to answer the four specific questions that were derived from the literature review and the research objectives. The view on mentorship undertaken in this study was a broad one, which considered developmental relationships that established business owner-managers engaged in, even if they did not acknowledge these relationships as mentoring relationships, or the support offered by these relationships as mentor functions. This approach led to the development of interview questions that were broad in nature and attempted to understand if any activities or behaviours displayed by established business owner-managers and their networks could fall under the category of mentorship, and then to subsequently understand the phenomenon more deeply. The interview questions formulated to gain insights into the research questions are mapped in Table 6.

#### **Research question one: What are the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers?**

The aim of this research question was to understand the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers. In order to gain insights into this question, it was essential to gain an understanding of an established business owner-manager's background, as well as their perceived challenges in business. Furthermore, this question also tried to gain new insights into factors that may not yet have been considered or may subsequently emerge in the context of the emerging economy in South Africa.

#### **Research question two: How do established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business, including engaging in mentoring?**

While research question one aimed to understand the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers by understanding their challenges in business, the aim of this research question was to understand how established business owner-managers dealt with challenges in business, and to determine if mentorship is a practice that established business owner-managers engaged in frequently to overcome challenges in business.

**Research question three: How do established business owner-managers fulfil their mentoring needs from one or more relationships in their networks?**

This research question sought to understand which relationships established business owner-managers turned to most often when trying to deal with challenges, and which mentoring functions were played by these developmental relationships, in order to help them to overcome the challenges that they faced. This question further sought to gain new insights into the specific relationships established business owner-managers tapped into, in the effort to fulfil their needs, as well as gather any new insights into mentor functions that are played by these networks. This research question specifically aimed to address the gap in literature pertaining to the limited understanding of the individual dyads in developmental networks, and the mentor functions played by these networks (Janssen et al., 2015), as well as to expand on extant literature on individuals comprising developmental networks (Allen & Eby, 2010; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram & Ragins, 2007), and the mentor functions played by developmental networks and mentors (Kram, 1983; St-Jean, 2011).

**Research question four: what is the perceived value and outcomes of mentorship, for established business owner-managers?**

The aim of this research question was to confirm if established business owner-managers experienced any notable outcomes from the mentoring they received. Further, this question sought to establish any new insights into the benefits of mentoring for established business owner-managers, even in cases where the support they received was not acknowledged as mentoring. This question also sought to gain insights into the mentor functions and developmental relationships that were perceived as most valuable to established business owner-managers and contributed the most to their growth and development.

## 4 CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the underlying philosophy of the research, followed by an in-depth discussion of the nature of the research design, methodological choices and data gathering and analysis techniques. Since the research was conducted on mentoring in a context that is still relatively unexplored (established business owner-managers in South Africa), an exploratory, qualitative study was undertaken. The section concludes by identifying limitations to the study.

### 4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Approach

Exploring the nature of mentoring required the research to be conducted among the 'social actors' engaged in the mentoring relationships (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). In order to understand the nature and perceived value of mentoring, the researcher assigned meaning to the language and actions of the subjects of research (Thomas, 1998). Thus, this research took an **interpretive approach** based in the belief that humans construct their reality through their perceptions of experiences (Patton, 2002). Hence, the research philosophy underpinning the research is one of **Social Constructionism**.

While the interpretive approach is closely tied to Social Constructionism as a philosophy, the research also took a **pragmatic stance**. The researcher recognises the value of being able to apply knowledge in a way that can be used for the good of individuals and society. Thus, the research problem and the research findings were thought of from a practical perspective, exploring the ramifications of the findings for business practice.

Under Social Constructionism, the notion of truth does not correspond with an objective reality (Patton, 2002). Rather, truth becomes a matter of consensus between the groups and individuals who act as constructors of reality (Patton, 2002). In this case, the constructors of reality were the participants who were established business owner-managers. Social constructionism focuses on the context in which interaction takes place, as well as the interaction itself (Cunliffe, 2008). Thus, part of the research design was to understand the backgrounds of participants and how this shaped their experiences in the context of mentoring.

The nature of this research itself can be seen to be embedded in the philosophy of **Relationally Responsive Social Constructionism**, where learning is a dialogic process which explores similar and different perspectives and interpretations of situations (Cunliffe, 2008). Studying the nature of mentoring as experienced by the participants assumes that the established business owner-managers learn through processes of interaction and dialogue with others, in the context of their key developmental relationships. Furthermore, the researcher, through dialogue, was involved in understanding and interpreting the experiences of other participants, and how these experiences shaped their own realities.

Based on the philosophy of Social Constructionism, the methodological approach needed to be one an inductive one, where emergent ideas were studied based on the narrative provided by participants. The research questions were based on the review of literature as depicted in Chapter Two. Some of the questions were specifically based on the theory from Kram (1983) and St-Jean (2011), to guide the design of the semi structured interview. The data was then analysed inductively, to code for any emergent themes from the interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

This approach is the most appropriate because extant literature on the subject is available mainly in the context of formal organisational mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2010; Bynum, 2015; Dobrow et al., 2012; Kram, 1983) and mentoring for novice entrepreneurs (St-Jean, 2011). Since this study was exploring both formal and informal mentoring of established business owner-managers in South Africa, the literature, while useful for guiding the design of the semi-structured interview questions, was not perfectly applicable to the context of the study. Therefore, the data analysis was purely inductive in nature.

The entire range of methodological choices is outlined and represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.

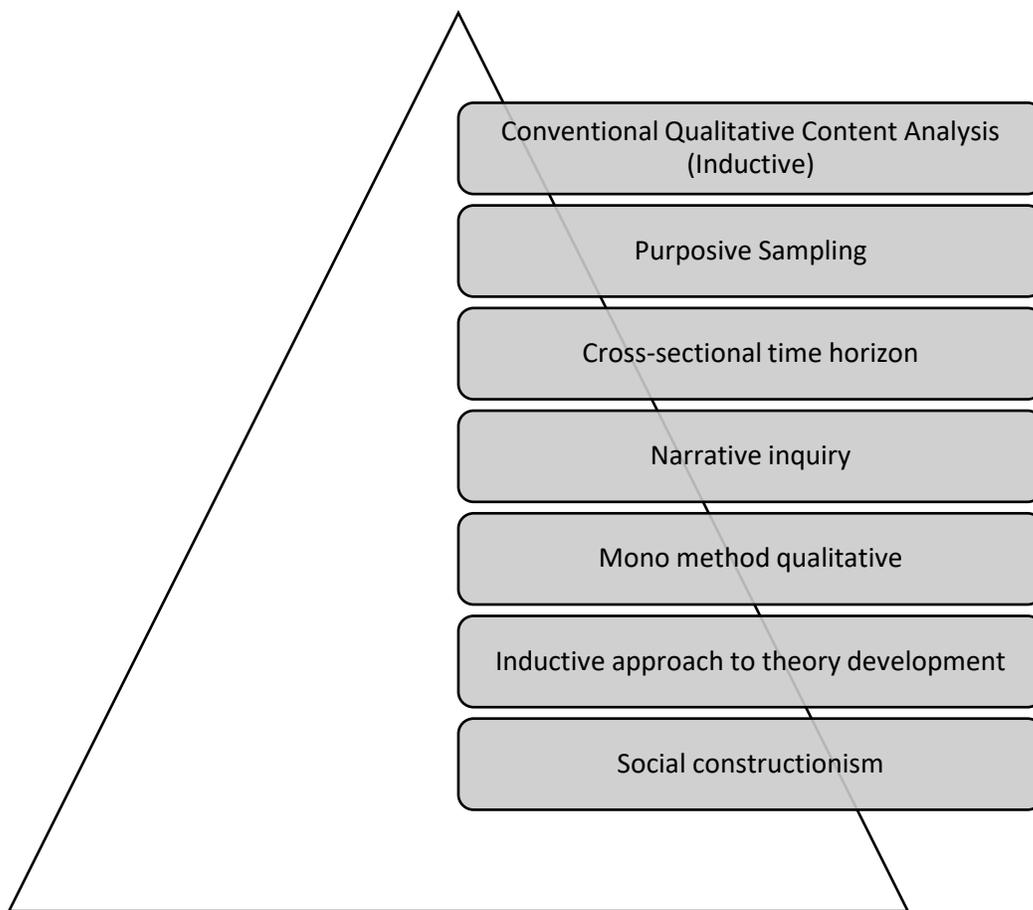


Figure 2: Overview of research methodology

Figure 2 gives an overview of the research methodology used. The underpinning philosophy is one of Social Constructionism, with an inductive approach to theory development. The mode of enquiry is narrative inquiry, using purposive maximum variation sampling. The analysis technique used was one of conventional qualitative content analysis. These methodological choices are explained in the sections that follow.

## 4.2 Methodological Choices

Recent studies conducted in the field of mentoring entrepreneurs have employed qualitative methods (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Kubberoed & Hagen, 2015; McKevitt & Marshall, 2015; Moulson & Davis, 2016; St-Jean, 2011), quantitative methods (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016;

Kunaka & Moos, 2019; St-Jean et al., 2018) and mixed method studies (St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

Jacobi (1991) argued that quantitative approaches to studying mentoring resulted in extremely narrow findings that could only be applied to the specific organisation or context of the study. Crisp & Cruz (2009) support this view by arguing that quantitative approaches to study mentoring are not always appropriate due to the lack of an agreed operational definition of mentoring that is specific enough to test and report on. They further argue that quantitative methods are not appropriate when relying on a protégé's self-reported benefits from mentoring, when using data collected at a point in time.

Thus, this research used a mono method qualitative design to conduct exploratory research in a nascent field. By doing so, this research may uncover new insights related to the topic explored.

Given that the philosophy underlying the research approach is one of Relationally Responsive Social Constructionism, **Narrative Inquiry** through **semi-structured interviews** was the most appropriate for the nature of the research. Narrative inquiry allowed the entire mentoring experiences of established business owner-managers to be gathered rather than collecting discrete data points that may have arisen from structured interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Furthermore, narrative inquiry allowed an established business owner-manager to tell their story as it unfolded (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007) which enabled a deeper understanding of how mentoring relationships emerge and change over the course of an established business owner-manager's journey based on their differing needs over time. In this approach, the researcher took the role of a listener, facilitating the story telling of the participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

Due to the time constraints of the research project, a **cross-sectional study** was conducted as a snapshot of the established business owner-manager's perceptions of developmental relationships at a particular time (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). However, the narrative inquiry approach allowed an exploration of past and current mentoring experiences of participants.

### **4.3 Population and Sampling Strategy**

The population defined for this research was owner-managers that were running established businesses in South Africa. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Kelley et al., 2017) reports that 2.5% of the adult population (aged 18 to 64 years) in South Africa are owners of established businesses. Established businesses are defined by the same report as mature businesses that have been paying salaries for over 3.5 years.

The level of analysis for this study was the individual established business owner-manager. In order to identify established business owner-managers that met the criteria for this research, the following organisations were approached to gain access to the limited population set in South Africa:

1. *The Entrepreneur's Organisation Johannesburg*: a global peer to peer network of influential business owners with a minimum turnover of USD 1 million annually ('Entrepreneurs' Organization | EO Johannesburg Membership Qualification', 2019).
2. *Women's Council of Entrepreneurs, South Africa*: a Johannesburg based non-profit organisation, dedicated to the empowerment and upliftment of women owned businesses in South Africa.

The above organisations are entrepreneur and small business networking or support organisations that were likely to have access to individuals needed for this study. These organisations assisted in making referrals to the researcher. Participants were selected based on them meeting the primary criteria of being established business owner-managers in South Africa.

#### **4.4 Unit of Analysis**

The primary focus of the data collection and analysis through narrative inquiry was based on the lived experiences of individuals and not the individuals themselves. There was a need to go beyond the individual when trying to understand human development, specifically avoiding the pitfall of individualistic reductionism (Moen, 2017). The unit was not a whole of elements, but rather a unified system – a living part of the whole that could not be broken down any further (Moen, 2017). Moen (2017) argued that narratives meet the criteria of a unit since they cannot be deconstructed or broken down further without changing the characteristics of a lived experience.

The research interest was the lived experience of a specific phenomenon: particularly the nature and perceived value of mentoring as it occurs among established business owner-managers in South Africa. The field of study falls under adult learning and development. Thus, the unit of analysis was not the individual established business owner-manager themselves, but rather the narrative they presented during the process of data collection through narrative inquiry.

#### 4.5 Sampling Method and Size

The inductive, exploratory nature of the study required that the samples selected were information-rich cases for an in depth study to address the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2002). Thus, purposeful sampling was used by identifying individuals who meet the criteria of the study.

Since the research aimed to understand themes in the nature of mentoring experiences among established business owner-managers, the sample incorporated a wide variety of lived experiences within the population set to be studied. **Purposive maximum variation sampling** allowed for common patterns to emerge among a variety of lived experiences of established business owner-managers and thus revealed shared dimensions of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). Sample variety was based on: the sector of business; the age of the business owner-manager; and the gender of the business owner-manager.

The sample size for qualitative enquiry needs to be based on the purpose of the inquiry, since “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). While sampling to the point of redundancy is ideal (Patton, 2002), the research is time bound with limited resources and needs to consider the practicalities of such. The recommended sample size for a varied population in non-probability sampling is between 12 and 30 participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Thus, a sample size of 14 participants was deemed sufficient for this study.

Participants were selected across ten different industries. These were finance and accounting, interior design, events and catering, education, food retail, jewellery wholesale, media and marketing, clothing manufacturing, consumer services, transportation and non-

profit healthcare. Seven male and seven female participants were selected in order to avoid any gender bias in the findings. Further details of the selected sample are provided in, [Appendix C](#).

#### **4.6 Measurement Instrument**

Narrative inquiry with semi-structured interviews requires the interviewer to be the main instrument of research or data collection (Josselson, 2013). Narrative interviews were open ended, guiding participants to the area of interest for the researcher, yet allowing participants to ascribe their own meanings to the dialogue (Josselson, 2013).

An interview guide was developed to list issues that need to be explored during the interview. This formed part of the measurement instrument. The guide provided topics and subject areas in which the researcher was free to probe and explore information that elucidated and illuminated the underlying research questions (Patton, 2002). The interview guide helped ensure that different participants interviewed were done so in a systematic manner that delimited the study to issues that need to be explored (Patton, 2002). However, the sequencing of questions was not fixed and depended on answers received from participants during the interview.

Care was taken to guide participants to the areas being studied, yet not to structure the interview to an extent where participants were asked leading questions. Open-ended questions were asked that encouraged participants to share their experiences of growth and development as entrepreneurs and business owners and to identify key individuals in their lives that may have contributed to such growth.

Participants were not asked direct questions around mentors so that their narratives were unbiased, and they were able to identify individuals and experiences which may not have been labelled as mentors in their minds. In order to ensure that the interview guide could achieve this, a pilot test was conducted with a test participant for evaluation of the topics and questions within the guide.

The semi-structured interview guide is presented in Table 6. As mentioned previously, questions were open ended in nature, allowing participants to share experiences freely. Some

of the probing questions in the guide were based on sensitising concepts from the mentor functions literature by Kram (1983) and St-Jean (2011). Interview questions were mapped to the research questions outlined in Chapter Three. This mapping is depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

RESEASRCH QUESTION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
<p><b>Research question one: what are the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about your background               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (Probe) How did you become an entrepreneur/ business owner?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Tell me more about your experience of owning and running a business?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (Probe) How was it when you first started?</li> <li>b. (Probe) What is that experience like today?                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Probe – positive, negative – overall happiness.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Tell me about the challenges you face as a business owner in South Africa?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (Probe) Tell me about those challenges when you started out.</li> <li>b. (Probe) Tell me about some of the challenges you face today.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Research question two: how do established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business, including engaging in mentoring?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. How did or do you overcome any challenges you face in business?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (Probe) Tell me about any support mechanisms that enabled you to overcome these challenges. (include TV, books etc).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Research question three: how do established business owner-managers fulfil their mentoring needs through one or more relationships in their networks?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Were there any key individuals/ organisations in your life who supported you through this journey?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Tell me more about who these people/ organisations are.</li> <li>b. How did these individuals/ organisations support you?                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. (Probe) Tell me about people who helped or still help you gain insights into the workings of the industry and the market?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. (Probe) Tell me about any people who helped or still help you in terms of managing the business as it grew?</li> <li>iii. (Probe) Tell me about any new skills you developed as a result of these key relationships.</li> <li>iv. (Probe) Tell me about individuals who helped or still help make key introductions for your business.</li> <li>v. (Probe) I'd like to know more about individuals who helped or still help support you psychologically when times were tough, or who celebrated victories with you.</li> <li>vi. (Probe) Have any of these individuals helped you become more self-aware as an individual?</li> <li>vii. (Probe) I'd like to know about individuals who helped or still help you physically by providing resources such as money, or services that helped you grow.</li> <li>viii. (Probe) I'd like to know about individuals who have supported and/or continue to support you in terms of your personal life.</li> </ul> <p>6. I'd like to go a bit deeper to understand the ways in which certain people have supported you through your journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Have these or any other individuals helped you reflect on yourself as an entrepreneur in your interactions with others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. (Probe) If so, tell me how they do this?</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Tell me about any people that offer you reassurance during times of self-doubt or anxiety? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. (Probe) If so, how does this play out?</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Tell me about how any of these or other individuals motivate you during times when you are feeling de-motivated.</li> <li>d. Tell me about these or other individuals who help you think through your ideas and challenge them when necessary in order to provide you with some perspective or different points of view.</li> <li>e. Tell me about these or other individuals who guide you and offer you business advice.</li> <li>f. Are there any individuals you look up to as role models for yourself? Tell me more about these people.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Tell me about how any of these individuals relate stories of their own experiences to help you through any challenges you face.</li> <li>h. From your perspective, what have these individuals gained from supporting you?</li> <li>i. Are there any individuals who have helped you grow that you do not know personally, but follow through the media and books or other mediums?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research Question 4: What is the perceived value of the support received by established business owner-managers through their networks?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. I'd like to know more about the value of some of the support you have received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Which of these relationships would you rate as most important to your success as a business owner?</li> <li>b. What kind of support received would you say has been or is key to your ongoing success as a business owner?</li> <li>c. What are the things you have learnt or gained from the individuals you have mentioned?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 4.7 Data Gathering Process

A total of 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the selected sample of established business owner-managers. Interviews ranged from 39 minutes to 109 minutes, with an average of 59 minutes per interview. The varying lengths of the interviews demonstrates the variety of ways in which participants wished to share their experiences. While some participants were brief in their descriptions, others welcomed the opportunity to talk at length and reflect on their journeys as business owner-managers and entrepreneurs.

Initial contact was made via telephone and email to establish a rapport with the participant and state confidentiality boundaries (Josselson, 2013). A mutually convenient appointment time and place was established during the initial call and email. A consent form was developed and given to participants in order to get their consent before the interview. The consent form also included a non-disclosure agreement to help participants feel comfortable and allow them to speak freely and honestly. A sample of the invitation letter and consent form is given in [Appendix A](#).

In-person interviews were conducted with willing participants. In five cases, where participants were not available to have in person interviews, the interviews were conducted via telephone. Although this was not the preferred method, unforeseen circumstances combined with the lack of participant availability for an in person meeting left telephone interviews as the only other viable option. Saunders and Lewis (2017) state that in person interviews, telephone interviews and interviews via Skype are all acceptable modes of data collection. Based on consent received by participants, an audio recorder was used to transcribe interviews in addition to field notes written during the interview. Recordings were transcribed and compared to field notes to ensure quality of data.

#### **4.7.1 Interview Process**

Prior to commencing the interview, participants were once again told of the purpose of the research. The word mentorship was avoided in order not to bias participants. Rather, participants were told that the purpose of the research was to explore the developmental relationships in their lives and the types of support they had received as established business owner-managers, and how this contributed to their growth.

The opening question was to establish the researcher's interest in the participant's experience (Josselson, 2013). Participants were invited to tell a story of their experience rather than an answer (Josselson, 2013). Participants were free to talk about the experiences that they felt were significant. The approach taken towards interview questions by participants itself gave insight in to factors that participants considered relevant (Josselson, 2013). In some cases, the participants' narratives did not fit the prior research formulation. For example, in the case of one interview, the participant had very limited developmental relationships and experiences and reportedly received little to no support as an established business owner-manager. The narrative approach allowed an in-depth exploration of this experience, ultimately proving illuminating to the research (Josselson, 2013).

In general, participants were asked seven main questions, with sub questions that were a follow up or probe, where participants did not elaborate their experiences. Their responses were listened to carefully and in a respectful way. For thirteen interviews, interviews were conducted until no new insights were provided by the participants. In one interview with Mark, the participant had rich experiences to share, but ultimately the interview had to be cut short

due to the participant's time constraints. However, most of the interview questions were covered in this interview except for the seventh one. This interview was included in the data set due to the rich findings and insights offered by the participant.

In preparation for the data collection, a pilot interview was conducted in order to test the interview guide and help the researcher refine her technique. This pilot interview allowed the researcher an opportunity to further refine the interview guide or modify her technique if needed (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). During the pilot interview, the researcher noticed a flaw in her interviewing technique. This interview resulted in the participant narrating lengthy technical aspects of his business and ultimately running out of time before the research questions could be explored. The researcher realised that care must be taken to guide the participant towards the research questions being explored. Furthermore, the interview questions needed to be asked in a manner that was brief and clear allowing the participants to focus on that part of their narrative. Based on this insight, the interviewing technique for subsequent interviews was tweaked and an improvement in the quality of collected data was seen subsequently. Furthermore, the pilot interview was not included in the data set.

#### **4.8 Analysis Approach**

The analysis undertaken was one of **conventional qualitative content analysis**. Under this approach, the analysis goes beyond counting the frequencies of words in data, to explore the meaning behind language used and classifying these meanings in to categories that represent similar meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This design was most appropriate because of the limited literature available in the context of mentoring for established business owner-managers. Preconceived codes and categories were avoided, allowing for any new insights and relationships to emerge (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, the text needed to be analysed in a holistic manner due to the fact that participants were telling narratives that had to be understood in context of the whole narrative and could not be broken down into individual parts.

Once interviews were transcribed, they were prepped for analysis by a software programme, Atlas TI. Original names of participants were changed, and details such as date, time and place of interview were recorded. Recording and notes were reviewed before the process of analysis began.

Once data was prepped and preloaded onto the software for analysis, an inductive approach was used to code appropriate units of data that conveyed specific meaning. Narrative research is analysed inductively in order to organise the meanings ascribed by participants to a more conceptual level (Salkind & Neil, 2010).

Once codes were assigned through open coding, the codes were collated into categories based on emergent relationships between the codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Atlas.ti allowed categories of data to be analysed using frequencies. Individual codes and subcategories of data within categories were ranked based on the frequencies with which they occurred.

Subcategories of data were then collated into major categories that represented constructs being explored through the research questions. In the final stage of the analysis, the literature reviewed in Chapter Two was used as sensitising concepts to guide the overall category formation in the analysis. A sensitising concept is a loosely operational notion to guide fieldwork (Patton, 2002). It helped determine how these concepts emerged in the various relationships experienced by established business owner-managers. However, these sensitising concepts were only used as a last step, once all the data had been coded and categorised, in order to come up with major categories to classify the subcategories and individual codes. Care was taken to ensure these concepts were used to make sense of the data rather than forcing the data in to an analysis based on the sensitising concepts (Patton, 2002). The entire process was highly iterative in nature, with multiple phases of coding and sub categorisation before the final categories were formulated.

Once data had been organised, it was exported into Microsoft Excel, along with the frequency of codes for further analysis and sense making in the context of research questions. Since the whole approach was highly inductive, a few new categories and themes emerged. Categories that were seen as relevant to the research questions were used, while other related categories that fell out of the scope of the research were not used.

Further analysis was then done to explore any emergent relationships between categories in context of the research questions, for example: most participants state that their families have played the function of psychological support in their journeys.

The entire analysis process is represented in Figure 3.

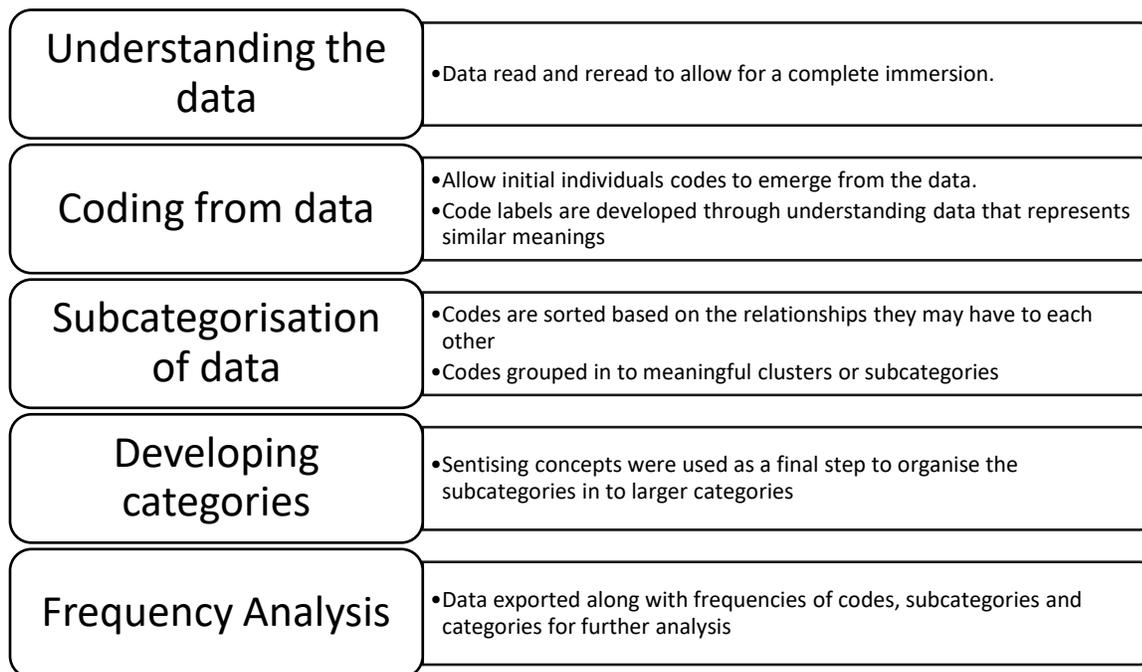


Figure 3: Data analysis process. Adapted from Hsieh and Shannon (2005).

#### 4.9 Quality Control

Validity has been a common concern in qualitative research (Cho & Trent, 2006). Validity deals with the accuracy of data and the objectiveness of findings. However, the philosophy of social constructionism recognises the role of the researcher in the findings, making it interpretive (Patton, 2002). The research strategy was narrative inquiry which dealt with the experiences of individuals, which may defer based on their internal sense making and their perceptions of their relationships. Hence an objective stance claiming accuracy of findings was not possible in this case.

There is an alternate approach to deal with validity in qualitative research, labelled the transactional approach through member checking and triangulation. Member checking can be done throughout the interview by playing back data to the participant to check for perceived accuracy and reactions (Cho & Trent, 2006). However, despite member checking, in interpretative approaches to research, the researchers will inevitably be reconstructing reality and assigning meaning to a participant's experience (Cho & Trent, 2006). Patton (2002) cites

Lincoln and Guba (1986) as stating that within a social constructionist paradigm, validity should be judged by: dependability through a systematic process followed systematically; and authenticity through the consciousness of the researchers' own perspectives and an appreciation for the perspectives of others.

In this case, triangulation can be achieved by reporting multiple perspectives of interpretation rather than reporting a single truth (Patton, 2002). Validity in this research was achieved by: member checking throughout the interviews; following a systematic process for the data collection; and interpretation and reporting multiple perspectives on the interpretation of the data.

Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the sample served to triangulate, where common patterns or themes were observed that emerged from a variety of participants.

#### **4.10 Limitations**

Although qualitative research can provide rich data for exploring concepts in a nascent field, there are limitations that need to be recognised:

1. Limitations of the interview approach include possible distortion of the data depending on the biases and emotional state of the participants during the interview (Patton, 2002).
2. Narrative inquiry as a method is particularly subject to the way the participant recalls or remembers events (Patton, 2002).
3. There is a risk that participants' responses may be swayed by the interviewer's reactions or due to the fact that participants may be conscious of the interviewer's possible perception and possible judgement of them (Patton, 2002).
4. The small sample size may mean that findings from the study may not be generalised to the rest of the population set.
5. Although a maximum variation sample was used (based on age of business, gender of business owner-manager, etcetera), the location of the research may influence findings. Since only urban established business owner-managers from Johannesburg were interviewed, these findings may not be generalisable to all established business owner-managers in rural and urban South Africa.

6. It may be difficult to investigate causality in findings since the research is based on subjective views of the participants.
7. There is no way to verify the data objectively unless there are future studies done to evaluate the findings of the research, possibly through quantitative methods.
8. There is a risk of self-selection bias, since participants that agree to be part of the study may do so because they have strong feelings about the subject. This means they could be different from individuals who decline to be part from the sample (Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Thus, findings may not be generalisable to the whole set of the population being studied.

## 5 CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter lays out the findings based on the research questions outlined in Chapter Three. The chapter is presented in this way due to the inductive nature of conventional qualitative content analysis method. Interview questions posed were based on the semi-structured interview guide, which in turn were mapped to the overarching research questions derived from the literature review in Chapter Two. Findings were then analysed using an inductive approach to generate codes which were categorised. The resulting categories were then developed into overarching themes, which are used to discuss the findings in this chapter.

This chapter uses a few terms that are further clarified. A developmental relationship is defined in this study as a relationship between an established business owner-manager and another individual who provides the established business owner-manager with support that helps them in some form. Developers or mentors are defined as the individual in the developmental relationship that provide support by playing mentor functions for the established business owner-manager. Developers or mentors are the individuals in the developmental relationship with the established business owner-manager. These developmental relationships collectively form an established business owner-manager's developmental network.

The inductive approach to data analysis generated 285 unique codes across 14 interviews (see [Appendix E](#)). This allowed for any emergent themes to be recorded and documented, even if they were not directly related to the research questions. This approach resulted in a macro view of the phenomenon being studied. It also allowed themes to emerge which had not previously been considered or found during the literature review. The resultant themes based on emergent categories are presented in Figure 4. The subsections that follow further link emergent themes to research questions to demonstrate how themes were used to answer the research questions.

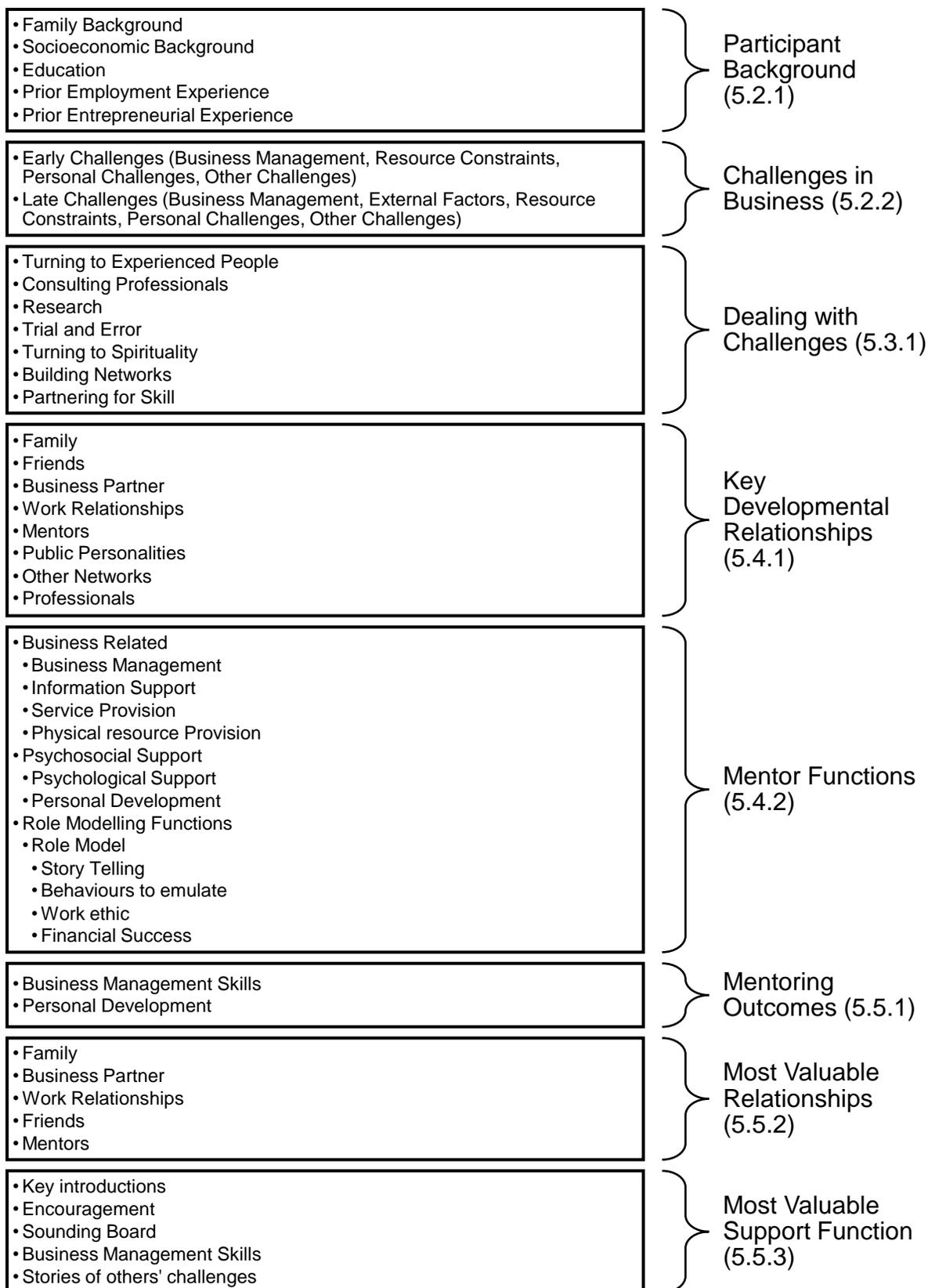


Figure 4: Categories Derived from Codes and Mapped to Overarching Themes Discussed.

## 5.1 Description of the Sample

Table 7 below lists the particulars of the interviewees along with the reason for their selection as part of the sample. Maximum variation purposive sampling was used to select the seven male and seven female established business owner-managers. Participants were selected based on the industry their business operated in to ensure variety in the sample. All participants were running businesses that had been operational and paying salaries for over three and a half years based on the GEM definition of an established business (Herrington et al., 2018). All the business owners interviewed were based in urban Johannesburg, South Africa. Participants names have been anonymised to protect confidentiality.

Table 7: Description of Participants

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>Josh</b>	32	Male	Finance/fund administration	Josh is an entrepreneur who has been running a business for the last six years along with his business partners. He has been paying salaries for the last six years.
<b>Mary</b>	50	Female	Interior design business	Mary is an interior designer who has been running an interior design and decoration company for the last 27 years. She has been paying salaries for the last 25 years.
<b>Yasmin</b>	34	Female	Catering business	Yasmin is an entrepreneur who has been running a catering company with her business partner for the last 4 years. She has been paying salaries for the last 3.5 years.
<b>Mandy</b>	31	Female	Catering business	Mandy is an entrepreneur and Yasmin's business partner in the catering business they run together.
<b>Farah</b>	34	Female	Preschool owner	Farah bought an existing preschool four years ago and currently runs it along with her brother. They have been paying salaries for the last four years and currently have six employees.
<b>Wendy</b>	35	Female	Audit firm	Wendy is a partner in an audit firm along with 2 other individuals. The firm has been operational for the last 30 years and currently has 25 employees. Wendy joined the business as a partner recently and is involved in running the business on a day to day basis.
<b>Lily</b>	47	Female	Non-profit HIV support	Lily is a 47-year-old social worker turned social entrepreneur who runs a non-profit

				that supports HIV research. She joined the business in 2011 as an owner. The business currently has 15 salaried employees.
<b>Jamie</b>	34	Male	Driver training	Jamie is an entrepreneur who runs a driver financing and training company with his business partner for the last 4 years. He has been paying salaries for the last 3.5 years.
<b>Derek</b>	31	Male	Health food restaurant	Derek is an entrepreneur who has been running a Health Food restaurant and paying salaries for the last 4 years.
<b>Davin</b>	65	Male	Jewellery wholesaler	Davin is an entrepreneur who ran a jewellery manufacturing business for over 30 years. He joined the business as a managing partner. Due to a change in market conditions and local regulation, he has now pivoted to jewellery wholesale only. He has been paying salaries for the last 30 years.
<b>Payton</b>	38	Male	Marketing agency	Payton is an entrepreneur who runs a marketing franchise agency for the last 10 years. He has other shareholders in the business who are not actively helping him run the business. They have been paying salaries for the last 10 years.
<b>Robert</b>	36	Male	Uniform manufacturing	Robert runs a uniform manufacturing business along with his brother and father.
<b>Mark</b>	68	Male	Media rental agency	Participant 13 has had extensive corporate experience as the director of marketing for a large chain of supermarkets. He bought in to the media rental agency in 2005 and has since then grown it to employ over 15 people.
<b>Luna</b>	38	Female	Thai massage business	Participant 14 is a 38-year-old massage therapist turned entrepreneur. She founded the business 10 years ago. She has had paid employees for the last 8 years. She currently has 4 employees in the business.

## 5.2 Results for Research Question One

### **Research question one: What are the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers?**

The aim of this research question was to identify the challenges faced by established business owner-managers. Participants were asked questions that allowed them to tell a story about themselves and their experience of running a business today versus when they first started out. Questions one, two and three in the interview guide aimed to answer this question (refer to interview guide in [Appendix B](#)) Since the approach used was one of narrative inquiry, participants were asked open ended questions. Participants were free to interpret and respond to the questions at hand in the way they felt was most appropriate. This process provided insights into which aspects of their stories they felt were relevant and in need of being told.

The responses to this question generated rich findings that provide fruitful insights into the various factors that play a part in the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers. In order to answer the research question holistically, the following factors were considered: participants' backgrounds; and challenges faced by the participant; namely the challenges faced in the company's infancy (early challenges) and challenges faced once the business became a more established entity (late challenges).

The process of developing categories into themes that allowed research question one to be answered is diagrammatically represented in Figure 5.

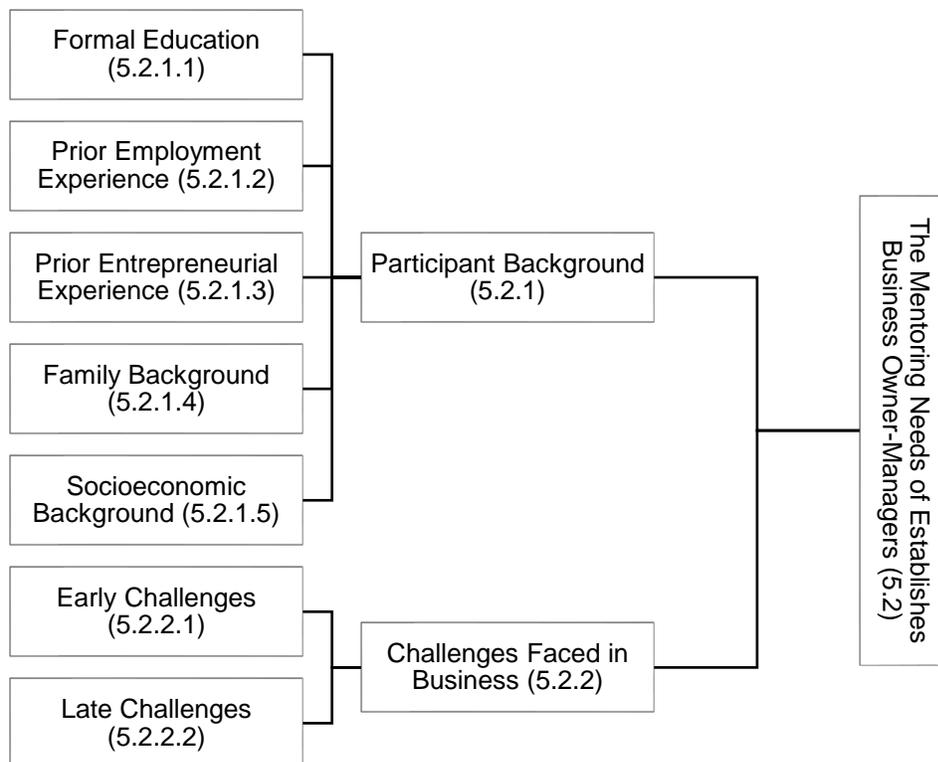


Figure 5: Category to Theme Mapping for Research Question One

### 5.2.1 Participant Background

In order to understand the findings of the research in context, it was important to understand the backgrounds of the individuals interviewed. Understanding the background of the participants also allowed relationships to be explored between the participants' backgrounds and how their backgrounds contributed to or influenced other aspects of this research.

Some participants went into detailed stories of their backgrounds, their education and previous employment and entrepreneurial experiences. Others chose to briefly mention their education background and then speak of their businesses. The way participants responded to this question gave deep insights into aspects of their backgrounds that they felt were relevant to understand them as entrepreneurs and business owners. Table 8 shows key concepts that emerged around the participants backgrounds and the frequency with which they were mentioned in the data set. The most prominent themes are then discussed below.

Table 8: Summary of Findings Relating to the Background of Participants

<b>PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Well Educated	10
Limited Corporate Experience	10
Family of Entrepreneurs	8
Business Experience in Youth	5
Substantial Corporate Experience	5
Limited Education	2
Educated Parents	2
Well Off Family	1
Well Read	1
Socially Conscious Family	1
Well Connected Family	1
Parents who Encouraged Education	1
Difficult Circumstances in Youth	1
Well-Travelled	1
Immigrant	1

### 5.2.1.1 Education

Most participants interviewed mentioned their education levels except for one participant. Most participants interviewed were well educated, having tertiary level qualifications. Three of the participants were qualified chartered accountants and one was an actuary. Participants who were chartered accountants were more influenced by their education in business and spoke of how their education contributed to their ability to manage certain aspects of the business better, however, one chartered accountant participant mentioned that although he was figure oriented, *“practically (he) really knew nothing.”* Another participant who was also a chartered accountant corroborated his experience,

*“On the finance side, I could understand things and figure things out because that’s where my knowledge and experience is, but when it came to other operational things, everything else was new.”*

For Josh, he saw his actuarial qualification as an enabler for entrepreneurship along with the fact that he was living with his parents,

*“I also knew that I would find it quite easy to get a job again because I qualified as an Actuary...so I found it quite easy. So really my risk appetite was probably disproportionately large right, because I could afford to take these chances.”*

Although a few participants mentioned their educational backgrounds, they did not refer to their educational experiences or how these influenced the challenges they faced in business. Two of the participants had limited formal education. However, one had substantial corporate experience, having served as a director for a large corporate, whereas the other had substantial prior entrepreneurial experience, working for his family’s business since childhood.

Despite the emergent trends from the data, the limited emphasis placed on education by participants indicates that for majority of participants, most of the learning and development relating to business occurred in practical work settings.

#### **5.2.1.2 Prior Employment Experience**

The majority of participants interviewed had limited to no employment experience. Of the individuals who did have some employment experience, they quickly found that they got bored, or were more attracted to entrepreneurship as a lifestyle. Farah expressed this as,

*“I’m qualified as a CA but it wasn’t something that I ever enjoyed so I was always kind of looking to do something else. I worked in corporate for a while and I was actually really sick of it so I left without really having a plan and what I did was I started lecturing and then while I was lecturing I had time so I was exploring other possibilities and an opportunity came up where a business was for sale so that’s how I got into business that I’m in now.”*

Josh expressed his frustration with corporate bureaucracy early on in his career,

*“I just felt like I had no value to add, or the value to add at that company was very limited. And so that is the main reason I left to be an entrepreneur, is that I felt like I could actually be unrestrained to create something.”*

For some participants, they acknowledged the lack of prior employment experience as disadvantaging them from managing certain aspects of their entrepreneurial ventures. Yasmin expressed this when she said,

*“I think I personally; it’s been a big challenge because I never had proper corporate experience so there was nothing that I could copy from, you know, or reference from.”*

For the participants who had substantial employment experience, the results were mixed. Mark’s extensive experience in corporate in a high-powered position allowed him to build networks that he continues to use in business today. While for Payton, he found the switch to entrepreneurship from corporate work difficult, he said,

*“Coming from a corporate background, one of the biggest challenges was that you’ve got all of these support structures and all of these resources that you can rely on both locally and globally; um, when you start up in business that all disappears. So everything that I needed to do, instead of it being a push, where you are having resources pushed on you that you could access, it turned to a pull where I was now looking around the market and trying to pull those resources to me from different avenues. So that was the biggest thing is the, the immediate cut off of all resources that I had.”*

### **5.2.1.3 Prior Entrepreneurial Experience**

A few participants interviewed had entrepreneurial experience in their youth. This was either in their family business, or ventures that they started out on their own. This may suggest that their childhood business experience contributed to them becoming comfortable with entrepreneurship or business as a lifestyle. Lily not only worked for her parents while she was in school, but she also helped disadvantaged communities generate an income through

entrepreneurial activities. For Derek, he identifies with entrepreneurship as something that was in built in him,

*“I have always been an entrepreneur from since like five years old! I was doing some little things. And then at KBV market days, as a teenager, we had like a little stand. And there was like an overweight kid at school I used to sell my lunch to!”*

#### **5.2.1.4 Family Background**

Many of the participants interviewed had close family members that were entrepreneurs. This could mean that these individuals either viewed entrepreneurship as a viable career option, or that they were strongly influenced by family members to go into business on their own. As stated by Jamie,

*“I come from a family of entrepreneurs actually, so my mom was an entrepreneur, I worked with her for many years, so she was a serial entrepreneur. She went through a lot of different product lines, all types of industries, I got to learn a lot from her, and I also learned a lot from her mistakes. So I worked with her - she got into a lot of debt when I was 21/22 so it forced us to draw down to only 2 or 3 product lines that worked and then when business was going well, I decided to go out on my own.”*

While another participant, Yasmin said she was influenced to become an entrepreneur because of her parents, who were also entrepreneurs and became familiar with the entrepreneurial way of life as she watched both her parents work tirelessly as entrepreneurs with early mornings and late evenings.

#### **5.2.1.5 Socioeconomic Background**

Most participants did not reference their socio-economic background or wealth status of their families. Of the three participants who mentioned it, for two of them they found it to be an enabler in their journeys as entrepreneurs. For Derek, he *“come(s) from money”*, and his father’s networks played a big role in his ongoing learning and development in business. Furthermore, Derek relied on his father for short term loans in business when he faced issues with cash flows. For Josh, his family’s ability to support him financially helped him take on the risk to become an entrepreneur, he says,

*“Well, I guess something to be aware of is that my situation is I guess different to number of entrepreneurs in that I started off quite young, I did not have much in the way of fixed expenses. I was living with my family, my parents. I knew that if I ran out of savings, that my parents would take care of me.”*

Although few participants spoke of this, the finding is a significant one suggesting that individuals who come from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds may have advantages in entrepreneurship and business ownership that individuals from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds do not have.

### **5.2.2 Understanding the Challenges Faced by Business Owner-Managers**

As stated in Chapter Two, entrepreneurs need support during the various phases of the entrepreneurial process, not just at the nascent stage (St-Jean & Audet, 2012). In order to determine the types of support and mentoring needed by established business owner-managers and entrepreneurs, it was imperative to understand the kinds of challenges such individuals faced in the established phase of business. Question three of the interview culled insights from the business-related challenges reported by participants. Participants were asked to describe their experience of running a business today and to outline some of the challenges they faced in their day to day business-related activities.

During the interviews and the relaying of their narratives, participants briefly discussed their struggles in the earlier stages of business. While the findings on early challenges in business are not exhaustive and discussed in detail, the interviews generated significant insights and allowed a comparison between challenges faced during nascent (early) and more established (late) stages of the business.

### 5.2.2.1 Challenges in the Nascent and New Phases of Business

Tables 9 outlines the main emergent themes of early challenges in business faced by business owners.

Table 9: Early Challenges Faced by Established Business Owner-Managers

<b><u>Early Challenges in Business</u></b>			
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Subcategory</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency of Mentions in Category</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency of Mentions in Subcategory</u></b>
<b>Business Management</b>		<b>22</b>	
	Technical Know-How		5
	Strategy Formulation and Implementation		5
	Sales and Marketing		4
	Systems and Structure		3
	Operations Management		3
	Human Resource Management		1
	Finance Management		1
<b>Resource Constraints</b>	Financial Resources	<b>13</b>	
<b>Personal Challenges</b>		<b>6</b>	
<b>Other Challenges</b>		<b>2</b>	
	Communication		1
	Relationship with Business Partner		1

### Challenges with Business Management

The main theme emerging from early challenges faced by business owner-managers was challenges with certain aspects of managing and running the business. Since a deep understanding of early challenges faced by business owner-managers was not a focus of this research, only the most frequently cited challenges under business management are elaborated on in this section.

#### Technical Know-How

Of this, technical know-how relating to delivery of goods and services provided by the business seemed the biggest challenge. Derek, who owns and runs a health food restaurant, described this as,

*“It was very stressful, and it is still very stressful, those challenges still remain, very high stress levels. Trying to figure out how to cook food, I really didn’t know how to cook food, and that is what we do, so we had no idea there.”*

#### Strategy Formulation and Implementation

Many participants said they had limited knowledge of the industry they were operating in, which in turn affected their ability to formulate a business strategy from a place of understanding. Farah expressed this as,

*“First, I didn’t know a lot about preschools, and I had not run a business before, then we had to try really hard, obviously to try increase the numbers and increase the revenue because we kind of put in our own capital”*

#### Resource Constraints

The limited availability of resources was a common challenge among participants when they started out in business. Lacking sufficient financial resources in particular came to limit the number of people business owners could hire, as well as the ease with which they could run their businesses, with some participants needing to begin their operations in their own homes. Mark mentioned this in the context of working from home,

*“One of the biggest challenges really was lack of resource, you know, lack of resource. Ya, I’m not sure I would recommend (working from home), you got to start somewhere, but try and start it somewhere where it doesn’t really interfere with the family flow, you know.”*

#### *Personal Challenges Faced in Early Stages of the Business*

Participants also described various personal challenges when starting out. One participant described it as an *“emotional battle”* where he just had to *“persevere”*, while another said that he had absolutely *“no support”* when he started out. Mark found that his work had started to interfere with his family life as he started to work from home and started to infringe upon his family’s home space, which in turn affected his relationship with his family.

Other challenges faced by participants extended to issues concerning effective communication with clients, such as how to write professional emails and trying to adapt to the working ways of their new business partner.

#### **5.2.2.2 Challenges in the Established Phase of Business (Late Challenges)**

In terms of challenges that the businesses faced after being established (paying salaries for over three and a half years), there were many themes that emerged. The most prominent theme was challenges with managing the business. In many instances, participants expressed increasing difficulties with management as the conditions in the industry changed, or as they grew and employed more people. Other related concepts that emerged were high amounts of governmental regulation and a weakening economy in South Africa contributing to the challenges faced by established business owner-managers.

This can be seen from the collated findings represented in Table 10. Various aspects of these challenges are discussed in detail in the subsections that follow.

Table 10: Late Challenges in Business Faced by Established Business Owner-Managers

<b>Late Challenges in Business</b>			
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Subcategory</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency of Mentions in Category</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency of Mentions in Subcategory</u></b>
<b>Business Management</b>		85	
	Human Resource Management		31
	Sales and Marketing		19
	Finance Management		15
	Operations Management		8
	Systems and Structure		5
	Strategy Formulation and Implementation		4
	Supply Chain Management		3
<b>External Factors</b>		15	
	Changing Market Needs		5
	Government Regulation		4
	Increased Competition		2
	Not Taken Seriously as SME		2
	Infrastructure Challenges		1
	Volatile Economy		1
<b>Resource Constraints</b>		10	
	Financial Resources		7
	Human Resources		2
	Operational Capacity		1
<b>Personal Challenges</b>		6	
	Abusive work relationships		1
	Emotional difficulties		1
	Fear of failure		1
	Inability to focus		1
	Lack of Motivation		1
	Lack of self-efficacy		
<b>Other</b>		8	
	Relationship with Business Partner		4
	Relationship with Board Members		2
	Bullied by Competitors		1
	Cyber Security Management		1

### Challenges Faced with Business Management

When asked about challenges faced by participants currently, after being considered an established entity, many participants seemed to have similar ongoing struggles, despite being in vastly different industries. Many of the participants repeatedly referred to challenges with human resource management and sales and marketing.

#### Human Resource Management

Human resource management was a common struggle among all but two participants. Derek described his challenges with managing staff in the context of managing employees with varying skill levels,

*“I think like everyone has their own unique problems and issues, and that’s very hard to accommodate because if you accommodate each and every single person, you will run out of business for one thing. And the thing is you’re dealing with like not everyone, a lot of people are of lower level calibre of like; I don’t know, some people you are dealing with are just raw intelligence and another could be cleverer than me with raw intelligence form but they have got no practical knowledge or formal or informal education or practical knowledge so that is very challenging.”*

Mary’s frustrations with staff were slightly different, where she found that her staff were not taking responsibility to complete tasks that she had assigned to them, and often left her to finish up what they couldn’t or didn’t finish up during the day. This could be a time management issue faced by the staff, management’s inability to delegate correctly or simply a demotivated workforce. At one point, Mary had retrenched most of her staff and considered shutting down her business. Her reasoning for that was,

*“You wish you could get something out of your employees, but you don’t get it. Just off hand in 2014 I shut off my work group and went on a light scale to use other workrooms because it was like to them it was coming to work at 7.30 and knocking off at 16.00 whether a thing is finished or not or whether it is at the stage it’s is supposed to be or not by the time they knock off it did not matter. I got to realise that over and*

*above I would have to put in more time and energy to make sure that I meet my deadline. It became just too much for me to handle.”*

Many of the business owners interviewed had various challenges relating to managing employees and surrounding issues with employees such as negotiating with unions in the case of manufacturing businesses, finding the right employees, holding employees accountable for tasks, dealing with negative attitudes of staff members and their resistance to changes in the business such as digitisation.

### Managing Sales and Marketing

The next most pressing issue for business owners was managing their *sales and marketing* activities. Within sales and marketing, the most common challenge was that customers' behaviours had changed and sales had declined. This could be due to multiple reasons such as ineffective sales and marketing practices, increased competition, a weak economy, or a weakening value proposition offered by the business itself. Luna described one of the reasons her revenues had declined in the following way,

*“I think is business become quiet because I don't have Thai therapist, because when people come for Thai massage, they expect to have Thai therapist.”*

Another respondent, Mark lost a large and long-standing account of his which impacted his business significantly when his corporate client recruited a new manager.

*“This new guy came along about a year ago and he said to us listen, they're going solar panels in the car park...he says, take them off. So, I said well just give us an alternate position...and he said no. And that's what can happen in your company. That's what can happen in a company. So, what was a very key product for us, and it still is a key product for us, was disrupted, by one man, who said 'I don't want it'. How unreasonable was that?”*

### Managing Finances

Even during more established phases of the business, the business owner-managers expressed challenges with managing finances. Two issues that stood out in particular were

cash flow management and collecting debts. Derek felt that entrepreneurship as a career choice was too glamourised and that,

*“People aren’t going to tell you - like some people will - when they are sitting there at two in the morning and freaking out, are you going to make payroll for instance.”*

Many of the business owners struggled to collect debts from clients who wouldn’t pay on time, while simultaneously maintaining good relationships with these same clients in order to continue getting business from them. Jamie echoed the sentiments of other business owners interviewed when he said,

*“I am speaking to this client and here’s one...new corporate client, guess what? They don’t pay. I am the face of the company and I am dealing with the face of the other company, I can’t go “hey where’s my money?” it spoils the relationship, it spoils the expansion of it.”*

#### Implementing Systems and Structure

Some business owners expressed frustration at not being able to effectively implement systems and processes in the business as it grew. The main reason they cited for this was, a resistance to change from employees as well as customers. Mandy described this as,

*“From an implementation basis, we still struggling, they’re still like it’s that thing of change is very difficult or its difficult to adapt so I feel like - because when we were few we used to work a certain way so now we’ve grown, but yet we still want to work the way we worked when we were less in a team which doesn’t really work that way. So, there’s a bit of a struggle in terms of adapting and changing how we work.”*

Robert had a similar challenge with his employees and customers when he tried to digitise systems in his factory to gain operational efficiencies,

*“It was getting customers who for also 15, 20 years used to fax through orders...or you know, ya, getting them to complete the order, order sheets online and email them through or, you know, put them through our portal that we opened up for them, for them to submit the orders. Ya, so those were the 2 main (challenges); is getting those*

*customers. And internally, the resistance to change was quite strong, but ya, we had to overcome that.”*

### Managing Operations

Some business owners struggled to run operations effectively in cases in which they worked ‘on the ground’ alongside their employees, forcing them to juggle managerial and administrative responsibilities in tandem with their customary, daily workload. Josh articulated this common frustration well when he said,

*“Currently I guess I’m in the place where I feel extremely frustrated. The business is in a place where I have too much to do to keep the business going and I don’t have enough of a focus. I don’t even have time to spend on building the business. So, I’m just running it now. I’m not building it and that’s a frustration of mine.”*

Yet other business owners drew attention to their inability to expand their businesses quickly enough to meet customers demand as another vital problem with which they were contending and troubleshooting solutions.

### Supply Chain Management

Another important concept that emerged from the interviews was challenges with supply chain management. One entrepreneur said,

*“I think the biggest, biggest challenge is just finding the right, the right network of suppliers to support our business.”*

### External Factors that Contribute to Challenges in Business

The next major theme that emerged under challenges were dubbed “External Factors”, which were factors not directly within the business owner’s control that contributed to challenges. These were issues such as a weakening economy, changing government regulation, the management of exchange rates in an increasingly volatile economy and for some of the businesses, factors related to the business’ reputation and not being taken seriously in the market.

### Dealing with a Weakening Economy

In this vein, Payton who has run a business in the FMCG marketing space for the last 10 years reported on the ways in which a weakening economy affects his clients negatively, which ultimately impacts his business' revenue. He reported,

*“Today we’re sitting in a market that’s a really tough market, weakening currency, lack of consumer confidence in the market, and in products that we have in the market, which is a challenge for our clients. So, we’re working on a whole different set of challenges and we’re, we’re working with, with very different mindsets today than we did when we initially started the business; so, it is different, it is challenging.”*

### Change in Government Regulation

Davin encountered a different challenge, where he was running a successful jewellery manufacturing business and suddenly, there had been a notable change in government regulations:

*“The government here decided to drop duties, and instead of dropping them slowly, from 60, to 50, to 40, to 30, they dropped it to zero overnight. And it became difficult;”*

### Personal Challenges

Some of the challenges faced by business owners were more personal in nature. Many entrepreneurs talked about struggling with motivation and going through emotionally difficult times. Yasmin referred to a difficult divorce in her personal life, resulting in struggles with motivation, which in turn started affecting her relationship with her business partner,

*“My deadlines and my procrastination was starting to affect my relationship with my partner. Not on a personal level but on a business level, you know. I don’t like the anxiety of my partner and I feeling like I’m the weaker link or something.”*

### Resource Constraints

Many business owners in the established phase of business felt like their business model was sound and they had understood how to make money but a main factor hindering their growth was a lack of financial resources which in some cases also affected their ability to hire more staff and increase operational capacity and quality. When asked about some of the current challenges faced in day to day operations of business, Josh expressed his frustrations,

*“Right now, I’m in a position where we face the challenge of not necessarily wanting to take on higher cost resources, but the current resources that we have in the organization are not ready to take on more responsibility.”*

Jamie, who was mentioned earlier, said that the principle factor holding them back from growth was a lack of capital, and that If they had more capital to finance their operations, their *“profitability would go through the roof.”*

### Other Challenges

Other challenges faced by business owners related to factors such as managing and maintaining good relationships with business partners, and even being bullied by large competitors who had set up barriers to entry for new companies by influencing regulations in the industry. One respondent, Josh relayed his experience of being bullied when he said,

*“Some of the challenges we face is that we often find that the market is controlled by very big players and they set up hurdles often for the ‘good of the customer’, in inverted commas. And they set up hurdles that stop other people from competing with them. And they also bully you and sometimes we have been explicitly threatened by our competitors.”*

Davin had been running his business for many years when he decided to sell shares in his business for some capital injection. When speaking about his relationship with his new Italian business partners he said,

*“(We had) huge challenges, huge. Huge, huge, huge challenges because they come from a different part of the world, I don’t have to tell you. They, think differently, they hardly spoke English...”*

### **5.2.3 Summary of Findings for Research Question One**

In summary, results from research question one provided rich insights into the way an established business-owner’s background affects not only the relationships they form within their developmental networks, but also the challenges they face in business in both early and later stages of business. Individuals from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have greater appetites for risk in their business, since they have a family to fall back on should their business fail. Furthermore, individuals that come from entrepreneurial families may be influenced by their families to view entrepreneurship as a viable career option.

The role of formal education seems to provide individuals with limited advantages when it comes to running their own ventures, unless the education in question is directly related to tasks performed during the running of a business. However, this finding may need to be substantiated with further research, since the utility of education as a means for individuals to overcome or circumvent business-related challenges are only self-reported. Established business owner-managers may have developed skills and abilities due to their formal education which they may not be recognizing explicitly. Hence, education seems to have an impact on the challenges faced in business, but the exact relationship is inconclusive from this research.

Prior employment experience seems to have both advantages and disadvantages for established business owner-managers. Prior employment experience may enable individuals to deal with challenges faced in their own businesses such as human resource management. Furthermore, the benefits of substantial prior employment experience, especially in high powered jobs may enables one to form key developmental relationships which then become significant sources of support in running their own businesses. The disadvantage for individuals with substantial employment experience – especially corporate experience may be that it makes the switch from resource rich corporate environments to resource poor environments, as are found in start-ups, more difficult.

Prior entrepreneurial experience may help an established business owner-manager glean lessons from previous experiences that they can apply to their new business venture. Although there seems to be a relationship between prior entrepreneurial experience and the challenges faced in business, the findings are not substantial enough to be deemed conclusive, except that they signify an individual's entrepreneurial orientation.

In terms of challenges in business, the initial argument in Chapter One was confirmed by findings. Established business owner-managers have new and additional difficulties compared to start ups. This is seen by the differences in the nature of challenges faced by business owners when they first started out versus later in business as they became more established. As business owners, transitioning into the established phases of business, their challenges were found to sometimes result from changes in the external environment deriving from changes in governmental regulations, changing market needs and changes in the economy. The most common and frequently cited challenge reported in the established phase of business concerned struggles with human resource management. However, sales and marketing and resource constraints seemed to be common across both earlier and later stages in business. Other significant findings included challenges such as being bullied by larger competitors, dealing with key business relationships, such as with board members and business partners and personal challenges owing to a lack of motivation and drive to continue in business.

### **5.3 Results for Research Question Two**

**Research question two: How do entrepreneurs and business owners deal with challenges in business, including engaging in mentoring?**

The aim of research question two was to understand how established business owner-managers deal with challenges they face while running a business. Question four in the interview guide aimed to answer gather insights to address this research question. The secondary objective of this question was to determine if participants turned to any individuals for support in dealing with challenges they faced.

### 5.3.1 *Practices Employed by Established Business Owner-Managers to Deal with Challenges*

The results from the interviews were analysed, with resultant codes categorised into concepts that illustrated similar meanings. Themes were developed from the resulting categories that demonstrate further meaning making from the codes.

The main theme that emerged related to the practices that established business owner-managers engaged in, in order to deal with the challenges they faced while operating their businesses. The mapping of these categories into an overarching theme is represented in Figure 6. This resultant theme allowed research question two to be addressed.

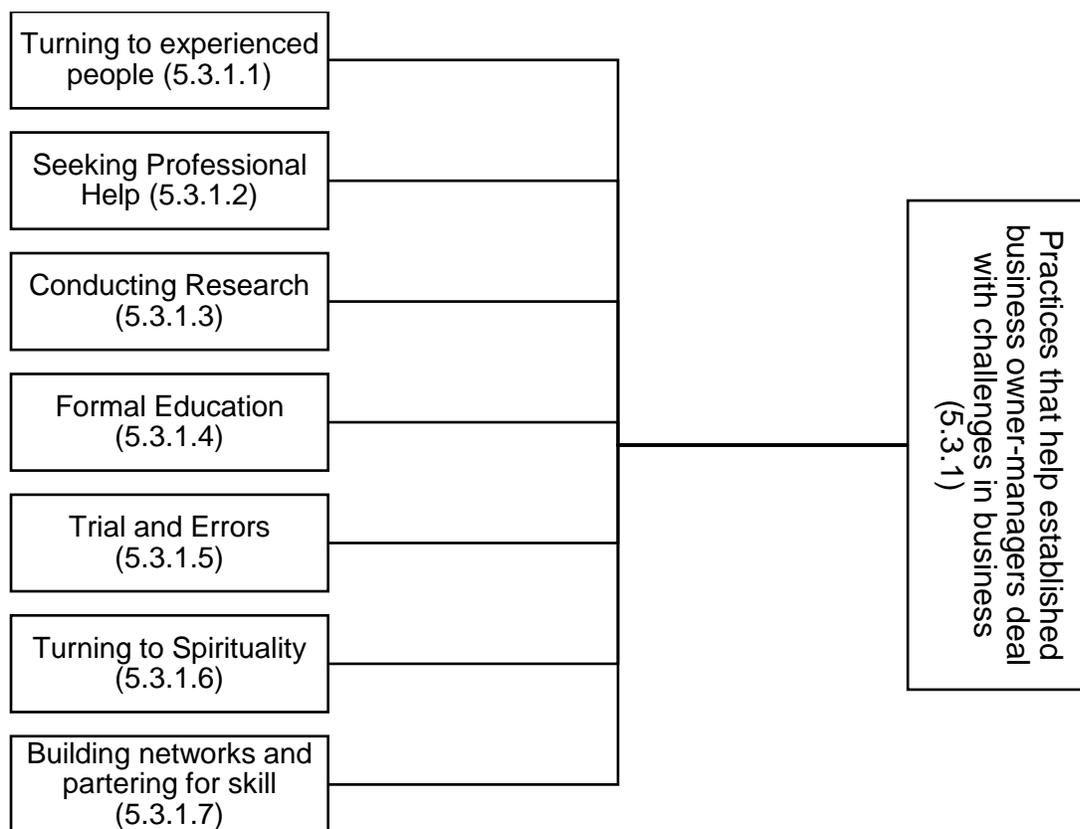


Figure 6: Categories to Theme Mapping for Research Question Two

When asked how participants dealt with challenges, the most prominent theme that emerged was that established business owner-managers predominantly turn to other experienced individuals. Of this, majority of the participants mentioned turning to other entrepreneurs for

advice and for help to think through problems. Table 11 provides a summary of findings from this research question.

*Table 11: Practices Employed by Established Business Owner-Managers to Deal with Challenges in Business*

<b>How Established Business Owner-Managers Deal with Challenges in Business</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Frequency in category</b>	<b>Frequency in Subcategory</b>
<b>Turning to Experienced People</b>		<b>20</b>	
	Advice from other entrepreneurs who are friends, suppliers and customers.		13
	Seeking help from friends, family members, and mentors.		6
	Competitors		1
<b>Professionals</b>		<b>7</b>	
	Professional bodies		1
	Accountants		1
	Labour consultants		1
	Specialist consultants		1
	Lawyers		1
	Life coach		2
<b>Research</b>		<b>4</b>	
	Reading biographies		1
	Published research		1
	General research		1
	Google		1
<b>Formal Education</b>	Diplomas/degrees	<b>3</b>	
<b>Trial and Error</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Turning to Spirituality</b>		<b>2</b>	
	Meditation		1
	Buddhist teachings		1
<b>Building networks</b>	Trying to build networks that can assist in business.	<b>2</b>	
<b>Partnering for skill</b>	Collaborating with customers or other business associated who have more experience	<b>1</b>	

### 5.3.1.1 *Turning to Experienced People*

Most participants overwhelmingly reported that they turned to various other experienced people in the networks when faced with challenges. One participant, Mandy said that she regularly turns to her friends who also own businesses to get their perspective,

*“Well I have other networks, like my business friends, that are in business, who have similar or bigger businesses who’ve been in business longer than we have; and I honestly just consult with them and I must say like their advice from time to time really works.”*

While Robert sought advice from another factory that he works with to deal with labour efficiencies in his factory,

*“So earlier this year we opened up a second plant that’s also part of the business. What we’ve done with that side there-, also, there I did seek advice, from another factory, and instead of making our expenses fixed per week, we made it fixed per unit; so, we save for production.”*

Another practice that many business owners engaged in was seeking support. Derek mentioned that he actively seeks more experienced mentors that he can learn from. In a similar vein, Yasmin said that they sought out the expert advice of their friends to assist them,

*“But the nice thing about our marketing is that there are a lot of people, our peers that were in the marketing space already so, it was nice to use them and be like look, we’ll pay you guys later, please just help us with abc. Yes it wasn’t that easy in the beginning but like because we had people like that, that we could call upon, it did make it a little bit easier; didn’t drag it out as long as maybe it would have if we didn’t have people.”*

Mary sought emotional help from a meditation group when she was experiencing trying times in business,

*“A group of my classmates we shared a lot of spiritual things...we shared a lot of encouragement so that you know...now and then you get some ladies that... ‘Wow’. ‘Wow’ that is speaking to me.”*

### **5.3.1.2 Seeking Professional Help**

Some of the established business owner-managers interviewed could afford to, and thus employed professionals to deal with certain business-related challenges. One business owner experienced a cyber security hack and immediately employed a cyber security expert to secure their systems and train the company on safe cyber practices. Josh mentioned that they regularly turn to their lawyers for advice as the services offered by their company are highly regulated and thus, they always need to ensure legal compliance.

Both Yasmin and Luna hired a life coach to help with personal struggles that were affecting their work performance. However, it was observed that business owners only employed professional services when it was integral to the business and if they could afford it. In many instances, business owners used other mechanisms to cope with challenges.

### **5.3.1.3 Conducting Research**

Some business owners stated that they continuously engage in research when they are faced with new challenges in business. Lily, for instance, reads research papers from accredited journals to help her create new courses for doctors and care workers working in the HIV care space, while Mary researches work done by other interior designers to get new ideas for her projects.

When asked about how Farah overcomes challenges faced in business, she responded,

*“Sometimes if I have a specific problem, I do kind of Google and see you know, what's out there and that could help me.”*

### **5.3.1.4 Getting Formal Education**

A few of the participants interviewed said they took formal courses to help them learn more about business. Lily took a leadership course at a university and it was that course that helped her gain a different perspective on business and for-profit organisations,

*“That was where I learnt not to feel so frightened about business and business people because really I didn't know that as anything other than like, you know uncaring or*

*profit-driven corporate - really that was my sense and so that was dipping my toe in my (Leadership) program and gained lots of support from that.”*

#### **5.3.1.5 Learning Through Trial and Error**

Some of the participants referred to learning by doing as a way in which they learnt to deal with challenges. Davin, for instance, was a financial director before he started running a business with his partner. With limited support and know how in running a business, he said,

*“You come out of, uh, as an accountant you very much figure-orientated and practically, you really know nothing... so it was a difficult one. It’s something that you’ve got to learn quickly and make mistakes and you learn by your mistakes, you know? Just, it’s how much it costs.”*

Derek echoed Davin’s sentiments when he said,

*“We tried and I think it is how we do most things in life, by trial and error.”*

#### **5.3.1.6 Turning to Spirituality**

A few participants turned to spirituality to find the inner strength they needed to deal with trying times in business. Luna in particular said that she uses meditation techniques to help herself calm down when she is feeling anxious about the business. She also said the Buddhist teachings she follows help her *“the most, more than my husband, more than Tommy.”*, and it also helps her to be *“a better person.”*

#### **5.3.1.7 Building Networks and Partnering for Skill**

One participant, Lily said that she would attend specific parties and try to target specific individuals at parties who she thought would be helpful to her with a particular obstacles she was facing in business, while another participant said that sometimes if he needed information on where to source certain equipment for his business he would even consult with some of his competitors who provided him with information.

Josh described an interesting way to compensate for his lack of skill and know-how they had in the business. He found that it was easier to partner with other companies for skills that they lacked in business, with commercial arrangements ensuring that the relationship would be beneficial for both parties involved. He said,

*“Well right now we need support. We're trying to grow into the asset management business. It's a strong need for things we either cannot afford or do not have - like a track record. And the only way that we are able to get this is not through some kind of relationship with someone who is providing a support but when we go out and make a commercial deal.”*

### **5.3.2 Summary of Findings for Research Question Two**

The main findings from research question two were that established business owner-managers did indeed turn to other people in their networks to overcome challenges in business as well as for learning and growth. Findings also demonstrate that not only did these individuals turn to others to seek help, they engaged in this practice most frequently compared to other forms of learning and self-help. Furthermore, the most interesting finding was that they preferred to turn to other entrepreneurs for help, even more than professionals and consultants. Where these individuals were unable to find the support that they required within their networks, they demonstrated resourcefulness by going out and building relationships with people able to assist them with various business-related challenges.

Another interesting finding was that established business owner-managers can also come up with innovative new ways of overcoming challenges in business and achieving their objectives, such as partnering with other experienced businesses to launch new initiatives and ultimately achieve their own business goals.

Other significant findings centred around the nature of the research conducted by established business owner-managers, such as reading biographies of other successful people, using the internet to ‘Google’ challenges, and studying published research to look for solutions.

It was also interesting to note that some participants described engaging in spiritual practices to overcome the challenges they faced in business. While this may be seen as a practice that

helps an individual in their personal life, this finding demonstrates that for established business owner-managers the boundary between the personal and business life is not so clear, and often the two aspects of their lives interact with and affect one another. Learning through trial and error was another significant finding to emerge from the research.

Overall, the results reveal the creative and often innovative ways in which established business owner-managers attempt to overcome challenges in business. These practices can be seen as a function of the established business owner-manager's resourcefulness.

#### **5.4 Results for Research Question Three**

**Research question three: How do established business owner-managers fulfil their mentoring needs from one or more relationships in their networks?**

The aim of this research question was to establish the kinds of support business owners received from other people in their networks to help them in business. Questions five and six in the interview guide sought to answer this question, for which it was important to identify: the key developmental relationships in the lives of established business owner-managers; and the support functions provided by these key relationships. These emergent themes are diagrammatically represented in Figure 7.

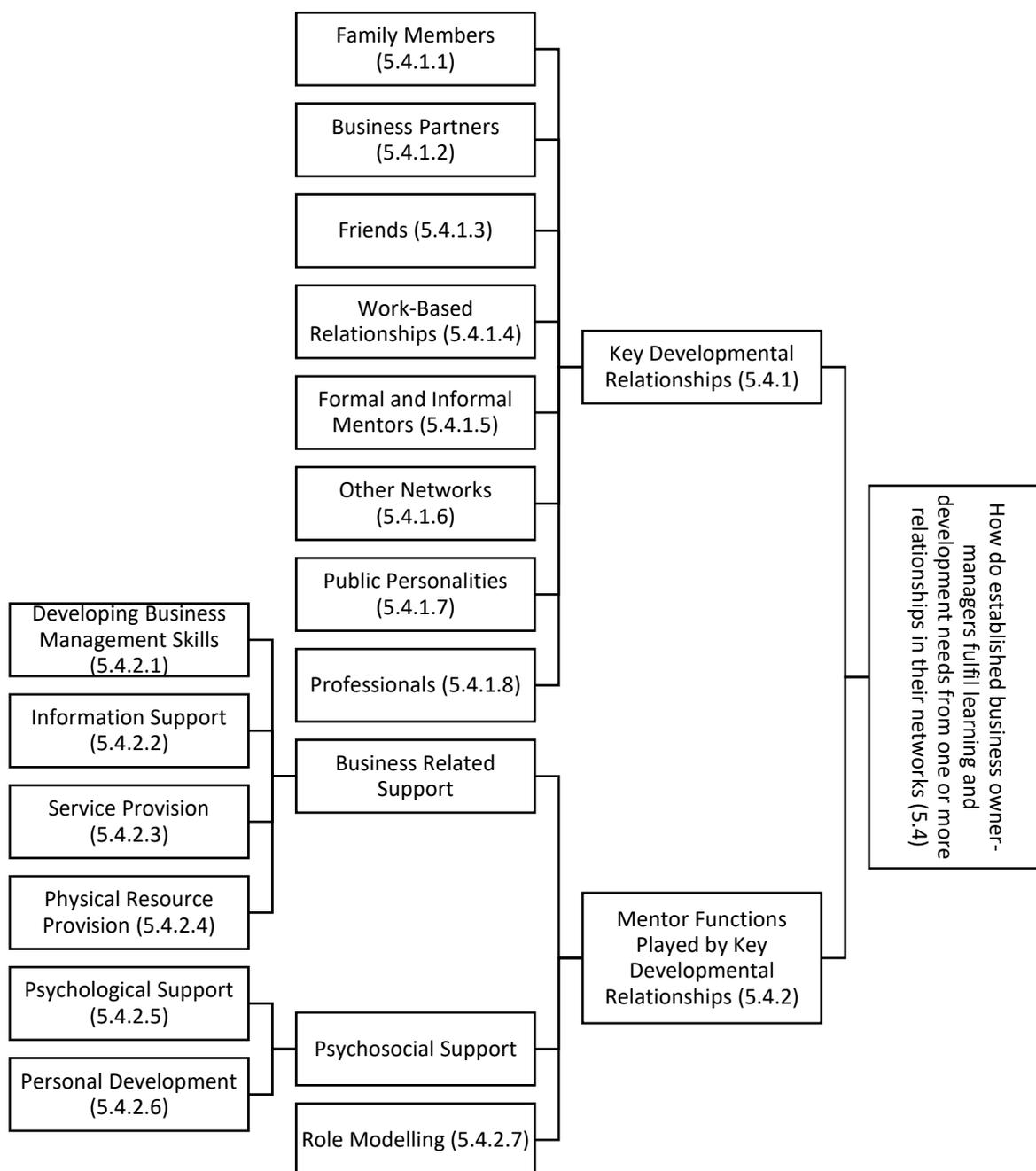


Figure 7: Category to Theme Mapping for Research Question Three.

The terminology that has been used to categorise and findings were largely based on Kram's (1985) and St-Jean's (2011) theories on mentorship since these are the two most salient sources in the streams of organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring literature.

Developmental relationships were identified based on the literature that states that mentor functions can be provided by multiple actors in an individual's life, despite not being explicitly recognised or acknowledged as mentors (Bynum, 2015; Kram & Ragins, 2007).

Furthermore, a broad view of mentor functions was adopted, where any support received contributing to the established business owner-managers growth, development or success in running a business was classified as a mentor function. This is in line with literature that states that a continuum of relationships providing various types of support to a protégé are considered to be a form of mentoring (Dobrow et al., 2012).

#### 5.4.1 *Understanding Key Developmental Relationships*

Table 12 highlights the key developmental relationships that participants referred to during the course of the interviews. As expected, most of the business owner-managers relied heavily on their family members and friends for essential support functions that were more that pertained to their personal development and psychological support.

*Table 12: Summary of Key Developmental Relationships for Established Business Owner-Managers*

Category	Subcategory	Frequency in category	Frequency in Subcategory
Family		<b>58</b>	
	Spouse		23
	Parents		23
	Extended Family		4
	Siblings		2
	Business Partners		6
	Children		2
Friends		<b>43</b>	
	General		24
	Other Entrepreneurs		15
	Boyfriend/Girlfriend		2
	Acquaintances		2
Business Partner		<b>27</b>	
Work Relationships		<b>23</b>	
	Suppliers		4
	Customers		8

	Employees		5
	Investors		4
	Work Networks		1
	Board		1
<b>Mentors</b>		<b>16</b>	
	Formal		11
	Informal		4
<b>Public Personalities</b>		<b>10</b>	
	Famous Entrepreneurs/ Business Gurus		7
	Famous Leaders		2
	Sportsmen		1
<b>Other Networks</b>		<b>15</b>	
	Classmates		3
	Industry Peers		3
	Family's Friends		7
	Ex-colleagues		1
	Ex-boss		1
<b>Professionals</b>		<b>9</b>	
	Psychologist		5
	Life Coach		4

An interesting finding was that many of the relationships that were discovered, evolved through the course of a participant's life. In one instance, a friend became a business partner because of the amount of support he offered the established business owner-manager, and, in some instances, suppliers became close friends.

Another unintended but significant finding pertained to the effect produced by the of the lack of developmental networks in an established business owner-managers life. Davin, for instance, said he had limited support from individuals and that there was truly "*no one*" who supported him during difficult times in business. When asked how he dealt with and overcame such challenges, he said that those were "*emotionally trying times*" and "*dark days*". Davin was further asked what kind of support he would have liked to have received, to which he said he wishes that, "*there was someone to calm (his) anxiety*", someone who he could "*bounce things off,*" and, "*someone who could advise (him) with (his) interests at heart.*"

#### **5.4.1.1 Exploring the Role of Family**

A key finding when exploring the role of family in a business owner-manager's life was that in many cases, one's parents and spouses had a significant role to play in supporting a business owner on a day to day basis. In some cases, a business owner's father or mother was an entrepreneur and inspired them to take the leap in to entrepreneurship. In other instances, an individual was encouraged by their spouse to become an entrepreneur.

Josh had both his wife as well as his father as role models for entrepreneurship.

*“My current wife inspired me; she was an entrepreneur. My father was an entrepreneur as well.”*

For Mary, her spouse was instrumental in enabling her to run a business. Apart from business advice, he provided her business with short term loans to cope with cash flow constraints as she waited to get paid by customers.

Three of the participants interviewed also described having members of their family as business partners. One business owner had inherited his business from his father and continued to run it along with his brother while two other entrepreneurs had ventured into entrepreneurship with their siblings. In cases in which family members were also business-partners, they provided even greater support functions for the established business owner-manager, mainly by helping them with their personal development.

#### **5.4.1.2 Exploring the Role of Business Partners**

For many of the participants who were in partnership, their business partners played multiple key support functions in their lives.

For Jamie, for instance, his partner Ben played multiple roles in helping him deal with business challenges. Ben challenged Jamie's ideas and helped him to perceive challenges from a different point of view. During the interview, when Jamie was asked probed regarding specific types of support he received, his answer was repeatedly, “Ben.” At one point, during this line of questioning, Jamie exclaimed, *“Ben is going to be the word of the day!”* This

expression from Jamie is the perfect example of how a business partner can be integral to supporting an established business owner-manager.

Similarly, for Josh, the fact that his business partners are described as being very different to him in their way of thinking, means that they are able to effectively help Josh to “*debate strategy*”, give him honest feedback about his performance as a manager, and help him deal with challenges he faces at work on a day to day basis.

However, most but not all participants had positive relationships with their business partners. Both Mark and Davin expressed frustrations with their business partners. Davin said that his business partner contributed almost nothing to the business except for the initial capital to fund the operation. Mark at the time of the interview was busy trying to buy out his partners who, in his view, had contributed nothing to the business in its fifteen years of existence. This is another interesting finding, because established business owner-managers did not recognise partners who invested capital alone as developmental in nature.

Despite the above findings, a strong theme that came out was that individuals who had business partners in general felt that their partners were essential in helping them succeed as entrepreneurs and business owner-managers. In particular, Wendy expressed that one of her business partners was essential to her entrepreneurial development where he not only believed in her ideas but pushed her to make them a reality, but that in the process he also greatly boosted her self-confidence and self-perception of being a successful business owner-manager.

#### **5.4.1.3 Exploring the Role of Friends**

Every single participant mentioned at least one friend as key to their development, not only personally, but also professionally. In some cases, friends played a more significant role than in others. Jamie cited ten different friends who contributed to his personal and professional development in various ways. Another respondent, Lily regularly relied on her friends to make key introductions for her in business. Yasmin had multiple friends who were also entrepreneurs and regularly approached them to discuss new business ideas and how to deal with new staff challenges that came their way, as well as relied on certain friends for services that the business could not afford to pay for.

The interesting aspect about respondents' discussion about friends was that the business owners were grateful for the support they received from their friends, only in some instances. In other instances, they didn't acknowledge certain support functions, such as, key introductions in business, from friends as support. For example, when Mandy was asked if there were any individuals who had helped her by making key introductions for her in business, Mandy responded, "*not really*". However, when she was asked about how she had secured a particularly large contract she had mentioned earlier in the interview, she responded,

*"So, a lot of people, a lot of people give me business but it's not like anything other than business, no not really."*

This suggests that she viewed some introductions in business as transactional and not as a support given to her, whereas at other times she acknowledged and appreciated business referrals from other friends. Despite her earlier comment about some business referrals being transactional in nature, during the course of the conversation she revealed that she has two friends who own much larger businesses than hers, and that she relies on these friends for advice on how to cope with challenges she faces in the business, and apart from this, they had also referred large catering contracts to her as well as made introduction to potential new clients. Furthermore, at a later stage in the interview when asked about the most valuable type of support she had received, she responded "*business referrals*".

#### **5.4.1.4 Exploring the Role of Work-Based Relationships**

Many of the participants interviewed emphasised certain work-based relationships such as suppliers, customers, employees, investors and industry peers in, as playing a role in their learning and development. Although business partners form part of work-based relationships, the significance of business partners in an individual's development called for it to be categorised separately.

For a significant portion of participants, suppliers played key roles in supporting their business. For Robert, a fabric supplier introduced him to a yarn supplier. This introduction helped him diversify his business and ultimately increase revenues. While for Davin and Mark, their suppliers played a key role in teaching them the technical aspects of the industry they

were operating in. Mark would arrange weekly meetings where all his suppliers would come together over a cup of coffee and discuss new products. While it could be observed that the suppliers ultimately gained from sharing knowledge with their client, Mark appreciated the support offered by his suppliers and recognised them as being particularly helpful and patient in teaching him.

For Davin, one particular equipment supplier flew down from Italy to train Davin's manufacturing team on the technical aspects of manufacturing jewellery. Although Davin recognised these suppliers as contributors to his knowledge of business operations, he also said that his relationship with his suppliers was more transactional in nature.

Customers were also perceived by many participants as key to their business growth. However, it is important to note that not all customers were perceived as providers of support. Mary felt grateful for the word of mouth marketing she received from her clients, while Josh didn't conceive word of mouth marketing as support. Rather, he attributed this marketing to his company's ability to deliver a superior service compared to their competitors. Luna, on the other hand, said she turns to her regular customers to get feedback and advice on how to improve her service offerings. She considered this to be support that transcended the transactional nature of the relationship.

Employees also played a significant role in an established business owner-manager's personal development. Farah, who runs a preschool, relied on her highly experienced principal to give her practical advice on how to manage her relationships with parents (who were clients in this case) and how to deal with her employees. Farah mentioned the principal as a key support figure who helped her perform better as a business owner-manager.

A few participants mentioned the supportive role played by investors in their business. The relationship and support provided could be perceived as transactional as it is mutually beneficial, but nonetheless some participants saw investors as support figures. Payton, in particular, mentioned the role of his investor who had significant experience in the media and marketing industry. Payton reported that the key support function played by the investor was that of a reflector, who held up a mirror to Payton and in the process helped him stay positive even when he faced major challenges in operating his business.

#### **5.4.1.5 Exploring the Role of Formal and Informal Mentors**

The role of mentors came out strongly during some of the interviews. Informal mentors were classified as individuals who were acknowledged by the business owners as playing that role, while formal mentors were classified as such, because these were mentoring relationships that were formed through a third party, such as SME development programmes. Although the various other developmental relationships in this study are perceived to be mentors in different forms and played mentor functions for the established business owner-manager, mentors were labelled so in this part of the study as individuals who were recognised by the participants as mentors.

Two of the participants had formal mentors they were assigned in previous corporate jobs while three others had formal mentors assigned to them by entrepreneur development programmes and associations. The findings in this regard were mixed. While some business owners formed deep bonds with their formal mentors, others said that some of the formal mentors assigned to them were not particularly useful.

Lily and Derek both experienced formal and informal mentors. Lily was given a male mentor as part of a businesswomen's association. Her statements revealed that she did not find the effort of seeking this mentor's support worthwhile, and when asked to explain her reasons, she said,

*"I think I was looking for like organisational advice and like me advice I wanted to know how I could deal with stuff and I just felt like I didn't get it."*

However, in another instance Lily was assigned a formal mentor through a programme with whom she was happy. The reasons for her satisfaction were mainly because this formal mentor had experience in the various fields that Lily's NPO was operating in, and apart from that, she was able to help Lily in a more holistic way, by helping Lily to process and overcome difficult situations at work.

In Derek's case, he was assigned a formal mentor from a development organisation but chose to sever the relationship. His mentor was operating a similar but larger business to his, and thus Derek felt uncomfortable to share his business ideas with this mentor, in case the mentor

decided to pursue the opportunity himself. This highlighted the problem that lack of trust can play in formal mentoring relationships.

Both Derek and Lily seemed to have better experiences with informal mentors than with formal mentors. In the case of Lily, the mentorship relationship formed organically over time. Lily's mentor acted as an advisor and friend, and even informed her of opportunities that she could pursue. In Derek's case, he actively sought out mentors who were accomplished individuals who had built large and successful businesses. When asked about how he dealt with challenges facing his business, one of the things he mentioned was,

*"I ask people for advice; I have always been very good at finding different mentors. I have never had a formal mentor, but I have always been very good at seeking out different and older people."*

One of the mentors he sought help from was a more experienced established business owner-manager in the beauty retail industry. He said this mentor taught him how to empathise with staff who harkening from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

A particularly interesting finding from the interviews was the differences in how two partners, Yasmin and Mandy, in the same business viewed the role of formal mentors. In Mandy's case, although she had been assigned mentors from various development programmes she had attended, she only identified one of the mentors as providing integral support to her growth as an entrepreneur.

Yasmin, on the other hand, had a different story to tell regarding formal mentors assigned to her. Yasmin identified and acknowledged multiple formal mentors as playing a significant role in the growth and development of herself as well as her business. As an example, as part of an entrepreneurship development programme, their business was assigned mentors who understood technicalities of operations in the food service industry. Based on that, these mentors helped the business implement systems and structures that would improve their operational efficiencies. When asked about how valuable the mentors' support was to the business, Yasmin responded,

*"Invaluable. It's been crazy, ya. It's been amazing. It's really honestly been amazing."*

While Mandy recognised and appreciated the grant fund she received from the same entrepreneurship development programme that had assigned her the mentor, she didn't recognise or acknowledge any support offered by the formally assigned mentors.

#### **5.4.1.6 Exploring the Role of Other Networks**

Many of the participants interviewed identified people in other networks as providing various types of support integral to the business. In this regard, Derek talked of his father's friend and business partner who continues to play a key role in helping him run his business. This individual helped Derek with various aspects of the business from pricing and costing, to implementing systems and controls within the business in order to streamline and optimise his business.

Three of the participants identified industry peers as sources of support they sought out regularly. Mary said that she regularly used industry peers in the interior design industry to discuss challenges and share business practices so that they could learn from each other's experiences. Payton on the other hand regularly chats to international franchisees who run the same franchise as him in various countries. He uses these global counterparts to discuss challenges and ideas that may be mutually beneficial.

Lily mentioned the support she received from classmates in the various postgraduate courses she had taken. Apart from classmates from her PhD degree, her syndicate group in her MBA played a key role in helping her with some aspects of the business. They helped her design and implement HR policies and even went as far as hosting a football fund raiser for the NPO.

Other participants mentioned roles played by ex-colleagues and ex-bosses as integral parts of their support system from a development perspective.

#### **5.4.1.7 Exploring the Role of Public Personalities**

A significant majority of the participants mentioned the role of public personalities in their personal development as business owners. Jamie watched "*two to three hundred*" TED Talks before starting his own business. When asked what stood out for him from what he learnt, he responded,

*"(It was) about personal relationships and literally understanding the other person's point of view."*

Derek regularly reads the biographies of legendary business leaders such as Steve Jobs and Michael Bloomberg. He says it provides him comfort to know that in the world of entrepreneurship,

*"there is no straight line and everyone - like it's hard, there has got to be something wrong in your brain to become an entrepreneur I think because of how hard it actually is."*

Robert talked about his love for sportsmen biographies because it helps to inspire and motivate him. He said,

*"most sportsman, you know, they had to come through some kind of adversity to reach the top of their game, which, which is great to apply into general life."*

Mandy said that she follows a South African executive who lives in France as a role model. She is inspired by her role model because she is South African and comes from the same town as her. Even though her role model may not be as famous or accomplished as some other business personalities in the media, Mandy said it inspires her to feel like she could also achieve significant career and business success when she adopts a role model with a similar demographic profile to her own.

#### **5.4.1.8 Exploring the Role of Professionals**

Five of the participants interviewed mentioned professionals such as psychologists and life coaches as contributors to their personal development as business owner-managers.

Two of these participants mentioned seeing a psychologist. For instance, for Derek, his psychologist helped him reflect on himself as an entrepreneur. For Farah, her psychologist played the role of reassurance when she felt self-doubt and anxiety.

Three of the participants said they used life coaches to deal with particularly stressful situations in their lives that were hindering their ability to perform in the business. An example

is Yasmin, for whom her life coach helped her process overwhelming emotions that she was experiencing as she went through a difficult divorce.

#### 5.4.2 *Understanding Mentor Functions Played by Developmental Networks*

The interviews generated rich and holistic insights into the various mentor functions played by an individual's networks. These functions were categorised based on previous research done on mentor functions for novice entrepreneurs. However, in the case of established business owner-managers, various new functions played by developmental networks were discovered.

The key functions integral to an established business owner-manager's learning and development have been categorised according to Kram's (1983) broad categories and are presented in Table 13.

*Table 13: Mentor Functions Played by Developmental Networks*

<b>MENTOR FUNCTIONS PLAYED BY DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORKS</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Frequency in category</b>	<b>Frequency in Subcategory</b>
<b>CAREER/BUSINESS RELATED</b>		<b>125</b>	
<b>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT</b>		<b>62</b>	
	Exploring Business Ideas		12
	Managing Employees		11
	General Advice on Dealing with Challenges in Business		8
	Strategy Formulation		7
	Building Systems and Structure		7
	Exposure to Different Business Approaches		4
	Finance Management		4
	Managing Business Relationships		4
	Collecting Debts		2
	Managing Operations		2
	Negotiation Skills		1

<b>INFORMATION SUPPORT</b>		<b>25</b>	
	Helping Spot Opportunities		9
	Industry News and Information		8
	Industry Specific Know How		3
	Technical Information (HR, Legal, IT)		3
	New Product Knowledge		1
	Industry Benchmarks		1
<b>SERVICE PROVISION</b>		<b>22</b>	
	Key Introductions		14
	Access to Markets		3
	Marketing Services		3
	Using Influence to Gather Support (Sponsorship)		1
	Recruiting People		1
<b>PHYSICAL RESOURCES</b>		<b>16</b>	
	Business Loans		8
	Investment		5
	Grant Funding		1
	Free Materials		1
	Help with Raising Funds		1
<b>PSYCHOSOCIAL FUNCTIONS</b>		<b>103</b>	
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT</b>		<b>58</b>	
	Reflection		13
	Reassurance		10
	Listening to Problems (Confidant)		7
	Motivation		7
	Encouragement		5
	Being Someone to Rely on		5
	Analysing Problems		4
	Acceptance		2
	Protection from Judgement		2

	Celebrating Victories		2
	Alleviating loneliness		1
<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>		<b>45</b>	
	Challenging Ideas		10
	New/Different Perspective		10
	Communications		5
	Confrontation (Building Self-Awareness)		5
	Honest Feedback		5
	Moderating Extreme Characteristics		4
	Teaching Compassion		3
	Teaching How to Learn from Mistakes		3
<b>ROLE MODEL FUNCTIONS</b>		<b>28</b>	
<b>ROLE MODEL</b>		<b>28</b>	
	Story Telling		13
	Behaviours to Emulate		11
	Work Ethic/Values		2
	Financial Success		2

Business management support, psychological support and personal development support are the three most prominent types of support received by established business owner-managers. The findings also give insight into the needs of established business owner-managers based on the types of support they acknowledged in the interviews. The emergent categories are explored more deeply in subsequent sections that follow.

#### **5.4.2.1 Exploring Business Management Support as a Mentor Function**

Much of the key support received by participants from their networks was in the area of developing their business management skills.

Many business owners utilised their developmental relationships to help explore new ideas. Jamie regularly explores new business ideas with his friend Dylan, who is an accountant.

Dylan gives Jamie fresh perspectives on financial viability of a new idea. Likewise, for Derek, his father, and his father's friend, Martin, often explore ideas with him by helping him think through various aspects of implementing a new idea. Whereas for Mandy, she says she likes to discuss new ideas with her ex-boss who,

*“(When) you give her like an idea and she’d be like ‘Yeah ok that’s a good idea’, but then like she would expand it like and just make it bigger. Me and her like we always, yeah we bounce off ideas off each other and just how to like, she, her thinking is more detailed and critical and she’s very innovative.”*

A significant number of participants also talked about how some of their support networks help them to overcome challenges with managing employees. Derek said that his father's friend, Martin, gives him advice on how to deal with employee challenges. Martin advises Derek on when to confront employees about their performance and how to approach employees to give them feedback. Payton said he speaks to his wife's brother when he has challenges with employees and that they play an active role in helping him implement better employee management practices.

While a significant number of participants mentioned debt collection as a regular challenge in business, three participants stated that this is something they get help with from their networks. As an example, Jamie reported that his friend helped him strategise on how to follow up on debtors and receive payments without spoiling his relationships with key clients, while Yasmin said her family members helped her approach key customers to get better payment terms for their business.

A small number of participants identified specific individuals who help them think through business strategy in various ways. For Derek, one of his friends helped him to think about his business strategically in the short and long run. For Josh, his business partners and wife help him to debate strategy regularly as the business environment changed. While for Lily, her MBA classmates helped her put in place a strategy for her NPO.

A few participants mentioned support they receive from certain people on how to manage relationships. In Jamie's case a friend of him helped him to understand how to confront challenges at work with employees as well as with suppliers. Jamie identified this new skill

as a key contributor to his ability to maintain relationships with people. While for Mary her daughter plays a key role in helping her set boundaries with customers who may be taking advantage of her.

A significant number of participants described receiving advice from individuals on how to deal with management challenges in general. Mary's husband regularly gave her advice on dealing with employee challenges, while for Farah her business partner and senior employee regularly give her general advice on dealing with challenges in business. While for Robert, he sought advice from his mentor,

*"I used to meet her at least once every 6 months. Actually, in the beginning, like maybe once every 3 months; about once a quarter, and just chat to her about the challenges, and she had business advice... she had business advice to give me because I mean, she was a very experienced business person and had, has experience on lots of different companies, which is a benefit of auditing, is that you get to see lots of different companies; and she gave me ideas of how to go about this and how to implement change."*

Many participants faced challenges with implementing systems and structures in their businesses. They regularly turned to certain individuals to provide assistance with these challenges. Derek turned to his father's friend Martin to help him implement systems and controls within his business, which required high efficiencies to run profitably. For Yasmin, she had formal mentors through a programme who assisted her with various aspects of operations management, she says,

*"They came to the kitchen and looked at how we do our everyday work and then after that they gave us a report and what they saw and they advised in terms of how we can solve certain issues like stock control, waste control."*

Other management skills participants got support for were help with negotiating, operations management, managing supplier relationships and help managing and understanding the importance of finances. For Mandy, she identified a mentor, Tina,

*“We used to have Tina, one of the mentors that (an Entrepreneurship Support Programme) gave us yeah, she was great, she actually, I learned like how important forecasts are and how to forecast properly and also the margins, because we were in an environment where we did not know how the catering margins look like and she taught us that skill and like it's been incredible, it's been amazing.”*

#### **5.4.2.2 Exploring Information Support as a Mentor Function**

Interviews revealed that there were certain work-related relationships that played the role of providing key information to a business owner. The majority of the information support received was in terms of market insights and opportunity spotting. Five business owners mentioned relying on their suppliers and customers to acquire such information.

Payton regularly speaks to one of his media sponsors to gain insights in to the FMCG industry which makes up most of his clientele. When speaking about this sponsor he says,

*“(He) gives me some great insights in terms of the market, but also some insights in terms of what clients are experiencing and what clients are thinking and the way they're moving their marketplace.”*

In terms of helping spot opportunities, many entrepreneurs acknowledged individuals who brought new opportunities to their attention. In Derek's case, it was his father who helped him see a gap in the market for a health food restaurant. In Luna's case it was her friend who told her about the market opportunity to start an accredited beauty school to improve revenue and profitability.

One other type of information support which was distinct from industry news and information, was industry specific know-how. In the cases where entrepreneurs described this function, it was seen as an enabler for them to diversify into new types of business or gain a deeper understanding of the workings of their industry. For example, in Mandy's case, one of her customers invited her to a luxury event catered for by a competitor to enable Mandy to learn about how luxury catering events are executed. In Mark's case, his suppliers played this function for him, where they allowed Mark insights into the various types of materials and quality available in the print media space. This in turn allowed Mark to make better product

decisions when selling on to his customers. Although some business owner-managers may see this function as part and parcel of the supplier's responsibility, Mark felt that they were "very helpful" since they went over and above what they needed to do to help develop his knowledge of the industry.

Other types of information business owners regularly derived from their networks were things like understanding industry benchmarks such as salary benchmarks for certain employee positions, gaining new product knowledge and know-how, and information on legal and statutory compliance requirements in terms of HR and finance.

#### **5.4.2.3 Exploring Service Provision as a Mentor Function**

Many participants recognised the role of service provision as a key support received by their businesses. Service provision included making key introductions in business, providing access to markets, help with marketing and recruitment, and using influence to gather support.

A significant theme that emerged from the interviews was how many participants received support from others who made key introductions for them in business. For many participants they had people who introduced them to potential customers, while other participants had individuals who introduced them to suppliers and service providers who became integral to their business.

Derek's father used his connections to help get Derek a retail outlet in a prominent mall in South Africa, while Yasmin recognised an individual who continues to make introductions to potential customers in business. Mandy recognised a few individuals who regularly tried to expose her to new opportunities in business. Apart from other friends mentioned by Mandy, she specifically mentioned a friend, Zweli as a prominent source of key introductions in business, saying,

*"I know Neo because of Zweli. Neo has referred business to me because of Zweli...the first event Neo gave us was like about almost R300 000."*

Mark was introduced to a graphic designer from a neighbour, who then became an integral employee in Mark's business. While Lily recognised her informal mentor Francois, who is a high-profile HIV expert and regularly makes key introductions for Lily in business.

Two participants specifically identified access to markets as a key support. Lily received support from a store owner who would sell her products without adding on a margin and passed on all the proceeds from sales back to her. Mark had a friend who was a product representative who was *"loved by all and had the key to everyone's door,"* he said that whenever Mark presented new ideas or services offered by his business, his friend would help by taking the idea to others and helping him gain access to potential customers.

Three business owners identified aspects of marketing as a support function they received from their networks. In Yasmin's case, she acknowledged friends approached for help with marketing while they couldn't afford to invest in paid resources. For Payton, it was his friend and investor Mike, in the UK, who helps him with marketing collateral that they can use,

*"So, they may have certain collateral that's neutral that doesn't mention the UK, and we'll take it and we'll apply it here in South Africa, and, and they may do the same."*

And finally, Josh identified his wife as sometimes providing some marketing support functions for his business.

Other support services received by business owners were help with recruiting employees, and friends using influence to pressurise some of their networks to support the business owner in terms of sales.

#### **5.4.2.4 Exploring Physical Resource Provision as a Mentor Function**

A large number of participants identified people who provided them with physical resources in the form of business loans, investments, grant funding and help with raising money. Six participants mentioned support in the form of interest free short-term loans from friends and family. For Mary, her husband regularly provides her with business loans to help with working capital as she delivers projects to clients and waits to get paid. In Mandy's case, her friend, Zweli is always ready to ease their cash flow constraints by giving her free access to loans.

Due to the nature of his cyclical business, Payton relies on one of his investors to ease cash flow constraints,

*“They’ve always been nice enough to lend us money without, without any interest implications on that money.”*

Some participants mentioned investments from shareholders as a form of mutually beneficial support. For Payton, he received investment from a large marketing company who had synergies with his business. Robert’s friend often bought materials together with him which ensured they both got preferential rates from suppliers.

Other support in terms of physical resources received were in the form of arranging fundraisers, receiving grants to buy key equipment from entrepreneur development programs, sponsorship of education and free material for recycling and re-selling.

#### **5.4.2.5 Exploring Psychological Support as a Mentor Function**

The interviews conducted revealed participants’ developmental networks as fulfilling a vast number of psychological support functions that helped individuals through their journeys as business owners. The functions categorised under psychological support pertained to support received by established business owner-managers to help them cope with the psychological stresses that they faced as individuals. Various types of psychological support offered were identified by business owners as integral to their success and overall wellbeing.

##### *Exploring Reflection as a Mentor Function*

Half the participants interviewed recognised a few individuals who helped them reflect on themselves. For Derek, his father and his business partner regularly help him reflect on and transcend negative behaviour and thought patterns. In his case, he appreciates the feedback they provide him and actively seeks it out in the effort to improve himself. Payton spoke of an ex-employee who continues to “*hold a mirror up*” to him, while Jamie described his friend Dylan as someone who recognises his stress and struggles even before he recognises them himself. Josh described in detail the various ways in which his support system helps him reflect on salient problems in his life,

*“My father provides a lot of warnings of what traps not to fall into. And sometimes those traps are not just certain actions but certain ways of being - don't be like this because people take advantage and so on. And that allows you to then start reflecting on characteristics of an entrepreneur. And my wife it - I think it's similar where my wife thinks about characteristics of me as a person and whether these make me effective as an entrepreneur – ‘You need to change or not change.’ And with my partners, the feedback is it at a higher level of detail. They have examples which they've seen and so the feedback they give me is very specific.”*

#### Exploring ‘Listening to Problems’ as a Mentor Function

Six participants mentioned people who listen to their problems as providing a significant type of support. Most of these support relationships were either in the participant's family such as a spouse or parents, or the participant's close friends or significant other. Lily said that one way her husband supports her is by understanding when she wants to just *“vent and be hugged”*. Yasmin talked about how she likes to share and she often *“cries to”* a group of her close friends. Jamie said he *“got to sob”* to his girlfriend and all she did was *“listened and calmed him down.”* He expressed the importance of this support when he said, *“You know, guys underrate that totally!”*

#### Exploring Reassurance as a Mentor Function

Half of the participants mentioned reassurance from their inner circle of support during times of self-doubt or anxiety. Lily stressed the importance of getting reassurance from specific people you look up to in order for the reassurance to be effective. As an example, when Lily's company faced a cyber security breach she only wanted to vent to her mentor and hear from her mentor that she was handling the situation in the correct way. She said in that situation, *“no one else would do”*, except for the mentor whom she turned to.

Derek said that he regularly gets reassurance from his friend who he respects as an entrepreneur and who relates to him and helps him see that it's part of the journey of entrepreneurship. He also got reassurance from his girlfriend at times though not always in the way he seeks it. When asked what kind of reassurance he sought he said that he just

wants to discuss it with someone who would understand and who could ultimately tell him  
*“Don’t worry you can do it!”*

Josh said he feels reassured by the same key people in his life but in different ways. While his wife reminds him of his intrinsic characteristics, his business partners help him maintain perspective on the size of the challenge that may be making him anxious.

On the other hand, one business owner mentioned self-reassurance as a way for her to overcome self-doubt. She said she reminds herself of positive feedback she has received from her clients in the past and uses that feedback to reassure herself.

### *Exploring motivation as a mentor function*

Only three of the participants interviewed acknowledged specific individuals who motivate them directly when they feel demotivated about business. Derek mentioned his father as a key person that motivates him to do things through tough love, by saying to him,

*“What are you worried about? Get up and do it!”*

Yasmin received extensive support from her mother and best friend during times of demotivation, even up to a point where they would hold her accountable to tasks she was meant to complete for the business. Whereas for Mary, her daughter helped to motivate her during periods of demotivation, and in which work was scarce.

A few other participants mentioned different ways that they dealt with demotivation in their lives. Luna said that she regularly turns to spirituality and Buddhist teachings to help her motivate herself. Lily finds that she feels motivated when she sees how passionate her employees are in the business. Mandy said that she feels motivated by certain people she follows on Facebook. These individuals from her town in South Africa have achieved great career success and reading about their successes motivates Mandy to reach for new heights. Mandy also mentioned internal drive as a motivator,

*“When you tell me like something is not possible like, I’m that person - I will make it happen.”*

Another interesting finding which emerged from the interviews was that a majority of the participants focused on self-motivation as one of the key factors that enabled their success. Such entrepreneurs were vigilant not to rely on other people to motivate them, but rather persistently strove to motivate themselves. When asked how he overcomes feelings of demotivation, Josh said,

*“I just continue, just continue and at some point, it changes. I just let it; I don't do anything. It's like the talk you saw, right. It's just ‘do what you need to do’ and at some point it goes away. It's like that - I just do and at some point, it goes away. I suppose if the demotivation stayed for very long, I guess I might give up at some point, but no, I just continue.”*

Two participants said they didn't rely on anyone to motivate them, and that it was a struggle when they did feel demotivated. These participants did not mention self-motivation either. Davin described a time of demotivation in his life as “*dark times*” with no support or motivation from anyone.

#### *Exploring encouragement as a mentor function*

Four participants mentioned encouragement they received from individuals as critical to their growth and success as people. For Farah, it was her ex-boyfriend who “*pushed her to take the little steps*” to buy the school. In Mark's case, it was his ex-boss whom he admired, who encouraged him to grow in his career and for Mary, it was her husband who “*saw talent*” in her and encouraged her to start her own business.

#### *Exploring the function of problem analysis*

Three participants mentioned logical problem analyses as a key support function they received from individuals in their network. For Lily, her husband helps her “*think through things because he is very logical and helps (her to) unpack it,*” while for Josh, his wife helps him “*talk through problems which potentially (he doesn't) talk through with anyone else.*”

### Exploring the function of being able to rely on someone

Four participants mentioned individuals in their lives who enable them through the knowledge that they can rely on these individuals. For Wendy, Payton and Josh this function was played by their parents, while for Jamie it was played by his business partner. For Josh, being able to turn to his parents for financial support reduce his anxiety. Josh said,

*“I still know that if I lost everything that I could turn to my parents for support, I still have that knowledge which I suppose reduces the anxiety of running your business because you know, there's been probably two or three times in the past six and a half years where the business seemed like it was going to run out of money. And the one thing I didn't need to worry about is not being able to pay the rent of my house.”*

### Exploring acceptance as a mentor function

Two participants mentioned ‘feeling accepted’ as a critical function played by key individuals in their support networks. For Mark, his ex-boss who, in his own words, *“accepted me for what I was and accepted my mistakes and my successes.”* For Jamie this was a friend who allowed him to just be himself.

### Other forms of psychological support

Other psychological support functions that were mentioned by participants were: having someone to celebrate victories with; offering protection from judgement by others; and alleviating the loneliness of being an entrepreneur.

#### **5.4.2.6 Exploring Personal Development as a Mentor Function**

Personal development functions were classified as functions played by individuals that helped participants grow and develop in their personal capacity. Many of the participants valued and worked on developing themselves through practices such as seeking mentors, reading books, and seeking to learn from various media personalities. As articulated by one participant,

*“Watching all the Ted talks, it was not about improving skills, it was about improving me the person.”*

### Challenging Ideas

Many participants mentioned individuals who challenge their ideas, which ultimately allows them to think through ideas and decisions more deeply. It was classified under personal development because this function forced the business owner to develop their own thinking abilities. These functions were mostly played by work-based relationships and close family for most of the participants.

For Jamie, this function was played by a customer early on in his business who challenged his value proposition to a point where he was forced to think about it creatively and change the business model. In Jamie’s opinion this enabled him to build a viable business. In Payton’s case he says his investor plays this function regularly, where his investor *“challenge(s) it to the point where it comes out as a stronger idea; or, or sometimes even just scrapped and we don’t go onto it”*.

### Providing a New/Different Perspective

Six participants referred to key individuals who helped them look at things from a new or different perspective. For Mandy, her boyfriend helps her to think differently about challenges she is experiencing, while for Lily, her husband provided this function in her life. However, for Jamie, this function seemed like it was invaluable, where he used different means to experience it. He particularly mentioned his business partner,

*“Ben and I butted heads and over time I would find something, and I would wonder what Ben would think of this – lets troubleshoot this from his eyes.”*

Apart from his business partner, Jamie turned to his friend Graham,

*“He will zip it down into one little molecule and go, ‘Okay I get it, should you really be that upset about it?’ And it makes you go ‘Yeah you are right’ Because we spend so much time and energy on things and they don’t go your way, you feel you have to justify it with an equal amount of time and energy in complaining about it.”*

Jamie also mentioned learning to see things from others' perspectives by watching Ted Talks.

### Providing Honest Feedback

Four participants expressed their appreciation for honest feedback from key people in their support networks. These business owners not only valued feedback but sometimes sought it out actively. Yasmin mentions an informal mentor, Ashley as being invaluable to her because,

*“She’s real and she able to be very honest with us. Oh gosh, ya, she’s been awesome.”*

Jamie turns to his friend Jade who tells him exactly where he stands. He values this because he says,

*“When I am in difficult situations... I need truth speakers.”*

### Teaching Communication Skills

Four participants spoke of how a few individuals helped them with their communication skills in business and management. Some of these skills were business communication skills such as how to write emails or make effective presentations, while other types of support, in this regard, were around dealing tactfully with customers and colleagues. For Lily, her mentor helped her speak about sensitive issues such as money with her board members who seemed hesitant to discuss it.

### Moderating Extreme Characteristics

Four participants valued people in their support networks for providing functions of tempering any extreme characteristics that proved to be a challenge for participants. In the case of Lily, being a highly emotional person, she said it helped her to be surrounded by logical people who could *“balance (her) out”*. For Derek, his psychologist helped him rationalise and process extreme emotions that would cause him to lash out at his staff. And for Jamie, he recognises that without that function being played by his business partner, he wouldn't have gotten as far as he did with the business on his own. He says,

*“As much as I am an entrepreneur, I know Ben tempered me in a way that without him, we wouldn’t be here right now. (My business) might still have become something, but it would totally different.”*

### Teaching Individuals How to Learn from Their Mistakes

Two participants mentioned the value they got from individuals who helped them learn from their own mistakes. For Derek, his father helped him think about how to re-evaluate his performance and say, *“Ya, I messed up there. Let’s do better!”*

While for Payton, an early investor in his business helped him to re-evaluate his performance when challenges arose.

### Teaching Compassion

Two participants spoke of how certain individuals had helped them to be more empathetic and compassionate towards others, especially employees. Yasmin said that as a result, she was able to be more compassionate with her employees and show them that she cares. For Derek, who comes from a different socio-economic background than his workers, one of his mentors helped him really empathise with the challenges faced by his employees. His mentor did this by encouraging him to go and see the living conditions of his staff which enabled him to understand the *“very hard lives”* lead by his employees and in turn, learn to demonstrate more compassion towards them.

### Confrontation and Self-Awareness

Three participants mentioned instances when they were confronted by others in a way that led them to become more self-aware of their shortcomings. For Lily, her friend confronted her about the way she was managing her disorganised home environment, which was hindering her ability to be more effective in her studies. For Josh, his business partners confronted him around the fact that he spent too much time exploring potential opportunities which affected his efficacy in the business. Once he started to change that behaviour, he said,

*“I found that it definitely improved in the short while that I'd been doing it - my productivity and my ability to stay focused on the job and so on by saying no to other things.”*

#### **5.4.2.7 Exploring Role Modelling as a Mentor Function**

When asked about role models, many of the participants interviewed could not pick individual role models. However, some of them did articulate aspects of certain individuals that they admired. Furthermore, in exploring the role of storytelling as a mentor function, participants did not recognise some individuals as role models per se, but did mention learning from their experiences in business.

##### *Exploring the Role of Storytelling as a Mentor Function*

A few participants referred to the role of others' stories and the manner in which it helped them to learn or to think differently. For some, these were stories told by people in their networks, while for others these were stories, they sought from reading books and biographies of leaders or famous people. Stories seemed to help different business owners in different ways. For both, Yasmin and Mandy, they liked to listen to stories from other entrepreneurs about their challenges and how they dealt with those challenges. For Josh, his father tells him stories of his own business experiences that serve as cautionary warnings to Josh around how to manage risks in business. For Payton, his late mother often told him stories of her family's large business empire and how they ultimately lost everything in business. He said these stories served as warnings as well as taught him values and practices around dealing with finances.

Robert said that his wife often told him stories revolving around her experiences working at a public hospital as a paediatrician. These stories were often very troubling for Robert, and, in gaining a more consummate appreciation of the challenges and problems facing other people, Robert was able to reframe his own challenges in business as meagre and insubstantial by comparison.

Exploring Other Aspects of Role Models That Serve as Mentor Functions

Most business owners mentioned wanting to emulate behaviours of their role models that ultimately lead to financial success. These role models were largely public personalities. For Robert, he sees his role model as living his own dream, he articulated this as,

*“In business specifically, so my ultimate role model is, is Richard Branson from Virgin... because I like that he’s involved in multiple different types of businesses. So, the same thing could be said about Bidvest; they’re not just focused on one business, because that would be my ultimate dream: to have multiple businesses across different sectors of the economy.”*

Each business owner had different reasons for the business personalities they considered to be role models. Some participants mentioned role models who were not as financially successful but had some other traits they admired. For Jamie, he looked up to Simon Sinek and the way he handled other people, while Josh mentioned looking up to Sam Harris, a philosopher and neuroscientist, for his intelligence and clear thinking. For Wendy, she mentioned her mother as a role model for her hard work, independence and ability to break a mould, that could be constraining at times, for women in her community.

A few individuals mentioned looking up to people as a result of their work ethic and values demonstrated. Some such individuals were family members, as per the testimony of one respondent, who spoke of his cousin, who became a doctor and spent the vast majority of his career giving back to his community, rather than merely accruing wealth for its own sake, as one of his greatest role models. He held his cousin’s values in high esteem and still looks up to him to this day as a role model.

Some participants declared that they only admired certain individuals for their financial success. In such cases, it was not public personalities that respondents described admiring so much as their fellow peers in their grassroots networks, or individuals with similar educational and cultural backgrounds to their own. Davin mentioned looking up to a friend of his who listed *“five companies on the stock exchange.”* When asked about what Davin looked up to, he said it was *“purely his financial success.”* Since Davin admired someone from his networks for achieving financial success, this also indicated relatability as an important

component when individuals select role models. For some individuals, if someone is not relatable it could mean that their levels of success are unachievable and thus, these individuals would no longer be contenders for role models. If an individual embodied characteristics with which the respondents could relate, on the other hand, such as occurred in cases in which they shared a common cultural or socioeconomic background, then that individual was found to be more likely to be framed as a role model, as their success could be cast as achievable within the respondent's worldview.

Interestingly, one business owner interviewed was opposed to the concept of role models because she felt like it was putting people on a pedestal when in fact *"we are all equal"*.

#### **5.4.2.8 Other Interesting Findings**

When one participant spoke of the lack of support him and his partners received in business, he was asked what kind of support he would like to see. Interestingly, he seemed to be describing a mentor like figure. He said,

*"Something in which we have thought about - is about having someone more experienced because all of us are quite young, maybe someone a little more experienced who could maybe sit on a board or something like that and provide some critique into the strategy, help shape the strategy. And also, networks of customers, of suppliers - someone like this, we have thought about, but really we struggled to see what would be in it for them."*

#### **5.4.3 The Relationship Between Key Developmental Relationships and Mentor Functions**

In order to understand the associations between key groups of developmental relationships and the types of support that were provided to established business owner-managers, a co-occurrence analysis was conducted using the Atlas.ti software.

The purpose of the co-occurrence table was to generate insights into the association of related concepts (Contreras, 2011). Co-occurrence tables reveal that when a single quotation is coded using two distinct concepts, these codes can be singled out as ones that touch each other in some way (Contreras, 2011). Co-occurrence tables likewise allow for a quantitative

exploration to be pursued in the association of two factors. The intensity of the co-occurrence in question relates to the strength of the relationship between the two factors under consideration.

For the purposes of this study, a co-occurrence table was generated to gain greater insights into the association between certain types of developmental relationships and the types of mentor functions these groups provided. This reality is represented in Table 14.

The rows in the table pertain to the category of relationship while the columns signify the types of support received. The frequencies in the individual cells generate insight into how many times a particular type of support was received from that relationship in general. Higher frequencies highlight greater amounts of the particular support from a relationship while lower frequencies signify that this type of support was not mentioned much in the context of the relationship. For example, family members are seen to provide the highest amounts of psychological support to established business owner-managers, while formal mentors were not once mentioned in the context of playing any role model functions.

Table 14: Co-Occurring Codes for Key Developmental Relationships and Mentor Functions (Top 10 Frequencies Highlighted)

CATEGORY OF MENTOR FUNCTION PROVIDED								TOTALS
CATEGORY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS	INFORMATION SUPPORT	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS	PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	SERVICE PROVISION	PHYSICAL RESOURCE PROVISION	PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT	ROLE MODELLING FUNCTIONS	
BUSINESS PARTNER	4	4	11	1	2	4	2	28
FAMILY	5	21	17	2	5	35	11	96
FRIENDS	7	19	8	7	2	14	6	63
FORMAL MENTORS	0	9	4	0	3	2	0	18
INFORMAL MENTORS	2	1	5	2	0	2	0	12
OTHER NETWORKS	2	12	1	3	4	5	2	29
PROFESSIONALS	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
PUBLIC PERSONALITIES	0	1	2	0	0	0	13	16
WORK RELATIONSHIPS	12	5	5	3	4	3	1	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>35</b>	

#### **5.4.3.1 Results from the Co-Occurrence Table**

There are certain trends that become evident when viewing the results from the co-occurrence table. Family members provide the most types of support to established business owner-managers, while professionals and public personalities provide the least types and amounts of support functions. The most frequently sought out support functions by established business owner-managers were in the form of business management skills and psychological support. While the previous sections gave a sense of the significance of support offered by key developmental relationships, Table 14 allows a holistic view of all the findings pertaining to developmental relationships and mentor functions. The frequencies also allow insight into the types of support sought and received, as well as allows a view of how these functions relate to each other.

Family and friends provided established business owner-managers with all types of mentor functions. Family members provided established business owner-managers with not only the greatest support overall, but also the greatest variety of mentor functions. Friends were the second most significant source of support, also playing a large variety of mentor functions for an established business owner-manager. Work relationships were the third biggest source of support. Business partners were categorised separately since they were seen as such a significant form of support for established business owner-managers. If business partners were to be included in work related relationships, this category would be the second most significant source of mentor functions. However, since they are categorised separately, work related relationships are the third most prominent source of mentor functions. Business partners provided a significant amount of personal development as a mentor function.

Another interesting observation from the table is that formal mentors provided a moderate amount of business management skills, but limited kinds of support in all other areas. As expected, public personalities provided the greatest amount of role modelling support. This was followed by family members.

In terms of types of mentor functions provided, business management skills and psychological support were the two most significant types of mentor functions, followed by personal development functions offered to established business owner-managers. As expected, work related relationships provided the greatest amount of information support, followed by friends. Interestingly, family was the greatest source of providing business management skills followed by friends. Family members also played the most significant role in the personal development of the participants interviewed.

#### **5.4.4 Summary of Findings from Research Question Three**

In summary, research question three generated rich insights into the types of relationships established business owner-managers draw support from. In general, family members were considered the most significant source of support, particularly parents and spouses. Since many of the participants came from entrepreneurial families, family members provided the broadest range of business related and psychosocial mentor functions.

Friends were seen as the second largest source of support for established business owner-managers. A significant number of participants turned to friends who were entrepreneurs for help and guidance.

The role of business partners has been downplayed in mentoring research conducted thus far. In most cases, business partners were seen as significant sources of business-related support.

An additional interesting finding was that some established business owner-managers did not view some individuals who provided them with mentor functions as developers or sources of support, despite them valuing the support they received from these individuals.

Overall, the informal developmental relationships that established business owner-managers engaged in seemed to provide richer and more holistic support than formal mentors they were paired with.

In terms of mentor functions played by key developmental relationships, business related support was seen to be the most significant type of support given to established business owner-managers. Of this, the most significant functions played by developmental relationships were helping to explore business ideas, help with managing and dealing with employees, general business advice, strategy formulation and implementation and help with building systems and structures for the business. Developmental relationships also often helped established business owner-managers to spot opportunities, provide industry news and information, make key introductions in business and help business owner-managers overcome challenges with physical resources.

The next most significant functions were seen as psychosocial support. This included helping an established business owner-manager reflect on themselves, reassure them during times of self-doubt and anxiety, challenge their ideas and provide new and different perspectives for them to think through business related challenges.

Developmental relationships also helped by telling stories of their own and other's experiences and posed as role models for established business owner-managers through their exemplary behaviours. A combination of these behaviours helped provide established business owner-managers with perspective on their own problems, lessons to learn from as well as motivation and inspiration.

## **5.5 Results for Research Question Four**

### **Research question four: What is the perceived value and outcomes of mentorship for established business owner-managers?**

This question sought to establish the value that established business owner-managers place on the support they received from various individuals in their developmental networks. Interview question seven in the guide related to this research question. It was important to understand, from a participant's perspective, what they viewed as the most important relationship and the most valuable type of support received which has been integral to their growth and development. The interview question further sought to understand if there were any key skills or benefits that individuals could pin-point as outcomes of the support received. The categories

that helped the main themes emerge related to this research question have been represented in Figure 8.

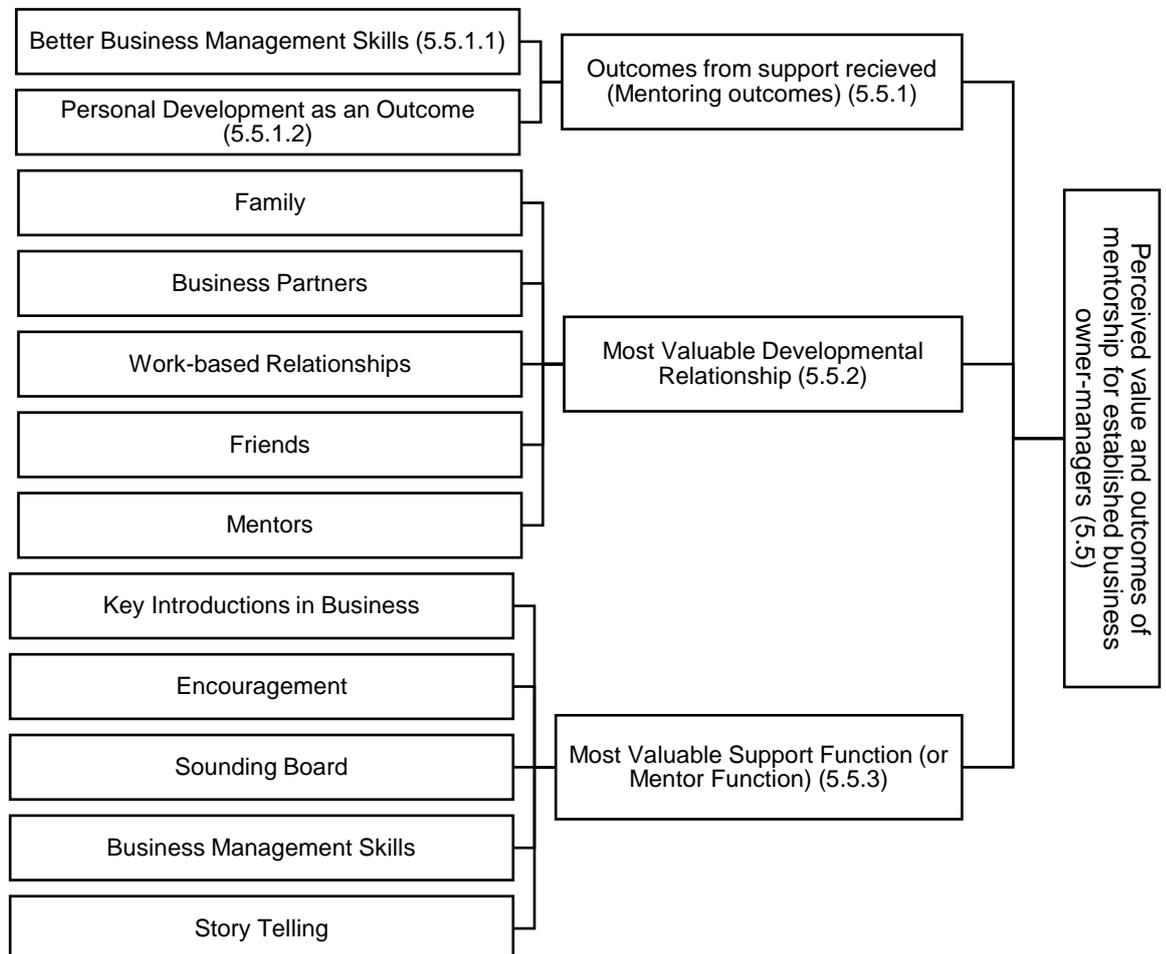


Figure 8: Category to Theme Mapping for Research Question Four

### 5.5.1 Outcomes from Support Received

Over the course of the interviews, some participants talked about key skills they learnt from the various people in their support networks. Only nine out of a total of fourteen participants referred to outcomes of support they had received. These findings were considered relevant because they provided a different perspective of the value these individuals gained from the support they received.

Participants talked about skills they learnt that directly influenced or changed the way they managed their businesses. They also spoke of abilities they developed as individuals that helped them in a personal as well as a business capacity. In some

cases, participants mentioned skills they gained as the most prominent outcomes that they could pinpoint. However, these skills could not be mapped exactly to specific types of mentor functions played by developmental networks. This reality is explored in the section below.

The emergent concepts are tabulated in Table 15.

Table 15: Mentoring Outcomes

<b>KEY OUTCOMES FROM SUPPORT RECEIVED</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Category Frequency</b>	<b>Sub-Category Frequency</b>
<b>Business Management</b>		<b>12</b>	
	People Management Skills		4
	Financial Management Skills		3
	Business Negotiation Skills		1
	General Management Skills		2
	Systems and Processes		1
	Product Development		1
<b>Personal Development</b>		<b>14</b>	
	Patience and Calmness		4
	Compassion		2
	Learning How to Think		2
	Productivity and Focus		1
	Humility		1
	Communication Skills		2
	Motivation		1
	Confidence		1

#### **5.5.1.1 Business Management Skills as an Outcome**

Business management skills emerged as one of the key constructs in the outcomes. Under business management skills, participants referred to a variety of different skills they had developed that helped them to manage their businesses better in a very direct way. Of these skills, people management skills emerged as a recurrent theme that participants referred to, followed by financial management skills, negotiation

skills, general business management skills and the ability to implement better systems and structures within their businesses.

One participant, Davin, was unable to answer this question. He received minimal support from others during the course of his entrepreneurial endeavours. Although this happened to be a co-incidence and was unplanned, the findings from his interview allowed insights into the experience of one who possesses limited developmental relationships and had received limited types of support. While this participant considered himself very successful financially, he described his experience as lonely and very difficult. This was in stark contrast to other participants who mostly had rich networks and regularly received different forms of mentoring support from these networks. This could also be viewed as a finding in terms of the outcome of a *lack of mentoring* for an established business owner-manager.

### People Management Skills

Four participants referred to how they had become better at managing people in different ways. Derek said that he has learnt “*how to get people to like (him)*” as well as how to better communicate with customers and employees. Mandy distinguished between having innate leadership skills, but still struggling with people management skills when she said,

*“Although I consider myself a born leader, you’re not born with all the knowledge and skills you know?”*

Robert further supported their views when he also said that he had developed better people management skills. He said that he realised that people management was about understanding what drives or motivates people, understanding how they see challenges and ultimately getting them to be comfortable and work in a way that achieves results.

People management seemed to be a recurrent theme where participants talked about developing softer skills that also fed into their ability to manage people better. These skills are explored more deeply in section 5.5.1.2.

### Financial Management Skills

Three participants directly referred to finance management skills they developed from people that had supported them. Derek said that he had learnt,

*“(a) host of technical skills I have learnt, from costing food to product development, a certain level of cash flow management.”*

Yasmin and Mandy also specifically referred to finance management as a key skill they developed. Yasmin says of this,

*“The key skills that I’ve learned would probably be some finance, ‘cause I was never really into finance.”*

### Other Business Management Skills

Other skills participants spoke of was overall management and managerial skills, product development skills, negotiation skills and being able to implement better systems and processes within their businesses. As expressed by Yasmin,

*“I loved cooking from the heart and, just going with the flow, so I’ve now learnt through the pressures of having to document my recipes and document how to do certain things. Even things like packing; it’s been so frustrating that you get to client and they’ve forgotten to pack spoons and they’ve forgotten to pack a tablecloth. So, I’m now learning how to put everything in some sort of a manual so when we are not here, there is something that staff can refer back to that’s written for them as proof and stuff. So, these are all the things that 4 years ago we would have never imagined doing and now here we are. Now we have manuals for nearly everything that needs to be done in the kitchen. So that’s definitely the skills that I’ve learnt. One or two of the skills.”*

#### **5.5.1.2 Personal Development as an Outcome**

Certain other skills that participants spoke of were classified under personal development because these were skills that helped them even in personal facets of their lives.

### Patience and calmness

Three participants spoke about various types of support that have helped them to become more patient or calm. For Derek, he is more patient, and which helps him to manage with his staff more effectively. For Luna, she says that the support she has received from her spiritual guides has helped her become calmer. She says of this,

*“If I don’t like the staff I would fire, and now, after I learnt so much monk teaching or meditation, it make me take time... take time to think...you can’t do that, you can’t just fire people.”*

### Compassion

Two participants referred to learning to be compassionate but firm at the same time. Derek describes this as a skill he developed directly from one of his informal mentors,

He said he learnt, *“to have compassion but also be hard. And not dehumanise people, not even in the way you talk or speak to them.”*

### Learning How to Think

Two participants spoke of relationships that helped them in the way that they think. For Lily, this was a role that her husband played in her life. She said she developed,

*“(a) kind of maturity in a sense and to not react to what the thing is and be able to just process it and then - and then have a response, you know, so I think that’s kind of grown over the years.”*

Luna echoed similar sentiments when she said her monk and practice of meditation have both helped her to learn to take time to think before acting out.

### Other Forms of Personal Development

Other participants spoke of a host of different ways in which they have developed personally. For Josh, his partners’ role in giving him honest feedback has helped him improve his productivity and focus greatly.

Robert said that the stories his wife tells him of people suffering in public hospitals has helped to *“ground (him)”* and keep him *“humble”*. He said that this in turn

motivates him in his business, because if he does well in business, he will be able to contribute more to charity and ease some of this suffering. This corroborated another statement Robert made during his interview which was to say that he was largely self-motivated. Although his wife's experiences play a part in motivating him, it is the way he perceives her stories that results in motivation.

Another emergent outcome was the development of communication skills. For Derek, he recognised this as a result of his relationship with an informal mentor as well as his psychologist. He said that previously, *“(he) used to scream and shout a lot which (didn't) help. (He) now barely ever scream(s).”*

Yasmin mentioned her overall confidence as an outcome of the various types of support she had received over the years in business, despite having anxiety around key decisions or new ventures in business,

*“I've learnt to be very confident as an entrepreneur as well. I don't doubt myself as much. I do doubt myself when now it's a new territory; like we're opening a studio and we're moving this weekend so we're leaving the hub and going to Bryanston. So, I'm very scared about the new venture but I've become very confident in what we do.”*

### **5.5.2 Most Valuable Developmental Relationships**

Participants were asked to identify individuals in their networks who had been instrumental to their growth and success in business. Almost all the participants identified more than one individual. However, some participants did identify some relationships as playing a greater role in their success than others. The results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Most Valuable Developmental Relationships

Category	Subcategory	Frequency in category	Frequency in Sub-Category
<b>Family</b>		<b>9</b>	
	Father		3
	Husband		4
	Mother		1
	Wife		1
<b>Business Partner</b>		<b>3</b>	
<b>Work-based Relationships</b>		<b>3</b>	
	Ex-relationship from Corporate Job		1
	Board		1
	Senior Employee		1
<b>Friends</b>		<b>1</b>	
	Friend who is an Entrepreneur		1
<b>Mentors</b>		<b>1</b>	
	Informal		1

Most participants identified their families as playing an instrumental role in their success as business owners. However, they identified different reasons for the individuals they selected.

For Payton, he recognised his late mother as providing him with a strong foundation in understanding how to manage money and how businesses run. Whereas for Derek his father was instrumental because from an early age, his father taught him *“to make it on (his) own, despite coming from money.”* While for Davin, he acknowledged his wife because of her constant support and advice *“despite not understanding business”*.

Participants also identified their business partners as instrumental to their growth and success. Jamie says that Ben is his *“primary support”* and everyone else is secondary. He talked about how when he spots any new opportunities Ben is *“the map of how to get there”*.

A few participants mentioned key work relationships as instrumental to their success. For Farah, it was a senior employee who gives her business advice and helps her to think strategically. For Lily, her board members continue to change the way she operates in business through their various forms of support.

Mandy mentioned a close friend of hers who is an entrepreneur as being instrumental to her success. She said it was because of his “*all round support,*” and the fact that he was able to help her not only by providing business loans but also giving her advice and introducing her to new clients.

Yasmin mentioned the support received by an informal mentor because of the various forms of support she provides such as helping them with important presentations, giving them “*endless opportunities*”, “*having (their) backs*”, and being “*genuine*”.

### 5.5.3 *Most Valuable Mentor Functions*

Participants were asked about the most valuable type of support they had received or continued to receive. Most of the participants found it easier to mention specific individuals than to pinpoint a particular type of support received. Results from the participants that gave definitive answers to the question are presented in Table 17.

Table 17: *Most Valuable Mentor Functions for Established Business Owner-Managers*

Category	Frequency in category
Key Introductions	4
Encouragement	3
Sounding Board	2
Business Management Skills	1
Stories of Others' Challenges	1

Key introductions in business were identified as one particularly valuable type of support received. To this effect, Lily recognised her board members as playing this function. While Yasmin acknowledged an informal mentor as providing this key support for them in business.

Some of the participants recognised encouragement and having “*someone (to) believe in you*” as the most valuable type of support received by them. Mary said that the encouragement she received from her husband was the most valuable type of support for her. She spoke about not having enough of a belief in herself and then said,

*“To me I think it was more the fact that I would have liked to have had that in me but the fact that I had encouragement, I had some people who believed in me so I did not lose hope.”*

Wendy also spoke of having someone who believed in her as the most valuable type of support. She said,

*“I think that that most integral is having someone believe in you. So if you don’t have that sort of belief or encouragement from other people you are just going to end up stuck in the same position and I mean it doesn’t matter what your background is, whether you have the financial means or not, I think just having that belief in yourself from, you know, having that support from others will help you get places because if you don’t have that then, yes, obviously self-belief, but if you don’t have that additional support it would make life I would say, a bit more difficult.”*

Mark did not mention the encouragement he received at present, but rather encouragement he received from his ex-boss during his corporate days. After an accident that left him disabled, his ex-boss encouraged and pushed him to get back to work and to take on challenging roles for his growth and development. He said,

*“I’m not sure what I would have done had I not had that support and push; things might have ended very differently.”*

Payton and Farah both recognised having ‘a *sounding board*’ to bounce off ideas and discuss ideas with as a key type of support that was integral to their continuation as business owners.

Robert recognised the role of his wife’s stories about others’ challenges in helping him to stay humble and maintain perspective of his own challenges. While Yasmin recognised an education in business management from an entrepreneur support organisation as the most valuable support she receives.

The results suggest that individuals perceive and remember support such as key introductions because of the substantive nature of the outcome. The results could also mean that individuals tend to remember and value how others make them feel rather than the specific things that they do. However, financial support and resource provision could also be perceived as a substantiable support function offered by developmental networks, but it was interesting to note that none of the individuals mentioned financial support as the most valuable type of support received although resource constraints was a moderately recurring theme when exploring challenges faced by business owner-managers.

#### **5.5.4 Summary of Findings for Research Question Four**

The main findings that emerged from this question were that participants developed various business management skills as well as developed holistically as people. Business management skills were categorised as skills learnt that could be applied directly in the day to day running of a business, while personal development was defined as outcomes that helped participants develop certain behaviours and soft skills as individuals. Under business management skills, people management and financial management skills were cited as the top two benefits that participants recognised as outcomes from the various types of support they received.

Under personal development, participants acknowledged patience and calmness most frequently as a result of the support they received. This was followed by other softer skills developed such as compassion, communication skills and learning how to think about challenges in business.

In terms of the most valuable developmental relationships, participants identified a number of key relationships that had been integral to their growth and development

as established business owner-managers. Family members were identified as important relationships, followed by business partners and work-related relationships. These were relationships that offered a broad range of mentor functions for participants. Interestingly, only one participant identified a friend as integral to their growth. This is a surprising finding given that friends were seen to provide significant amounts of mentor functions across all categories of functions in the co-occurrence table (Table 14). Furthermore, one participant identified an informal mentor as the most valuable relationship. This finding was interesting since informal mentors were seen to provide low amounts of mentor functions from the co-occurrence table (Table 14).

In terms of the most valuable type of support received, a significant number of participants identified key introductions in business as valuable, while some participants identified encouragement as the most valuable type of support. Both of these mentor functions are related, as both functions express confidence in an established business owner-manager's ability.

## **5.6 Summary of Results**

The results from the 14 interviews conducted are presented in this chapter. Emergent themes from interviews were tabulated and presented based on the frequency of mentions throughout the interviews. These findings generated rich insights into the nature and perceived value of mentorship among established business owner-managers in South Africa. The insights generated also allowed a holistic view of mentorship as a phenomenon. Maximum variation purposive sampling allowed a broad range of views and experiences to emerge.

In summary, the main findings from the study were that aspects of an established business owner-manager's background play a role in influencing the challenges they face in business, in both nascent and established phases. The main determinants of their backgrounds that affect the nature of challenges they face later in business are prior formal education, prior work experience, prior entrepreneurial experience, their socioeconomic background and their family background.

The nature of challenges faced by participants in the established phases of business were very different to earlier phases of business. Challenges in the established

phases of business were sometimes resulting from changes in the external environment such as increased competition or a change in government regulation. Human resource constraints were also another challenge that was more prominent in the established phases of a business versus the nascent stage. This could be due to the result of expanding operations that require more staff to be managed. This is a challenge that most established business owner-managers do not have to contend with in the earlier phases of their business. Furthermore, sales and marketing were a challenge that participants grappled with in both early and later stages of business, although in the more established phases, this was emphasised more by participants.

Findings also confirmed that established business owner-managers turn most to other experienced individuals when dealing with challenges in business. While family and friends seemed to play a key role in helping participants overcome challenges, within the subset of family and friends, individuals who had entrepreneurial experience were most sought after and useful from the perspective of established business owner-managers. Established business owner-managers were also observed to seek mentoring from role models they had not previously met or engaged with. These were public figures who were entrepreneurs and sportsmen that participants were inspired by.

Mentoring support received by established business owner-managers was most often in the form of developing business management skills, providing key information support and providing psychological support on an ongoing basis.

Some participants could not map mentor functions to outcomes they experienced, but many of them reported a number of new business management skills they learnt, as well as an increase in confidence and general psychological well-being as a result of the multiple sources of support they enjoyed.

As expected, family members were seen to be the most valuable type of developmental relationship by far, followed by business partners. The range of support functions provided by these subsets of relationships also give insight into the types of mentoring or development appreciated by established business owner-managers.

Key introductions in business were cited as the most valuable form of support received followed by encouragement. These findings are significant because they provide insight into the types of support established business owner-managers consider as having the most immediate or obvious effect on their performance in terms of running their businesses.

Although the most relevant findings have been summarised, all the findings can be considered relevant given that no known prior mentoring research has been conducted with a focus on established business owner-managers.

The next chapter will discuss the implications of the findings in light of prior research conducted in the field of mentoring.

## **6 CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

In this chapter, the research findings, based on the study of mentorship conducted among established business owner-managers in South Africa, are discussed in detail. The results will be discussed in relation to the literature review that was conducted in Chapter Two and used to explore the research questions formulated in Chapter Three. Each of the codes and categories that were developed in Chapter Five in combination with the literature review, are used to unpack the results of the study. These findings contribute to the understanding of the nature and perceived value of mentorship among established business owner-managers and business owners in South Africa.

Since the analysis of data was pursued through conventional qualitative content analysis (a purely inductive approach), the research questions that are outlined in Chapter Three were used as an organising framework for the discussion in this chapter. The themes identified from the categories and codes in Chapter Five will be discussed in greater detail in relation to each research question in this chapter. The mapping is thus demonstrated in Table 18.

Table 18: Mapping of Subcategory to Category and Theme Formation in Relation to Research Questions

Research Question	Categories	Themes
<b>Research question one: What are the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers?</b>	<p><i>Background:</i> Prior Education, Prior Employment, Prior Entrepreneurial Experience, Socioeconomic Background, Family Background</p> <p><i>Challenges in Business:</i> Early Challenges (Business Management, Resource Constraints, Personal and Other Challenges) Late Challenges (Business Management, External Factors, Resource Constraints, Personal Challenges, Other Challenges)</p>	<p>Background of the established business owner-manager (Table 8) (Section 6.1.1)</p> <p>Challenges faced in business (Table 9 and 10) (Section 6.1.2)</p>
<b>Research question 2: How do entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business?</b>	Turning to Experienced People, Professionals, Research, Formal Education, Trial and Error, Turning to Spirituality, Building New Networks, Partnering for Skill	Practices employed by established business owner-managers to deal with challenges (Table 11) (Section 6.2.1)
<b>Research question 3: How do established business owner-managers fulfil their mentoring needs from one or more relationships in their networks?</b>	<p><i>Key Developmental Relationships:</i> Family Members, Friends, Business Partner, Work Relationships, Public Personalities, Professionals, Other Networks</p> <p><i>Mentor Functions:</i> Business Related Functions (Business Management Support, Information Support, Service Provision, Physical Resource Provision)</p> <p>Psychosocial Functions (Psychological Support, Personal Development)</p> <p>Role Modelling Functions</p>	<p>Key Developmental Relationships (Table 12) (Section 6.3.1)</p> <p>Mentor Functions (Table 13) (Section 6.3.2)</p>
<b>Research question 4: What is the perceived value of the support received by established business owner-managers through their networks?</b>	<p><i>Key Outcomes from Support Received:</i> Business Management Outcomes, Personal Development Outcomes</p> <p><i>Most Valuable Developmental Relationship:</i> Family, Business Partner, Work Relationships, Friends, Mentors</p> <p><i>Most Valuable Mentor Function</i></p>	<p>Key Outcomes from Support Received (Table 15) (Section 6.4.1)</p> <p>Most Valuable Developmental Relationship (Table 16) (Section 6.4.2)</p> <p>Most Valuable Mentor Function (Table 17) (Section 6.4.3)</p>

The framework in Table 18 also outlines the approach taken to the discussion chapter.

## **6.1 Discussion for Research Question One: What are the Mentoring Needs of Established Business Owner-Managers?**

Research question one attempted to address the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers in South Africa. In order to answer this question, a holistic picture of the participants was required to understand their specific mentoring needs, considering the insights provided by the previous high-level overview of the participants' backgrounds. Next, the challenges faced by participants in business were considered when they first started out, in addition to a comprehensive survey of current challenges besetting them today, were examined. This approach allowed for a comparison of challenges faced by entrepreneurs and business owner-managers running a nascent and new business versus an established business, taking into consideration their backgrounds.

### **6.1.1 *The Influence of the Established Business Owner-Manager's Background***

The findings from the research will be compared to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

#### **6.1.1.1 *Prior Education, Employment and Entrepreneurial Experience***

While most participants mentioned their educational background during the interviews, even the most highly educated participants (chartered accountants and an actuary, for instance) recognised gaps in their knowledge that affected their ability to run their businesses, in the early and later stages of their businesses. Although the majority of the participants interviewed were well educated, with tertiary level qualifications, most of them did not place much importance on their educational experience and how it related to helping them run their businesses from a skills perspective.

The research identified advantages and disadvantages deriving from the prior employment experience of established business owner-managers that were not addressed in previous studies on mentoring. One such advantage pertained to the

prior work experiences of entrepreneurs, and especially those with corporate experience who had worked in high-prestige positions with an abundance of support structures available to them, in the form of networks from their prior workplaces. Such business owner-managers with prior, relevant experience also demonstrated possessing better insights into how other businesses and workplaces were managed, which business owner-managers lacking this professional experience seemed not to possess. The research also identified one more factor being a disadvantage to entrepreneurs with substantial prior employment experience (and especially those occupying senior management positions in large organisations), which was the difficulty of transitioning from a resource rich environment in a corporate setting to a resource poor environment in a small business setting.

Only two of the participants interviewed reported having had prior entrepreneurial experience in their youths. Neither of these participants mentioned any significant effect of their prior entrepreneurial experience. It was simply revealing the nascent entrepreneurial nature they possessed in their youth. This finding concerning the entrepreneurial experiences of businesses owners in their youth is inconclusive, as respondents were not specifically probed on the question of the benefits they had accrued from their prior entrepreneurial experience.

The extant literature on organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring has mostly focused on the issue of personality and demographic variables, and has seldom recognised the role played by educational and other background variables (Chandler et al., 2011). The literature that addresses human capital in entrepreneurship and SMEs states that education was only a significant variable if it related to the task that entrepreneurs needed to carry out (Marvel et al., 2016; Unger et al., 2011). With regard to the prior employment experience of entrepreneurs, a study conducted by Terjesen and Sullivan (2011) found that entrepreneurs tended to use many of their support structures from former employment as developmental networks in their entrepreneurial ventures. None of the literature on formal entrepreneurial mentoring, by contrast, has identified prior entrepreneurial experience as an influencing factor shaping the mentoring needs of individuals. But this may be due to the fact that most of these studies conducted have been done so in the context of nascent entrepreneurs who are likely to have little to no prior entrepreneurial experience.

Overall, the research findings confirm those of the literature reviewed: that prior education is only significant if the individual can apply and use the education for specific tasks in business. However, this finding may not be conclusive since the established business owner-managers may have accrued benefits from prior education that they may not be aware of or acknowledging explicitly. The findings also confirmed extant literature that prior employment experience provides an advantage to entrepreneurs and business owner-managers, who are then able to draw on the support structures they developed during their employment to further their interests in their entrepreneurial ventures or businesses.

The research findings further expanded on the extant literature by revealing the disadvantages of prior employment experience, in that prior employment experience can perturb the efforts of business owner-managers to transition from resource rich corporate environments to resource poor entrepreneurial environments. However, only one participant cited their past employment experience as a disadvantaging factor. This is likely owing to the fact that most of the other participants did not describe having any substantial employment experience prior to embarking on their entrepreneurial endeavours.

As concerns the prior entrepreneurial experiences of participants, the findings on this subject were inconclusive, as the particular benefits deriving from such experiences were not reported or described in any depth. The only significance of prior entrepreneurial experience is that participants considered this to be an important aspect of their stories. Hence this factor may be seen as an influencer, although the exact nature of the influence it exerts is inconclusive from this study.

#### **6.1.1.2 *Family and Socioeconomic Background***

Many of the participants interviewed in the research mentioned that they had close family members who were entrepreneurs. The research found that some of these participants were directly influenced by their families, coming to learn about entrepreneurship and business management through familial connections. Furthermore, many of the participants identified the developmental relationships provided by family members as having been crucial in enabling them to overcome subsequent business-related challenges.

Only two of the entrepreneurs interviewed, specifically referred to their socioeconomic background as having exerted a notable effect on their entrepreneurial experiences. In one such case, the individual's socioeconomic status functioned as a risk mitigant protecting them against business failure by providing the promise of financial support for personal expenses in the event of business failure. In the other case, the individual's socioeconomic background not only helped him build key relationships, but also helped him in material terms, in the form of the business loans granted on friendly terms to him by his family.

The literature reviewed on organisational mentoring only recognises the socioeconomic background of respondents as a central influencing factor in the formation of developmental relationships (Kram & Ragins, 2007). This factor recognises the fact that individuals originating from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to attract and in turn be attracted by mentors from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Kram & Ragins, 2007). The literature reviewed did not recognise any other aspects of family background as relevant to mentor-protégé relationships in the context of formal organisations.

The research findings in the study did substantiate one of the central conclusions that echoes in past literature on mentoring: individuals deriving from wealthy socioeconomic backgrounds were found to attract and develop relationships from other financially successful individuals.

However, the research findings have expanded on the extant literature in revealing that wealthy entrepreneurs and business owners may be able to rely on family members providing a promise of personal financial support protecting them against the risk of failure, and were found to face fewer challenges owing to resource constraints, as they were able to rely on family members for such support if need be.

Another manner in which the findings expand on the extant literature is by elaborating on the benefits, such as entrepreneurial knowledge, that families with a history of entrepreneurship provide to relations who are established business owner-managers. Furthermore, this factor also relates to the key developmental networks and mentor functions available for established business owner-managers to draw on.

Overall, an individual's socioeconomic and family backgrounds not only affect the quality of their developmental networks, but also influence the mentor functions available to them, both directly from their family in the form of physical resource provisions, but also indirectly in the form of support available from their family's networks, their risk-taking orientation and their understanding of entrepreneurship and business ownership as a lifestyle.

### **6.1.2 Challenges Faced in Business**

The research findings in Table 9 demonstrate that, in the early phases of a business, participants described having significant challenges with financial resource constraints and business management know-how such as the technical knowledge related to delivering their product or service, strategy formulation and implementation, sales and marketing, implementing systems and structures, and operations management. Participants also referred to personal challenges they faced in the nascent phases of business concerning difficulties with perseverance and struggling with communication skills.

In the more established phases of their businesses, the nature of challenges faced by participants changed (see Table 10). Participants overwhelmingly reported challenges with human resource management, sales and marketing and finance management. Other challenges were external in nature, concerning changes in market dynamics, new competitors or changes in governmental regulation. Personal challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the established phases of their business related to a lack of motivation, focus and/or a fear of failure in business. Many participants also reported facing resource constraints in the form of financial, operational and human resources.

Research findings demonstrated that, as business owner-managers progress to the more established phases of their businesses, the changing environment often brings about new challenges in business management as well as in the roles they play.

Some of the literature on entrepreneurial mentoring recognises that the needs of each entrepreneur may be different depending on the stage of their business, the industry in which they work, economic conditions as well as other personal and emotional considerations (Memon et al., 2014). However, this literature does not

outline or detail the types of challenges faced by entrepreneurs and business owner-managers in the various phases of business. The literature on entrepreneurial mentoring recognises that entrepreneurs in early phases of business may be faced with challenges such as resource constraints but may not be skilled enough to deal with such challenges and hence need mentors (St-Jean & Audet, 2013). It does not speak to any challenges faced by entrepreneurs and business owner-managers with established enterprises, however some literature conducted on the subject of human capital has recognised and made this distinction. The literature reviewed states that new business stage entrepreneurs tend to focus on running their businesses on a day to day basis, implementing relevant and useful systems and processes and hiring effective employees (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). The literature also states that, in the established phases of businesses, entrepreneurs are focused on owning and managing their businesses, looking for new opportunities in their surrounding economic environment, implementing quality control and trying to maintain stable employment within their businesses (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). While this literature speaks to the nature of tasks business owner-managers may be involved in during the new and established phases of their businesses, it does not consider any of the challenges faced by business owner-managers in the new or established stages of their business. Furthermore, none of the literature reviewed recognises the personal challenges that entrepreneurs may contend with as a matter of course.

Research findings confirm that the needs of entrepreneurs and business owner-managers are dependent on the stage of their businesses, the state of the economy and their personal and emotional states. Research findings also confirm the findings of the reviewed literature that business owner-managers in the early phases of business face financial resource constraints and are often concerned with operations management and implementing systems and processes. However, the research findings expand on the available literature in this regard in revealing that, in the early phases of a business, entrepreneurs and business owner-managers are concerned with and face many more challenges than outlined in the literature. Furthermore, the research findings identify specific types of personal challenges and other types of challenges, such as challenges faced with communication and adjusting to new business partners, which are an expansion on the extant literature.

The research findings also confirm some of the literature, revealing that established business owner-managers focus on owning and managing their businesses, looking

for new opportunities (through sales and marketing), implementing quality control (through implementing systems and processes) and trying to maintain stable employment within their businesses (demonstrated by the human resource challenges). However, the research findings also expanded on this literature significantly. While previous literature has suggested that entrepreneurs lack relevant skills required in the nascent phases of their businesses (St-Jean & Audet, 2012), this research has found that, even in the established phases of a business, established business owner-managers required mentors because they were not equipped to deal with the new types of challenges they were facing. Further, research findings expanded on the literature by providing much more rich and nuanced data on the nature of challenges faced by established business owner-managers in terms of the types of personal challenges they were facing, as well as their vulnerability to changes in the external environment, persistent resource constraints, and other challenges concerning the bullying they experienced from competitors (Table 10).

### **6.1.3 Concluding Remarks for Research Question One**

To date, limited research has addressed variables affecting the personal mentoring needs of an individual, apart from demographic factors and issues pertaining to personality (Chandler et al., 2011). This research has made a significant contribution to the available body of literature on the topic in this respect by identifying the importance of factors such as an individual's prior education, former employment and entrepreneurial experience, socioeconomic background and family background in determining the challenges they face, especially in the context of entrepreneurship and SMEs. Overall, these factors influence the potential key developmental relationships an established business owner-manager has available in their network to pursue, the mentor functions played by these developmental relationships, and the challenges they faced in the early and late phases of their businesses. All of these considerations combined to exert a determining influence on their mentoring needs.

While these factors could be expected to influence an established business owner-managers mentoring needs, to date, literature on mentoring has not identified these factors explicitly, except for the influence of socioeconomic backgrounds on attracting mentors (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

The research findings also confirm the initial argument presented in Chapter One, that it is important to study mentoring in the context of established business owner-managers, since the nature of their needs is different, compared with those of new business owners and nascent entrepreneurs. Established business owner-managers face many different and additional challenges in business as is revealed in Table 10. Hence, the nature of support they need is significantly different from the nature of support that is needed by nascent entrepreneurs, both from a business management perspective, as well as from a psychological support perspective. The mentoring needs of such individuals needs to be considered more holistically in the future, taking into account factors pertaining to their family, socioeconomic, educational and employment backgrounds, their access to developmental relationships and the resulting mentor functions played by these developmental relationships.

Furthermore, the other significant theme that emerged was that established business owner-managers needed ambidexterity to contend with the challenges they faced in business. While, on the one hand they faced challenges with debt collection from clients, on the other hand they also needed to manage good relationships with the same clients. For some, business growth meant that they were committed to working in their businesses, while they simultaneously tried to work *on* their businesses to increase their operational capacity.

The challenges faced by business owner-managers in their established or later phases of business were found to be partially dependent on the challenges that beset them in the early days of their businesses. These were factors such as the relative availability of resources, availability of developmental relationships in their networks and their possession of skills that would help them overcome their challenges in the established phases of business.

Overall, the research findings contribute to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers, and how these needs come to be affected by various factors, such as their backgrounds and available developmental relationships.

## **6.2 Discussion for Research Question Two: How do Established Business Owner-Managers deal with Challenges in Business, Including Engaging in Mentoring?**

The aim of this research question was two-fold. It first sought to understand how established business owner-managers cope with the challenges they face in business, and, secondly, it sought to investigate whether established business owner-managers seek out help from other individuals when coping with challenges in their professional lives. The literature reviewed drew on mentoring and developmental network literature in organisational and entrepreneurial contexts.

### **6.2.1 *Practices Employed by Established Business Owner-Managers to Deal with Challenges in Business***

The research findings suggest that the most common manner in which established business owner-managers dealt with challenges they faced in business, was by turning to other experienced people in their networks, such as family and friends who are also entrepreneurs, suppliers, competitors and customers. They also turned to friends and family who were not entrepreneurs as well as formal and informal mentors. Absent not being able to connect with the right people in their existing networks, participants mentioned networking and seeking to build relationships with people who would be able to help them overcome their challenges. Furthermore, some established business owner-managers turned to professionals such as lawyers, accountants, professional bodies, labour consultants, life coaches and other specialists.

Apart from turning to others for advice, established business owner-managers also pursued their own research on the issues, questions and problems affecting them, by reading previously published research, for instance, the biographies of other successful people, and even by using internet search engines to answer critical questions.

Some established business owner-managers also reported that they overcame challenges by learning through a process of trial and error and had enrolled in relevant formal education courses to improve the skills they lacked. Other practices they mentioned finding helpful included spiritual modalities and embarking on business ventures and projects in collaboration with clients and suppliers who could compensate for their lack of skills in certain areas of business.

The literature reviewed has stated that established business owner-managers demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness when dealing with business-related challenges (Calvo & García, 2010) and that mentoring relationships are often need driven (Janssen et al., 2015). Other literature reviewed has discussed how entrepreneurs in different phases of a business's progress tried to expand their human capital skills for use in business. The literature reviewed has indicated that entrepreneurs read books, engage with public sources of information, such as the internet, and learnt through a process of trial and error in order to overcome challenges (Mamabolo et al., 2017b; Sharafizad, 2018). Furthermore, it stated that entrepreneurs tend to turn to people such as family and friends (Mamabolo et al., 2017b), coaches and mentors (Mamabolo et al., 2017b), professionals and consultants (Sharafizad, 2018) as well as other work-related relationships (Sharafizad, 2018). Literature in the context of organisational mentoring also suggested that individuals turn to spirituality to overcome challenges they face at work (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003).

The findings pertaining to this research question were largely consistent with prior literature found. However, the research findings further expanded on extant literature to provide relevant insights into the specific practices that established business owner-managers engage in. The research findings were, in this respect, more detailed than those found in past literature on the subject. For instance, while past literature on human capital investments indicates that entrepreneurs read books as a source of learning (Mamabolo et al., 2017b; Sharafizad, 2018), the research found that some established business owner-managers specifically read biographies of famous entrepreneurs and professional athletes in order to motivate themselves, while other established business owner-managers read academic research to learn.

The research conducted also found that established business owner-managers don't solely turn to family and friends for help, but they specifically seek help from friends who are also entrepreneurs. This finding constitutes a significant expansion on the extant literature, which tends to treat family and friends as a homogenous category unto themselves (Allen & Eby, 2010; Dobrow et al., 2012; Kram, 1985; Mamabolo et al., 2017b; Murphy & Kram, 2014). Rather, it is important to consider which specific friends established business owner-managers turn to for help. It is reasonable to expect established business owner-managers will make use of developmental networks comprising other entrepreneurs with whom they can relate. However, it is

important to understand that established business owner-managers do not just turn to any friends, and that the ability of the friend to relate, understand and offer solutions to challenges is an important consideration.

While the literature on this subject recognises the role of mentors, coaches and professionals as a source of support (Mamabolo et al., 2017b; Sharafizad, 2018), the research has also expanded on this topic, finding that established business owner-managers also engage with life coaches and professionals that can help them as holistic individuals, taking into account the personal and professional dimensions of their work lives. This conclusion further supports the view that an entrepreneur's work and personal life cannot be separated, and that, in order to succeed, entrepreneurs require help as holistic individuals, especially since the psychological cost of entrepreneurship is so high (Duchek, 2018).

Research findings have also expanded on the literature by revealing the innovative practices of established business owner-managers. In cases in which they were lacking in certain crucial business-related skills, established business owner-managers would collaborate with their clients in order to provide a commercial incentive to their client or supplier to help their businesses grow. This finding is significant, as it provides an additional viewpoint onto an entrepreneur's and business owner-manager's resourcefulness.

Furthermore, while the literature has not thoroughly elaborated this point, a key new finding from the research indicates that, in the case of established business owner-managers who did not possess the networks and relationships they needed in order to deal with specific challenges, they actively tried to network to build those relationships as a resource to draw on. While this came about as an additional finding expanding on past studies, this finding is consistent with the literature that identifies the need-driven quality of mentoring relationships (Janssen et al., 2015). This finding is also consistent with the underlying principle of entrepreneur resilience and resourcefulness reflected in the literature (Calvo & García, 2010).

### **6.2.2 Concluding Remarks for Research Question Two**

The main findings from the research were that established business owner-managers turned most to experienced people to deal with the challenges they faced

in business. While many of these practices were supported by prior research conducted in the field of mentoring and established entrepreneurs, the findings from this research uncovered new practices, and in turn elaborated on past literature.

The role of specific types of people in an established owner-manager's network is important to consider, especially given that they tend to turn mostly to other entrepreneurs. This reality reveals the fact that such individuals need support from experienced people who can relate to them and provide them with practical solutions to pressing problems. Even the practice of reading biographies of other successful people can be seen as a vicarious form of turning to another experienced individual to learn from their stories.

Absent the suitable people in their networks, some established business owner-managers seek out networks and build relationships with individuals who may be able to help them in business. Furthermore, established business owner-managers also collaborated with other people and companies in order to take advantage of skills and know-how they may not possess. The ability of established business owner-managers to seek out and build resources that they need in order to succeed in business is not a surprising finding, especially given that this ability is a reflection of their resourcefulness.

### **6.3 Discussion for Research Question Three: How do Established Business Owner-Managers Fulfil their Mentoring Needs from One or More Relationships in their Networks?**

This research question aimed to get insights into the way established business owner-managers use their networks of relationships to fulfil their mentoring needs. The objective was to gain insights into which developmental relationships provide essential mentor functions, and to gain a better appreciation of what these functions are.

The discussion compares the research findings to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The literature review was conducted by drawing on streams of mentoring and developmental networks in both entrepreneurial and organisational contexts.

### **6.3.1 Key Developmental Relationships**

The research found that established business owner-managers overwhelmingly turn to family members, friends, work-related relationships and business partners for support. They also turn to formal and informal mentors, professionals, other support figures such as classmates and industry peers, and draw on stories from public personalities for support. However, the research findings detailed these clusters of relationships further to create a detailed typology of developmental relationships. Among the family members mentioned by respondents as having provided them with significant support, parents and spouses were found to be most important in this regard. Among friends, those friends who were also entrepreneurs were most useful, with established business owner-managers also relying extensively on their business partners for support with their business and personal development.

The literature on mentoring in entrepreneurial contexts describes mentors as denoting more experienced entrepreneurs who provide support to less experienced coevals (St-Jean, 2011). Some of the mentoring literature states that there is a difference in status between protégés and their mentors (Jones & Brown, 2011), while other studies on mentoring contradicted this view, indicating that individuals received support from peers but do not necessarily consider them to be mentors, but rather just friends who have greatly contributed to their growth and development (Bynum, 2015).

Other literature reviewed found that entrepreneurs often use former colleagues, former mentors and other relationships from their prior employment to bolster their entrepreneurial ventures (Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). Entrepreneurs were found to use their networks as learning habitats to access resources and identify opportunities (Bowey & Easton, 2007). The literature on the topic also states that entrepreneurs with established enterprises are more likely to turn to friends and family as sources of support and to further develop the skills that they lack in business, especially if their families have had entrepreneurial experience (Mamabolo et al., 2017b). Family members were found to provide entrepreneurs with social, task related and financial support in early phases of their businesses (Edelman et al., 2016). The literature further stated that entrepreneurs in the established phases of their businesses were more likely to use mentors and coaches as sources of skills development. This is due to entrepreneurs tending to be overconfident in their skills and abilities in the

nascent phases of their business and hence seeking out support less often in this phase (Mamabolo et al., 2017b).

The literature on organisational mentoring states that an individual's developmental network comprises of co-workers, professional association members, family members, outside friends, support staff, role models and the greater community (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Chandler et al., 2011; Dobrow et al., 2012; Kram, 1983). The literature on organisational mentoring also finds that individuals tend to use role models in the public sphere as sources of support (Dobrow et al., 2012).

Overall, the literature on developmental networks in an organisational context could largely be applied to established business owner-managers. Many of the key relationships found in the literature were applicable to established business owner-managers as well.

The research findings also largely agreed with literature on the subject in the contexts of established business owner-managers and entrepreneurs. Established business owner-managers were found to use all the relationships outlined in the literature as sources of support. With respect to family, the research also confirmed that established business owner-managers were more likely to turn to family members who had entrepreneurial experience for support. The research findings expanded on the extant literature by identifying other sources of support, such as informal mentors and business partners, work related relationships such as suppliers and customers, professionals such as life coaches and consultants, an individual's family's networks, classmates and industry peers. Some of these new clusters of relationships identified, such as business partners, seemed to be significant sources of support for established business owner-managers that were not specifically identified in the relevant literature.

The research findings that were consistent with those of previous studies elaborate in far greater depth on *who* the key developmental relationships were within the categories of developmental relationships and the sources of support, thus expanding on extant literature. The findings elicited in the data set revealed that established business owner-managers turned to parents and spouses most within the cluster of family members, and that they turned a lot to friends who were also entrepreneurs for support within their friend cluster. Furthermore, the research

findings identified which types of public figures acted as sources of support for established business owner-managers. Established business owner-managers read the biographies of famous entrepreneurs, leaders and sportsmen to get inspired and learn new skills.

One area in which the research contradicted the findings was that established business owner-managers tended to use family, friends and mentors in all phases of a business, and not just in its established phase. Another area in which research findings contradicted the literature on entrepreneurial mentoring was that, while the experience of the mentor/developer seemed to be important for the established business owner-managers in the study, the research found that the developer or mentor need not be *more* experienced necessarily. This study found that established business owner-managers also draw support from individuals in their networks who may not be experienced in entrepreneurship at all. Findings also contradicted the literature that stated that there is a difference in status between mentors and protégés. Many established business owners did not view key developmental relationships as being of a higher status to themselves. Rather, many of the social actors in the established business owner-manager's networks were considered peers. Research findings confirmed literature on peer mentoring that many individuals do not consider peers to be mentors, but may recognise them as other individuals who have largely contributed to their growth and development as individuals (Bynum, 2015).

Taking a macro view of the nature of developmental networks, research findings were consistent with literature that stated that developmental networks comprise a continuum of relationships that offer varying types of support in accordance with an individual's needs (Dobrow et al., 2012). If the research was to have only taken into account the relationships where the developer takes an active interest in the development of his or her protégé, many of the types of support and mentor functions provided would be missed. Furthermore, the established business owner-manager's relationships took on many forms - long term and short lived as well as planned and spontaneous (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

The additional findings from research are significant, because they show the importance of support from an established business owner-manager's nuclear family members. These findings also show that established business owner-managers

value support from other entrepreneurs highly. This signifies the importance of having developmental relationships with individuals that the established business owner-manager can relate to and who may be going through similar challenges.

The research also found that when established business owner-managers engaged in formal mentoring relationships with mentors who did not have experience or expertise in the fields they were operating in, they were disappointed. This finding further shows that established business owner-managers need to have developmental networks that provide them with support that is specific to an entrepreneurial and small business context.

Some of the literature recognised the role of formal mentors from prior work relationships, but it did not recognise informal mentors (Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). Although the argument being made in this research is that multiple people from an individual's network can act as informal mentors, the distinction within the sub-category named 'informal mentors', is that the participants recognised these specific individuals as so, whereas in other cases, participants did not term their developmental relationships as informal mentors.

When it came to professionals such as lawyers and consultants, although participants drew on these individuals for specific services, they did not identify them as being developmental in nature due to the transactional nature of the relationship. What is interesting is that participants did identify psychologists and life coaches as developmental despite the transactional nature of the relationships. A possible explanation for this may be that psychologists and life coaches sell services that are meant to be developmental in nature, and hence participants identified them as such even despite the transactional nature of the relationships.

The research also found that developmental relationships are not as clear cut, since relationships evolve and overlap. Friends become business partners and customers become friends.

The findings also indicated that the number of developmental relationships an established business owner-manager has in their networks is associated with their backgrounds. Factors such as prior employment experience, family background and socioeconomic background seemed to play a significant role in the number and types

of relationships in an established business owner-manager's developmental network.

Furthermore, this research enabled a view of outcomes revolving around the lack of developmental relationships. In the case of one entrepreneur who lacked such developmental relationships, the experience was described as emotionally difficult and resulted in so-called dark days. None of the literature reviewed identified specific consequences deriving from a lack of developmental relationships in an individual's life.

Overall, the research findings allow for deeper insights into specific relationships that offered support to established business owner-managers. These findings are significant because they suggest a strong link between an entrepreneur or business owner-manager's support structures and their ability to progress in business. For example, it is important to understand the role of support nuclear families and business partners offer established business owner-managers. Absent these developmental relationships, while an established business owner-manager may still be able to run a successful business, their experience of being an entrepreneur is significantly worse than others who have this type of support.

A GEM report (Herrington et al., 2018) found that many of the entrepreneurial development programmes in South Africa use mentors and advisors who have never had any entrepreneurial experience themselves. The research confirmed the importance of other experienced entrepreneurs as sources of support for entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers. If South Africa is to create effective support programmes for established business owner-managers, then it is essential that the mentors and advisors they use have experience in entrepreneurship themselves.

### **6.3.2 *Mentor Functions Played by Developmental Networks***

Questions five and six in the interview guide allowed for an exploration of functions played by developmental networks for established business owner-managers. The findings are summarised in Table 13. The exploration of functions played by mentors allowed insights into *how* mentoring or support is provided. Furthermore, mentor

functions are another way to understand an established business owner-manager's mentoring needs.

The research findings were categorised based on Kram's categories for mentor functions (Table 13). However, additional sub-functions were introduced since interviews revealed many different functions played by developmental networks that were distinct in nature. The categorisation of sub-functions allows for a more nuanced understanding of exactly how developmental networks provide support for established business owner-managers to learn and grow. Furthermore, these nuances allow insight into the skills and knowledge a mentor/developer ought to possess in order to effectively support an established business owner-manager as a protégé.

The research identified multiple mentor functions that were categorised broadly into business management support, information support, service provision, physical resource provision, psychological support, personal development and role modelling.

Each of the categories are explored in detail in the subsections that follow.

### **6.3.2.1 *Business Management and Information Support***

Under business management support, the research found that established business owner-managers received support largely with exploring business ideas, managing employees, general advice in business, strategy formulation, building systems and structure, finance management, managing business relationships, managing operations and building negotiation skills.

Under the category named information support, participants identified receiving multiple different types of information support such as help from a developer or mentor to: spot new opportunities in business, gain industry news and information, gain industry specific know-how, gain technical information, gain new product knowledge and learn about industry benchmarks.

The literature on organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring states that mentor functions often extend to information support including business management skills (St-Jean, 2011) and providing guidance in the form of problem solving and advice (St-Jean, 2011).

The literature on both organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring seem to categorise support functions into large opaque categories. The research findings were consistent with the literature in that the mentor functions played by developmental networks included information support, business management skills and guiding through providing advice. However, the research findings were much more detailed and descriptive of the mentor functions played by key developmental relationships.

The research expanded on the literature by identifying multiple subfunctions within the category of information support (St-Jean, 2011). These were: helping spot opportunities. This was in situations in which a mentor or developer made a protégé aware of opportunities in the market for the established entrepreneur to take advantage of. These would often take form as business ideas or market trends; providing industry specific know-how such as knowledge of the workings of an industry. This also could take the form of offering an established business owner manager an opportunity to learn. An example was seen in one participant's case, in which her client offered her opportunities to learn about how luxury catering events are executed so she could expand her business' service offering; providing information on new products in the market; and providing information on industry benchmarks such as salaries.

#### **6.3.2.2 *Physical Resource and Service Provision as Support***

The research found multiple subfunctions within the categories of physical resource provision and service provision. Under physical resource provision, participants identified types of functions such as business loans, investment, grant funding, free material, and help with raising funds. Under service provision, participants identified sub-functions such as key introductions in business, access to markets, marketing services, using their position of influence to gather support, and helping with recruitment activities.

The literature related to these functions identified in the research were limited to sponsorship, which was defined as advocating for the protégé with others (Kram, 1983), exposure and visibility (Kram, 1983) to others in their organisation, integration and socialisation (St-Jean, 2011) into the business community (Table 3). None of the

literature on mentoring identified physical resource provision as a type of mentor function.

Research findings were consistent with the extant literature, in which exposure, visibility, integration and socialisation could be seen as similar to the functions of key introductions in business.

The sponsorship function in the literature was found to be similar to the 'access to markets' function identified in the research. However, while sponsorship was defined as advocating for the protégé with others, access to markets was more of a service provision in which developmental relationships went above and beyond advocating for the established business owner-managers, and sometimes would go as far as to sell products on their behalf.

The research findings expanded on extant literature in this sense by further identifying multiple types of service provision as support. The services provided were significant sources of support given that established business owner-managers were often constrained by financial and human resources. Services they would receive for free from their developmental networks were valuable to them.

The research also identified multiple distinct forms of physical resources that established business owner-managers would receive as forms of support from their developmental networks. These support offerings often consisted of loans received from family members, while others seemed to consist of business loans received from friends, signifying the high levels of trust these social actors invested in these relationships.

Furthermore, while business management help was seen as a sub-function of information support in the literature, the findings under the different types of business management support offered were so wide and significant that it was categorised as being distinct from information support. Under business management support, *exploring business ideas* and *managing employees* were the two most cited mentor functions. Both these findings were consistent with other findings from other parts of the research on challenges faced by established business owner-managers. For established business owner-managers operating in a volatile business environment with changing market needs, it is expected that they need to constantly come up with

new ideas to expand and diversify their businesses in order to survive and thrive. Furthermore, key challenges reported by numerous participants were challenges that they were experiencing with employees; hence, it is unsurprising that perhaps this might be an area in which established business owner-managers actively seek out and receive the most support. Another important type of mentor function that emerged from the data was strategy formulation. This function can also be seen as necessary for established business owner-managers operating in dynamic environments.

### **6.3.2.3 *Psychological and Personal Development Support***

The research found multiple types of psychological and personal development functions as constituting key forms of support offered to established business owner-managers. Psychological support was identified as ongoing emotional support offered, while personal development was classified as functions that contributed to the participant's growth, further enabling them to develop new skills.

Under psychological support functions listed, the research identified multiple sub-functions such as reflection, reassurance, listening to problems, motivation, protection from judgement, acceptance, encouragement, help with analysing problems, celebrating victories and alleviating loneliness.

Under personal development functions, the research identified many sub-functions such as, challenging ideas, offering new and different perspectives, confronting the established business owner-manager on their shortcomings in order to build their self-awareness (termed confrontation to build self-awareness), providing honest feedback, moderating extreme characteristics, teaching compassion and teaching the established business owner-managers how to learn from their mistakes.

The literature reviewed went on to identify the key psychosocial functions played by mentors and developmental networks, which extends to psychological support functions like reflection, in which the mentor would act as a mirror for the entrepreneur providing them with critical feedback in terms of their business plans and the personal image they wished to portray to others (St-Jean, 2011). Mentors were also identified as providers of reassurance to entrepreneurs in times of difficulty, alleviating stress while doing so (St-Jean, 2011). Mentors further provided functions

of motivation and encouragement, helping entrepreneurs with self-confidence (St-Jean, 2011), and finally mentors were seen as confidants for entrepreneurs, who could be trusted like friends (St-Jean, 2011). Entrepreneurial mentoring literature also identified other support functions extending to the confrontation of assumptions and ideas, and a guide for improving problem solving and comprehension strategies (St-Jean, 2011).

The literature on organisational mentoring also identified some of the key psychological support functions offered by mentors to protégés. These support functions were identified as acceptance and confirmation, counselling, friendship, inspiration and motivation (Kram, 1983).

Many of the psychological support functions outlined in the literature on organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring were also substantiated in this research. These extended to functions such as reflection, reassurance, listening to problems as a confidant, motivation and encouragement, protection from judgement, acceptance and help with analysing problems.

Only two of the personal development functions found in this research were also identified by the literature reviewed. These were the functions of challenging ideas and confrontation to build self-awareness.

The research findings significantly expanded on the literature reviewed. The research found multiple new sub-functions under psychological support and personal development categories such as sharing in and celebrating victories, alleviating the loneliness that comes with entrepreneurship, offering new and different perspectives, providing honest feedback, moderating extreme characteristics in the established business owner-manager's temperament, teaching compassion and instilling the established business owner-manager with the skills necessary to learn from their mistakes.

The research findings were more nuanced while the literature tended to combine multiple similar types of support into broad categories. The new subfunctions identified are critical because they demonstrate the psychological and personal development needs of an established business owner-manager. Furthermore, the identification of personal development functions as a distinct category is important

because it demonstrates the softer skills and abilities needed by established business owner-managers to run their businesses successfully (as opposed to the hard skills directly related to business such as business management skills).

#### **6.3.2.4 Role Modelling as a Support Function**

The research identified a few role-modelling functions played by developmental relationships. Role models were sources of inspiration for established business owner-managers. The subfunctions categorised under role modelling were those of storytelling, which was conceived as a means through which developers/mentors could share their experiences, and which served a pedagogic function for the established business owner-managers; demonstrating admirable behaviours demonstrating admirable ethics and values; and acting as role models on the basis of the financial success they had already achieved.

The extant literature on mentoring and developmental networks outlines role modelling as a distinct function of mentoring (Dobrow et al., 2012). Mentors can be sources of inspiration or comparison (St-Jean, 2011). The subfunctions of role modelling include providing behaviours to emulate (Allen & Eby, 2010; Dobrow et al., 2012), demonstrating work ethics and values that a protégé can aspire to (Allen & Eby, 2010; Dobrow et al., 2012) and engaging in storytelling activities that help an entrepreneur acquire new knowledge (St-Jean, 2011).

All three subfunctions have been identified in the research and are thus also applicable in the context of established business owner-managers. An additional finding from literature was that some established business owner-managers aspired to others owing purely to their financial success. This factor was dubbed *financial success* in the research findings. Role models served as paragons of financial success, especially when they derived from the community or networks of established business owner-managers. In terms of being sources of inspiration, role models were only found to be sources of inspiration in the event that their personal philosophy or achievements fell in line with an established business owner-manager's own inherent values.

Most of the established business owner-managers' role models came from public personalities, as expected, followed by family members.

### **6.3.3 Concluding Remarks for Research Question Three**

The themes that emerged from this context were that informal mentors and developmental relationships acted as greater and richer sources of support for established business owner-managers than was the case in formal mentoring relationships (Janssen et al., 2015). Furthermore, established business owner-managers valued developmental relationships that had entrepreneurial experience.

The most important sources of support in the inner circle of established business owner-managers were parents, spouses, and friends who were also entrepreneurs and business partners. These relationships, especially those consisting of family and friends, tended to provide the broadest ranges of business management skills, psychological support, personal development support and role modelling support for established business owner-managers. This finding is in line with the literature that states that especially in the context of entrepreneurship, mentors need to be able to provide a broad range of functions, and need to possess diverse skills and expertise in order to be effective (Deepali et al., 2017).

The research also contributed rich and nuanced findings to the types of mentor functions played by established business owner-managers' developmental networks. These mentor functions allowed for a different perspective on the needs of established business owner-managers to emerge. Established business owner-managers needed support with business management skills and psychological support functions the most, followed by personal development functions.

The findings show that mentors/developers need to be well versed in a wide range of business management functions and preferably derive from a similar industry to the established business owner-manager. Furthermore, mentors need to be able to fulfil psychological as well as personal development functions, since the types of support provided by mentors is dependent on the protégés needs as well the abilities of the mentor (Kram & Ragins, 2007). If formal mentors are used to provide all these services to established business owner-managers, there needs to be high amounts of trust in the relationship as established business owners may feel threatened by the mentors, especially if mentors are more experienced in business and operating in a similar industry.

Furthermore, findings also show that, in order to function as effective role models, there needs to be an alignment of values between key developmental relationships and established business owner-managers.

The co-occurrence table provides further insights into which developmental relationships provided specific types of mentor functions. While the literature on entrepreneurship has identified that family members provide entrepreneurs with social, task related and financial support (Edelman et al., 2016), none of the other literature reviewed specified support functions played by various groups in an entrepreneur's network. This is an area that is understudied (Dobrow et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2015), and hence the findings from the co-occurrence table can be seen as a significant contribution to mentoring literature to date. The co-occurrence table shows that while family members and friends prove to be great sources of business management skills and psychological support, business partners contribute the most to the personal development of an established business owner-manager.

The co-occurrence table (see Table 14) also shows the importance of a strong "inner circle" for established business owner-managers. Since entrepreneurship is seen to be a difficult endeavour overall, it is of the utmost importance that established business owner-managers cultivate close relationships that are supportive and enable their success.

The key finding from this research question was that established business owner-managers seek help from certain developmental relationships when they face challenges in business. These developmental relationships provide certain mentor functions, which help alleviate the established business owner-manager's challenges. Furthermore, if established business owner-managers do not find the mentoring support they need from their available networks, they seek out various people within their networks who then become part of their developmental network that are able to offer them the support they need.

#### **6.4 Discussion for Research Question Four: What is the Perceived Value and Outcomes of Mentorship for Established Business Owner-Managers?**

Research question four sought to understand the perceived value of key developmental relationships, and the mentor functions played by them, for established business owner-managers. Question seven in the interview guide asked participants to select relationships and mentor functions that they found the most integral to their growth and development. Participants were also asked to pinpoint outcomes or learnings from their interactions with their developmental network.

#### **6.4.1 *Mentoring Outcomes for Established Business Owner-Managers***

The research findings demonstrated that some of the challenges faced by established business owner-managers were overcome by way of the mentorship they received from their respective developmental networks. For example, “people management” and “HR management” were cited most frequently as a common business-related challenge for established business owner-managers. One common outcome deriving from the mentorship they received extended to the development of better people management skills. Other outcomes identified by respondents extended to: better financial management skills, business negotiation skills, general management skills, the ability to implement systems, improved processes in business and the ability to develop new products. In terms of personal development outcomes, participants identified: patience and calmness, compassion, learning how to think, better productivity and focus, humility, better communication skills, motivation in business, and confidence.

The literature on mentoring in organisational contexts clearly indicates that individuals who received mentoring reported better self-efficacy, improved work life balance, better goal achievement, reduced anxiety, higher confidence in risk-taking, increased credibility and improved reputation, increased power and confidence, better psychological health, a heightened ability to attract decision-makers, improved technical knowledge, improved skills and abilities, better abilities to spot and grab opportunities, increased levels of motivation and a better overall sense of self through the development of their identities (Allen & Eby, 2010).

The literature on mentoring in the context of SMEs reveals that business owner-managers derived multiple benefits from mentoring such as better opportunity identification and evaluation abilities, a clearer business vision, better business management abilities, a better understanding of accounts, a better ability to manage

operations, better human resource management skills, increased abilities to network, increased abilities to achieve goals, a validation of self-image, an improved sense of authenticity as an entrepreneur, improved self-awareness, better productivity levels, better after-sales follow ups, improvement in product range, increases in revenues and profitability, reduced costs and improved rates of business survival (Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

Research findings were largely consistent with the literature on mentoring outcomes (Allen & Eby, 2010; Kunaka & Moos, 2019). Almost all of the research findings were consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. This demonstrates that much of the literature on mentoring outcomes in organisational and small business contexts are applicable to established business owner-managers as well.

The research findings generated have also expanded on the extant literature by providing insights into a few new mentoring outcomes that were not outlined in literature. These extended to *better negotiation skills, developing the ability to learn how to think through challenges, better communication skills, increased levels of patience and humility*.

The literature on mentoring outcomes is rich, with detailed insights into the benefits that, protégés who received mentoring, assistance received. However, research findings were not as rich and detailed, possibly due to the small sample sizes investigated. Some of the mentoring outcomes mentioned in literature were not found during the course of this research. These outcomes extended to the process of outlining in an organisational setting processes such as *achieving work life balance, gaining credibility and reputation, improved power and confidence by association with a more powerful mentor, attracting decision-makers and opportunity spotting and grabbing* (Allen & Eby, 2010).

Some of the mentoring outcomes outlined in the context of SMEs were not reflected in the research conducted in this study, extending to outcomes such as *achieving a clear business vision, improved ability to network, better after sales follow up, increases in revenue, profitability and business survival and a reduction in costs* (Kunaka & Moos, 2019).

While these mentoring outcomes were not found in the research, it does not necessarily mean that these outcomes were not realised altogether. Many of the mentoring outcomes reflected in the literature related to the findings on mentor functions played by developmental networks in the research. For example, while none of the participants cited an improved ability to spot and grab opportunities as an outcome, the interviews demonstrated that this was a key mentor function played by developmental networks. Hence, it cannot be concluded that the absence of reported outcomes in the research means that there is a total absence of these outcomes altogether.

Another insight that was generated was that mentoring outcomes either resulted from the mentor functions played by a number of different people in the established business owner-manager's developmental network or were owing to a combination of mentor functions they received and other practices that established business owner-managers engaged in to overcome challenges in their businesses.

Some of the personal development outcomes and business management outcomes were linked. For example, participants reported better communication skills, compassion and patience as well as better people management skills. These outcomes can be linked to *better people management skills*, such as in the case of the development of communication skills, in which context compassion and patience can contribute to better people management skills in business.

Furthermore, the collection or reporting of outcomes can be seen to be outcomes that stood out most for established business owner-managers. The fact that people management skills, financial management skills and patience and calmness were reported as the top three outcomes could mean that these outcomes made the most significant differences to the established business owner-managers interviewed.

#### **6.4.2 *Most Valuable Developmental Relationship***

The literature on mentoring and developmental relationships does not rank the significance of relationships or mentor functions based on their value to protégés. Hence, all the findings in this section can be considered as new contributions to the extant literature.

Participants were asked to identify one or more of the most valuable relationships that have contributed to their growth and success as business owner-managers.

Most of the participants referred to a member of their family as having been key to their growth and development (refer to Table 12). This finding corroborates findings on key developmental relationships (Table 11), in which family members were cited most often as offering an established business owner-manager support. Family members were often also seen to be the most valuable developmental relationship since the results in the co-occurrence table (Table 14) show that family members provide the most significant and broadest range of mentor functions in addition to providing the greatest amount of business management and psychosocial support.

Business partners were identified as the second most valuable relationship for established business owner-managers. A possible explanation for this could be that business partners also fulfilled a broad range of mentor functions. Furthermore, business partners played a significant role in the personal development of the established business owner-manager, second only to family.

Work-related relationships were also identified as the second most valuable relationship for the established business owner-managers. A possible explanation for this could be that work-related relationships provided the highest amount of information support for established business owner-managers, apart from also providing a broad range of mentor functions across all categories.

Interestingly, only one person mentioned a friend as having been integral to their growth and development as established business owner-managers, despite friends as a group being the second most frequently cited developmental relationship listed in Table 12. One possible explanation for this could be that although friends fulfil a broad and significant number of mentor functions for established business owner-managers, rarely is one single friend able to provide an established business owner-manager with all their needs in business. Rather, it is a combination of multiple friends that contribute significantly to the development and growth of established business owner-managers. Furthermore, this could also mean that established business owner-managers only appreciate and acknowledge those relationships that provide broad and deep forms of support to them.

Interestingly, one participant mentioned an informal mentor (acknowledged by the participant as a mentor) as having been the most valuable relationship to their growth and development as established business owner-managers. However, from the co-occurrence table (see Table 14), informal mentors are seen to provide low amounts of mentor functions for established business owner-managers. This was found to be especially true when comparing the mentor functions provided by family and friends to the mentor functions provided by the informal mentors identified by participants. The most significant finding to emerge when comparing informal mentors to family was that family provided high amounts of psychological support, personal development and business management skills, while informal mentors rank much lower across all these functions. The explanation for this individual highlighting an informal mentor as most valuable, could be, that this informal mentor provided the participant with deep (as opposed to broad) support in a certain area that greatly helped him in business, and hence was considered as the most valuable relationship by this participant.

This findings in this regard are significant, revealing that established business owner-managers required high amounts of psychosocial support, business management skills and personal development support in order for them to consider relationships as being significantly valuable to them.

#### **6.4.3 *Most Valuable Mentor Functions***

None of the literature on organisational or entrepreneurial mentoring identified or weighted mentor functions in terms of their perceived value to protégés. Thus, all of the findings in this subsection can be considered as new contributions to the extant literature.

Participants were asked to speak of the most valuable *types* of support received, that have contributed the most to their growth and development. Many participants struggled to identify and single out these special types of support. However, some participants gave a few definitive answers to the question, as outlined in Table 16. These functions were: making key introductions in business, offering encouragement, functioning as a sounding board, conveying business management skills, and sharing stories of challenges.

Many participants referred to key introductions in business as the most valuable type of support received. This was not surprising given that many participants expressed experiencing difficulties with sales and marketing as the second biggest challenge facing them in the established phase of their business. Interestingly enough, none of the participants interviewed acknowledged the help they received to boost their people management skills as having been the most valuable type of mentor function of which they availed themselves, despite the fact that it was cited most frequently as a challenge in Table 10, and the fact that it was the mentor function received most frequently in Table 13. A possible explanation for this may be that key introductions in business was a type of support seen as making the most tangible difference in terms of business outcomes. Another alternate explanation for this could be that an introduction made to an established business owner-manager is a vote of confidence for the established business owner-manager, imbuing them with credibility. This can be seen as another way in which mentors/developers boost an established business owner-manager's self-confidence and motivate them in their business practice.

Participants spoke of encouragement as the second most valuable mentor function received. This was surprising because very few participants referred to personal challenges with motivation, self-efficacy and emotional difficulties in Table 10. When looking at the mentor functions they received in Table 13, only a few participants referred explicitly to encouragement received by developmental relationships. However, overall psychological support provided by developmental relationships was very high. One explanation for this could be that the combination of psychological support functions provided by mentors resulted in encouragement and improved self-belief for established business owner-managers.

Other participants mentioned having a sounding board as the most valuable type of support. This finding supports other research findings, especially when looking at the range of psychological support functions provided by key developmental relationships (see Table 13), with reflection being the most frequently cited psychological support received.

#### **6.4.4 Concluding Remarks for Research Question Four**

The findings from this research question provided an additional dimension to the overall view of mentoring in the context of established business owner-managers.

The main findings indicate that mentoring outcomes were often the result of a combination of mentor functions played by developmental relationships as well other efforts made by established business owner-managers. As such, it was difficult to map specific mentor functions to outcomes in all the cases, since many of the reported outcomes were the result of multiple variables.

Furthermore, the findings from the outcomes, while useful, are not exhaustive, since these outcomes were self-reported. Business outcomes, such as increasing revenues and profits were not specifically explored and hence were not reported on by established business owner-managers. Furthermore, many of the reported outcomes were also dependant on a participant's level of self-awareness.

The research made a significant contribution by identifying the most valuable relationships and mentoring functions as perceived by established business owner-managers. Even though these were self-reported, they allowed insights to emerge into the types of functions valued by established business owner-managers. Furthermore, the other insight gained was that participants often identified the most valuable relationships as those that played the widest variety of mentor functions for them, or those that provided the highest amounts of psychological and personal development support consistent with the findings from the co-occurrence analysis in Table 14.

## **6.5 Conclusion of Discussion – The Devil is in the Detail**

This chapter has discussed the findings that emerge in light of the literature on mentorship reviewed in Chapter Two. Many aspects of the mentoring literature conducted in the context of organisational and novice entrepreneurship are applicable to established business owner-managers. However, the way that the findings for established business owner-managers differ is that they have additional and, in some cases, different mentoring needs, and receive different and additional types of mentoring support compared to protégés in other contexts. The findings contribute rich and nuanced data that furnish deeper insights into various aspects of mentoring for established business owner-managers. The detailed insights into this field, pertaining to the various aspects of mentorship for established business owner-managers, are in themselves a significant contribution to extant literature on mentoring.

Certain variables from an established business owner-manager's background contribute to their network of developmental relationships as well as the challenges they face in business.

Established business owner-managers draw on a variety of methods that allow them to overcome challenges in business; however, findings confirm that the most common and frequently cited practice was to defer to other experienced people. In cases in which business owner-managers do not possess the relationships that can help them overcome challenges facing their businesses, they form such relationships through networking. In cases in which they have such a relationship but are unable to receive the type of support they need from that relationship; they collaborate with potential developers on commercial terms to receive the support they needed.

Family members, friends and business partners were all seen to provide the most support within an established business owner-manager's relational network. Furthermore, established business owner-managers value relationships with other entrepreneurs. These individuals could be family members or friends with entrepreneurial experience.

Many of the most significant mentor functions were played by individuals in developmental networks that were not classified as mentors by the established business owner-managers. Further, these relationships seemed to play a broader variety of mentor functions and in a more significant way when compared with individuals who were recognised and appreciated as mentors.

Support with various business management skills and different types of psychological support were the most frequently cited types of support received by developmental relationships. Apart from the factors mentioned by established business owner-managers with regards to the challenges they face, the types of support they received gives an additional perspective on the ongoing challenges established business owner-managers face in business.

The co-occurrence table allowed for a unique view of key developmental relationships and mentor functions to emerge. This constituted a significant contribution, as developmental network literature states that the behaviours and support functions comprising individual dyads were opaque (Janssen et al., 2015).

Mentor functions sought by established business owner-managers were related directly to the availability of such support within their developmental networks. If certain types of mentor functions were needed and not received, established business owner-managers sought out these functions through new and different relationships to further add to their developmental network.

Mentor functions played by developmental networks were found to have an effect on the types of challenges an established business owner-manager faces in business. Certain mentor functions received help to alleviate certain challenges in business.

Mentoring outcomes were seen to result from a combination of mentor functions tied to various relationships in an individual's developmental network. Better people management skills, better financial management skills and increased levels of patience and calmness were seen to be the top outcomes from support received.

Literature has thus far not explored the value or weighting of individual dyads in developmental networks, nor has it explored the most valuable types of support received by protégés. These constructs have been explored in this research and constitute a significant contribution to the field of mentoring and developmental network literature.

Insights into the most valuable relationships show that close relationships with frequent contact, providing the broadest range of mentor functions, are valued deeply by established business owner-managers. The most valuable mentor functions were found to be key introductions in business and encouragement. These functions instilled confidence in the established business owner-manager and helped them to see that people believed in them.

## 7 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Chapter One argued that the high rate of unemployment in South Africa is being exacerbated by the increased failure of established businesses in South Africa (Herrington et al., 2018). Since mentoring has long been perceived to be an effective tool for entrepreneur growth and development, a study of mentorship in the context of established businesses may help uncover new avenues through which established business owner-managers can be supported effectively.

With this in mind, this research set out to explore, “*The nature and perceived value of mentoring among established business owner-managers in South Africa.*” The aim of the study was to examine the phenomenon of mentoring as experienced by established business owner-managers in the South African context.

The study relied on the narratives of established business owner-managers to uncover their mentoring needs and how these needs were fulfilled by various social actors in their networks. These networks were termed developmental networks based on the prior evolution of mentoring as a concept (Higgins & Kram, 2001), as explored in Chapter Two. This exploration of mentorship has deepened the understanding of mentorship as a phenomenon in the context of established businesses in South Africa.

The main objectives of this study were: to develop a deeper understanding of the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers in South Africa; to understand whether there were any key relationships that fulfilled the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers; to understand the key support functions played by relationships that fulfil these mentoring needs and subsequently help established business owner-managers to overcome challenges they face in business; and finally to understand the outcomes and perceived value of these relationships by established business owner-managers in South Africa.

The research has met the objectives it set out, and has further contributed to a deep, nuanced understanding of mentorship as a phenomenon experienced by established business owner-managers in South Africa. Furthermore, the research has uncovered details on the specific challenges faced by established business owner-managers,

and how their needs differ from individuals in organisational or new business contexts.

This chapter will offer a conclusion of the key findings derived from the guiding research questions; outline the contributions made by this study; reflect on the limitations of this study; and provide recommendations for future research.

## **7.1 Conclusion of Findings for Research Questions**

This section will outline a conclusion per research question, all while striving to build a conceptual framework that helps to organise and convey the key themes uncovered throughout the study.

### **7.1.1 *Research Question One: What are the Mentoring Needs of Established Business Owner-Managers?***

Research question one set out to identify the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers in South Africa. It aimed to do this by understanding the participants holistically as individuals, identifying the challenges faced by established business owner-managers and how these challenges contributed to their mentoring needs.

Although the extant literature on organisational mentoring largely focusses on the personality and demographic factors pertaining to individuals (Dobrow et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2015), much of the literature has failed to consider other aspects of an individual's background. This study found that factors such as an established business owner-manager's family background, socioeconomic background, formal education and prior entrepreneurial and employment experience all carry the potential to impact not only the challenges they face in business, but also the types of networks available and mentoring support functions accessible to established business owner-managers to contend with such challenges. The results also deepened the understanding of the myriad factors that determine the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers in South Africa.

While some literature has identified that entrepreneurs in different phases of business often have different challenges to overcome (Memon et al., 2014; St-Jean & Audet, 2013), limited literature exists which discusses the nature of their challenges

(Mamabolo et al., 2017b). The literature that does address these challenges, however, does so at a high-level and only focuses on challenges with business management. This study strove to provide further insights into the specific challenges faced by business owner-managers in the established phases of business versus the nascent and new phases of business. The study not only explored challenges pertaining to business management, it also considered the individuals holistically, which takes into account their psychological support needs as well as personal development needs.

One prominent theme that emerged was that challenges faced in the nascent or new phases of business (termed early challenges) influence the nature of challenges faced in the established phases of business (termed late challenges), particularly if the individual was unable to overcome the challenges in the nascent or new phase of business.

Overall, both an individual's background as well as the challenges they face in the new and established phases of business contribute to their mentoring needs.

A graphical representation of the findings pertaining to this research question is provided through the conceptual framework in Figure 9.

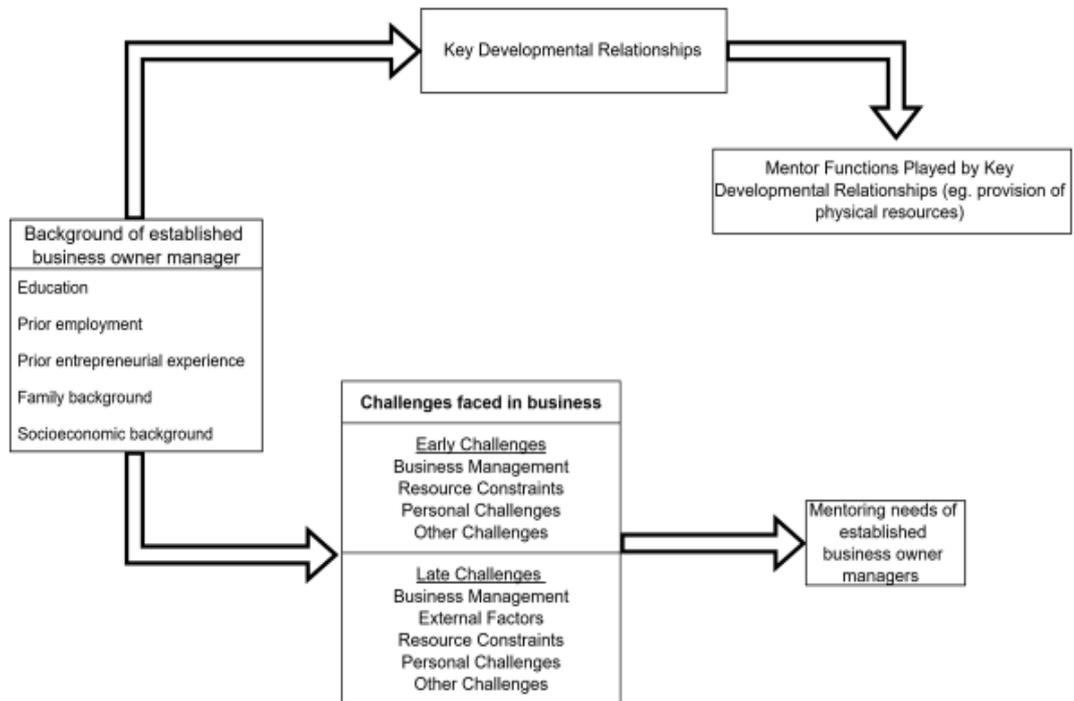


Figure 9: The Relationship Between an Established Business Owner-Manager's Background Factors, Key Developmental Relationships, Challenges in Business and Resulting Mentoring Needs

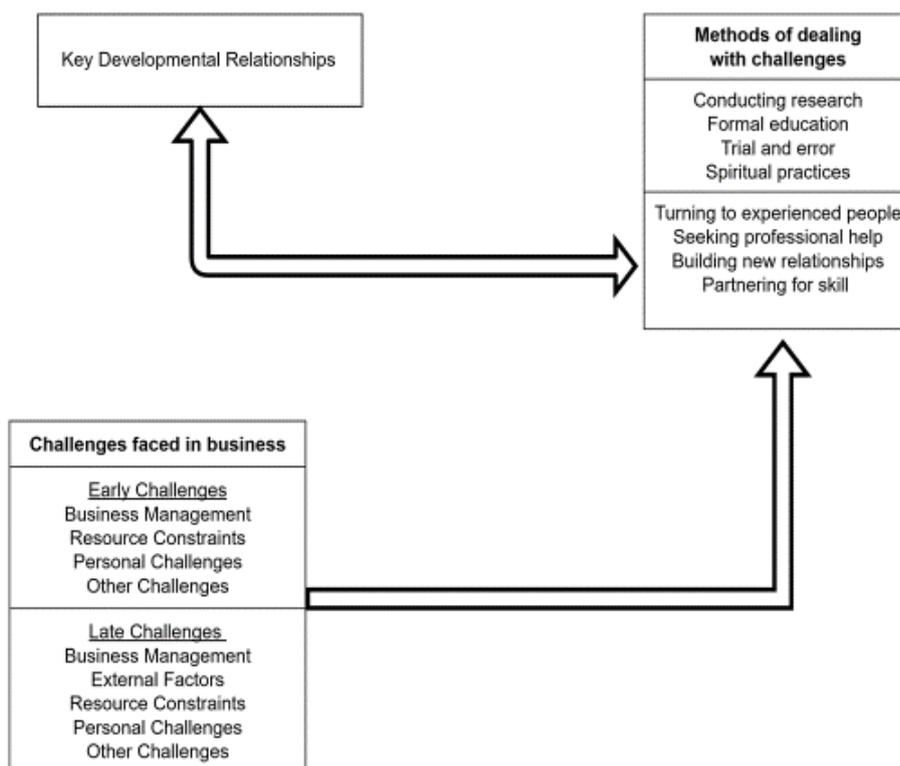
### 7.1.2 Research Question Two: How do Established Business Owner-Managers Deal with Challenges in Business, Including Engaging in Mentoring?

The aim of this research question was to examine the ways in which established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business, and further to understand whether they did indeed turn to other social actors in their networks to receive mentoring support and overcome challenges in business.

This research revealed that many of the studies that have been conducted on organisational mentoring (Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Kram & Ragins, 2007) and human capital investments as sources of skills for established business owner-managers (Mamabolo et al., 2017b) can largely be applied to understand mentoring in the context established business owner-managers. Furthermore, the research confirmed that established business owner-managers tend to rely on other people in their networks most often when trying to overcome challenges they face in business. Established business owner-managers often turn to other experienced individuals when attempting to overcome specific challenges. If such support is unavailable within their existing networks, they demonstrate their resourcefulness by

collaborating with other business owners, or even going out and developing their networks further. This finding demonstrates how the availability of key developmental relationships in an individual's network influences the practices they employ to overcome challenges in business.

Thus, established business owner-managers employ various practices to overcome challenges in business. The methods they employ are dependent on the nature of the challenges they experience. Furthermore, part of the methods that an established business owner-manager employs to overcome challenges in business contributes to further building their developmental relationships and the availability of developmental relationships in their networks in turn contributes to the methods they use to overcome challenges in business. This finding is represented graphically in the visual displayed in Figure 10.



*Figure 10: The Interrelationship Between Challenges in Business, How These Challenges are Dealt with, and Key Developmental Relationships for Established Business Owner-Managers*

### **7.1.3 Research Question Three: How do Established Business Owner-Managers Fulfil Their Mentoring Needs from One or More Relationships in their Networks?**

The aim of this question was to understand which relationships established business owner-managers turn to in order to overcome any challenges they face, or to fulfil their own mentoring needs. This question was central to the research as it probed how established business owner-managers engaged in mentoring.

The extant literature on the subject of organisational mentoring discusses the concept of developmental networks as a more useful way to conceptualise the kind of mentoring that takes hold among individuals (Higgins & Kram, 2001). The literature surveyed outlines many of these developmental relationships at a high level, which are lacking in specificity. In response to this shortcoming of past research, this research has made a significant contribution. In addition to having specified overall clusters of developmental relationships, it generated a typology of developmental relationships in depth (i.e. spouse or partner, entrepreneur friends, business partner etc. etc.). It further identified developmental relationship subsets not previously identified, such as those of investors, an individual's family's networks and former classmates. Furthermore, it confirmed that the breadth of an individual's developmental networks is often associated with their backgrounds, such as their prior employment experience, family background and socioeconomic background.

In terms of the support functions or mentor functions played by developmental networks, this study's findings were consistent with much of the literature on organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring (Dobrow et al., 2012; St-Jean, 2011). However, the research contributed many new insights into the different categories of mentor functions, along with the specific mentor functions played by developmental networks in the context of established business owner-managers.

This study was also able to draw links between the types of developmental relationships and the types of mentoring functions offered to established business owner-managers. This was another significant finding, as there has been a call for such research in the recent literature reviewed (Janssen et al., 2015). The links that are presented in the co-occurrence table (Table 14) demonstrate that family members and friends provided all-round support to established business owner-

managers. Significant support for established business owner-managers also came from work-based relationships and business partners.

The link between the developmental relationships and types of support received suggest an association between the availability of a developmental network, the types of support one can access and the resulting ability to address and overcome challenges in business which may ultimately lead to a business owner-manager's success.

Apart from the rich insights and nuanced data contributed by the research, the main theme that emerged was the interrelationship between the mentor functions that were provided and the established business owner-managers' developmental needs. Key developmental relationships play certain mentor functions for established business owner-managers. Absent these mentor functions, the established business owner-manager seeks appropriate mentors to fulfil these functions, further developing their developmental networks. Furthermore, the mentor functions played by developers may ultimately affect the nature of the challenges established business owner-managers face as they improve their business management skills and develop their personal abilities. The main findings to emerge from this line of inquiry are presented in Figure 11.

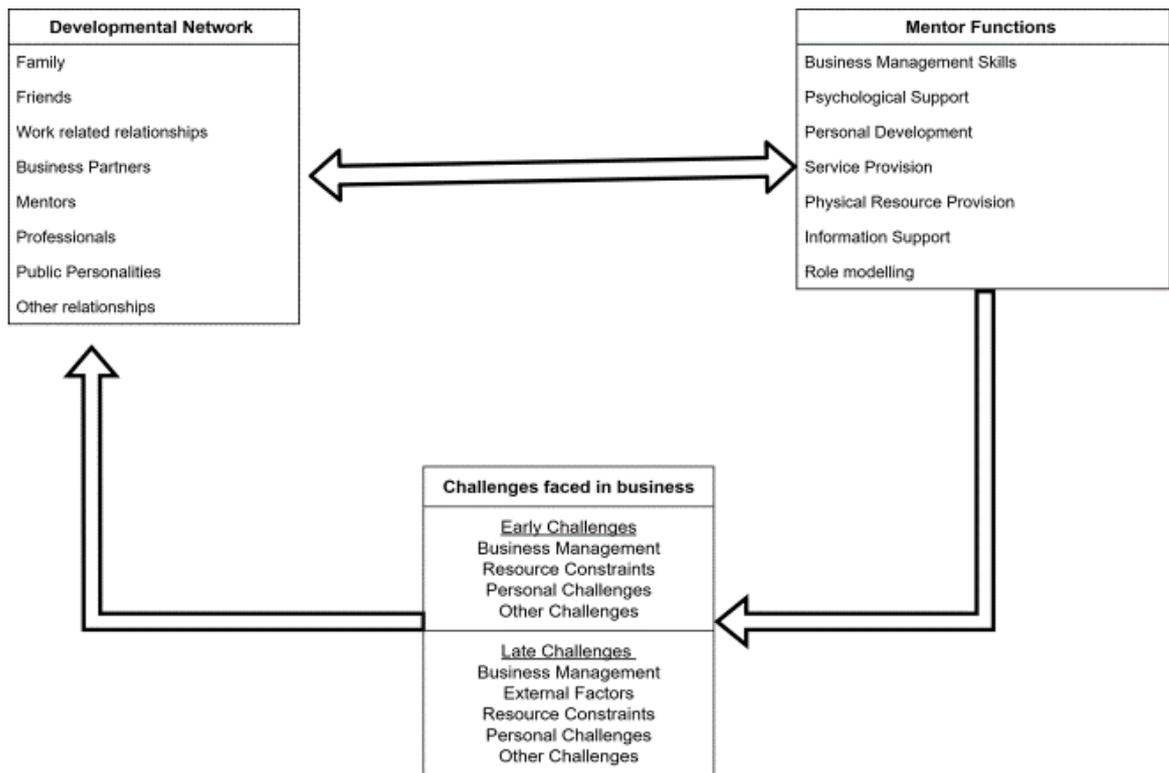


Figure 11: The Interrelationship Between Developmental Networks, Mentor Functions and Challenges Faced in Business.

#### 7.1.4 Research Question Four: What is the Perceived Value and Outcomes of Mentorship for Established Business Owner-Managers?

The aim of research question four was to establish: the outcomes from the various types of mentoring received; the perceived value of the developmental relationships; and, the perceived value of the mentor functions or support offered by their developmental relationships.

While these outcomes and perceived value are self-reported and not empirically tested, they provide greater insight into the perceptions of established business owner-managers and help to provide a broader view of the phenomenon of mentorship.

Findings expanded on existing organisational mentoring literature in terms of how outcomes were perceived in the context of established business owner-managers, with a few new mentoring outcomes identified. Furthermore, prior literature has not given weightings to the significance or importance of mentor functions and key

developmental relationships. This research provides a base for further exploration of the perceived value of mentorship.

The overarching theme to emerge from this research question is that a combination of mentor functions together culminates in outcomes for established business owner-managers. Furthermore, established business owner-managers value relationships that were seen to provide the broadest range of mentor functions. Findings from the most valuable types of support received, help to understand the value that established business owner-managers place on being appreciated by others and believed in, both through key introductions in business as well as through encouragement that is received.

The predominant themes to emerge from this research question are presented in Figure 12.

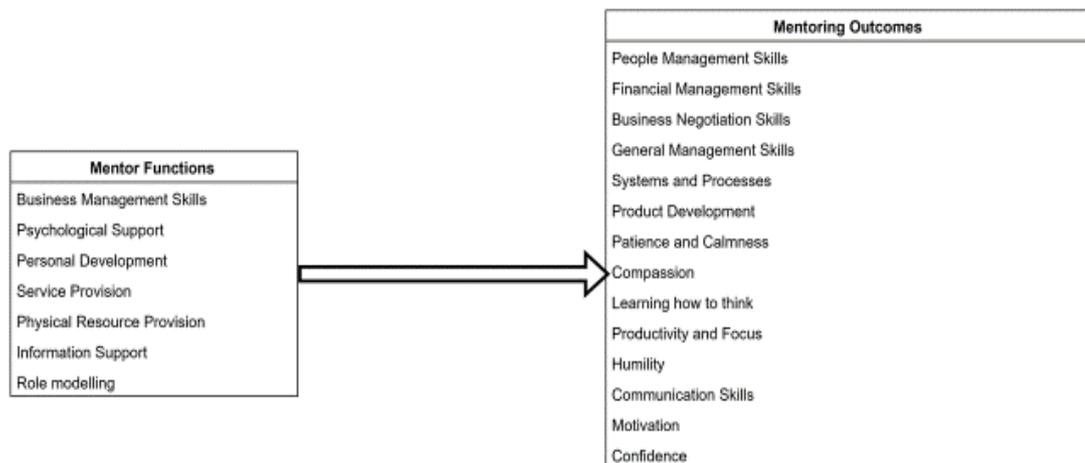


Figure 12: The Relationship Between Mentor Functions and Mentoring Outcomes

### 7.1.5 Conclusion and Conceptual Framework

This research was successful in achieving the objectives it set out to meet at the beginning of the study. The findings have demonstrated that, while much of the literature on organisational and entrepreneurial mentoring can be applied to the context of established business owner-managers, there is a level of detail and specificity that is needed if established business owner-managers are to be provided appropriate levels of support to succeed in business. The findings also demonstrate the importance of considering established business owner-managers as holistic

individuals, replete with personal and professional needs that must be addressed for them to achieve success in business.

Apart from the study's nuanced data which provides insight into the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers, this research has also provided an advanced framework within which an understanding of the nature of mentoring can emerge at a conceptual level. The various elements of the emergent themes and conceptual frameworks developed throughout this chapter have been combined and are represented in Figure 13.

This framework represents the emergent themes from the research. It highlights the interrelationships between various factors, as well as details some of the specific factors discovered through the research. This framework, is a culmination of all the findings from this research, graphically representing the nature and perceived value of mentorship for established business-owner managers in South Africa.

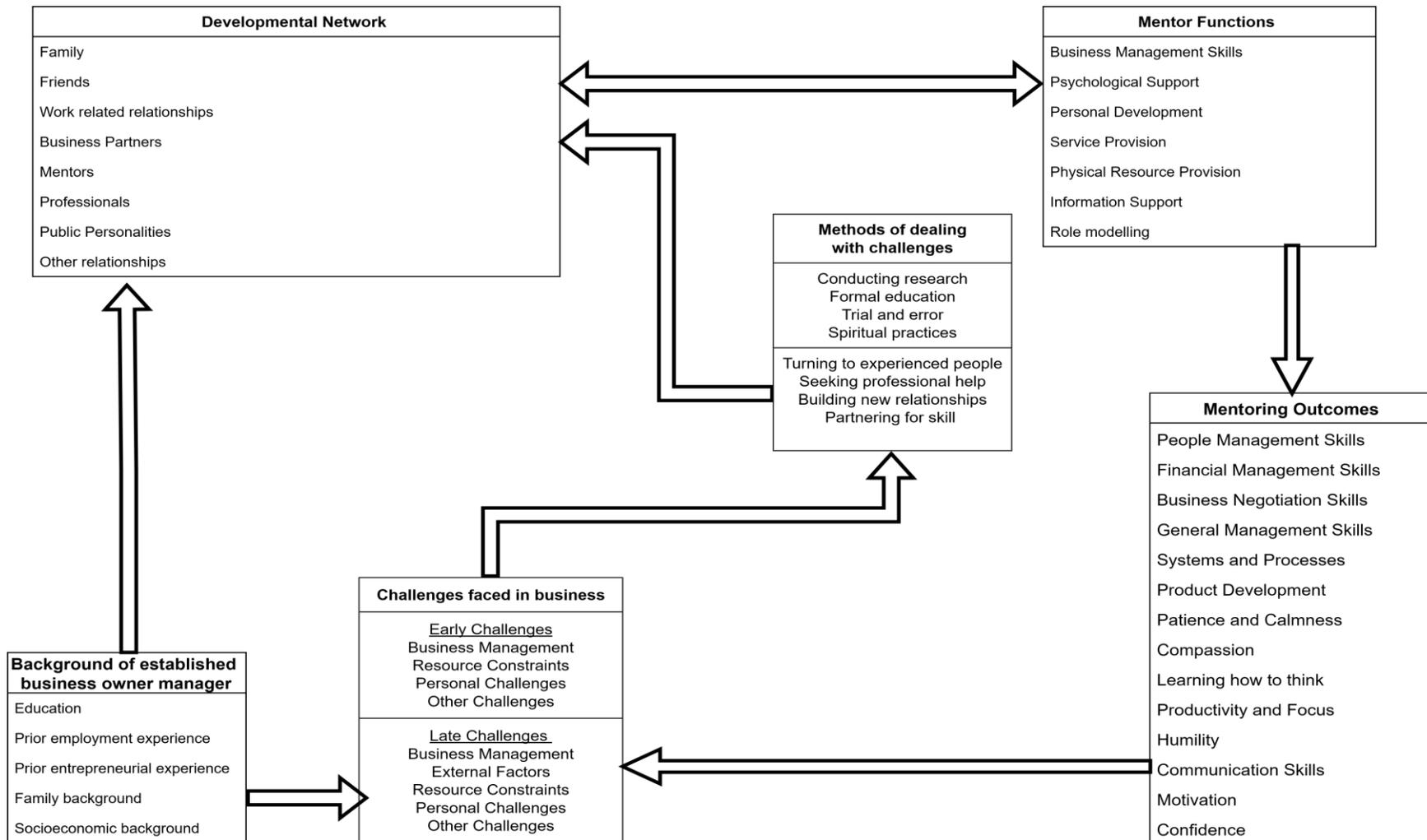


Figure 13: The Nature and Perceived Value of Mentoring for Established Business Owner-Managers in South Africa

The framework can be further explained as follows: a combination of factors relating to the background of an established business owner-manager affects the challenges they face in business, as well as the availability of relationships that comprise their developmental network.

Likewise, the challenges that are faced by established business owner-managers in both the early and late phases of their businesses can exert an influence on the methods and practices they adopt to deal with various challenges. Some of the methods that are used for dealing with challenges in business help established business owner-managers to further develop the key relationships that ultimately contribute to the availability of relationships in their personal developmental network, which play various roles for business owners. The availability or non-availability of support and mentor functions for established business owner-managers, can influence them to go out and further develop relationships that can fulfil their unmet needs. The availability of mentor functions also influences the challenges faced in business by established business owner-managers. If certain needs are met through mentoring support received, the established business owner-manager no longer recognises the need as a challenge to overcome.

Furthermore, various types of mentoring received, as a collective, influence the outcomes of mentoring as experienced by established business owner-managers. These outcomes in turn influence or relate to the challenges they face in business.

In closing, the various interrelationships between an established business owner-manager's background, their challenges in business, the way they deal with challenges in business, the availability of developmental relationships, the mentor functions played by developmental relationships and the ultimate perceived outcomes from mentoring allow for a holistic understanding of *the nature of mentoring* in the context of established business owner-managers in South Africa.

## **7.2 Contributions made by this Study**

The research that comprises this study strives to contribute to a nascent but growing body of scholarship on the phenomenon of mentoring in the world of business. The conceptual model presented in Figure 13 proposes a way of viewing the nature of mentoring among established business owner-managers and has a variety of

implications for mentoring as a practice. Both the theoretical and practical implications of the study are further explored in this section.

### **7.2.1 Theoretical Contributions**

Apart from the new and detailed findings that pertain to mentoring in the context of established business owner-managers, this research has addressed a variety of gaps in the existing entrepreneurial mentoring literature in several ways. Much of the entrepreneurial mentoring literature has only been conducted recently, with a focus on nascent or new businesses (El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; Kubberoed & Hagen, 2015; Memon et al., 2014; St-jean, 2011; St-Jean et al., 2018; Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). There was a paucity in the literature reviewed on mentoring in the context of established business owner-managers. Furthermore, the extant literature on mentoring has been criticised for the lack of attention it pays to theory building (Allen & Eby, 2010). This study endeavoured and succeeded in illuminating the concept of mentoring within the context of established business owner-managers through the development of the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 13.

Mentoring scholars have called for further exploration of the mentoring needs of different individuals in different contexts (Janssen et al., 2015). Furthermore, a limited number of studies have been conducted that focus on the needs of established business owner-managers (Mamabolo et al., 2017b), and the role of mentoring and mentoring outcomes in the context of SMEs in South Africa (Kunaka & Moos, 2019). This research has uncovered the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers, fulfilling the notable absence of research on the subject. Furthermore, this research extends an extant body of literature by providing a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by established business owner-managers, as well as the role that mentoring plays in helping business owner-managers to overcome their challenges and achieve specific objectives in the South African context.

Prior literature on developmental networks has called for a deeper exploration on the nature of developmental networks (Dobrow et al., 2012). This research has contributed to the theoretical understanding of developmental networks in this regard. Furthermore, recent studies on mentoring have called for a deeper understanding of the individual dyads that comprise these developmental networks,

and the types of support provided in these dyads (Chandler et al., 2011; Janssen et al., 2015). The co-occurrence analysis in Table 14 makes a significant contribution in this regard. It allows a more nuanced understanding of the various clusters and sub clusters of relationships in developmental networks, and the types of support functions associated with these clusters.

Lastly, many mentoring studies have investigated the personality and demographic variables of individuals with regard to mentoring, with few studies examining the influence of other factors such as education (Chandler et al., 2011). This study also contributes to literature by illuminating other relevant variables affecting the way that mentorship is experienced, which may have escaped the attention of past researchers.

### **7.2.2 Methodological Contributions**

The primary methodological contribution made by this study lies in the approach taken towards conducting this research, namely the purely inductive nature of this research using narrative research as a mode of enquiry and conducting the analysis through conventional qualitative content analysis. The methodological approach taken by this study is in contrast to existing research conducted on mentoring in organisational and entrepreneurial contexts (Bisk, 2002; El Hallam & St-Jean, 2016; Kunaka & Moos, 2019; Sharafizad, 2018; St-Jean, 2011; St-Jean et al., 2018; Terjesen & Sullivan, 2011). The research paradigm and approach adopted allowed for new insights to emerge in the field of mentoring, and further contributed to the development of a conceptual framework to understand mentoring as a phenomenon. This experience may be useful for further studies on mentorship in various other contexts to uncover novel insights on mentoring.

### **7.2.3 Practical Contributions**

The theoretical contributions made by this study carry a host of practical implications for established business owner-managers, stakeholders in government, and entrepreneurial and SME support and development organisations.

### **7.2.3.1 Implications for Established Business Owner-Managers**

The research findings demonstrate to entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers the benefits of engaging in various forms of formal and informal mentoring.

Apart from demonstrating to established business owner-managers the value of investing in relationships and building support structures to overcome challenges in business, this research helps to explain *who* established business owner-managers can turn to in order to overcome various challenges that they might encounter in their business practices.

A recommendation for established business owner-managers would be to engage with potential available relationships to build support structures around themselves. This becomes especially relevant in the context of South Africa, where human capital is weak and access to finance is often cumbersome for SMEs.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates how entrepreneurs and established business owner-managers do not necessarily need formal mentors to assist with their learning. They can establish their own networking associations and draw from the each other's strengths and experiences.

### **7.2.3.2 Implications for Government and Entrepreneur Support Organisations**

Chapter One made the argument for government to focus their attention on supporting established businesses in the effort to alleviate the country's unemployment problem. Governmental organisations tasked with this issue can draw from this study to understand the importance of viewing entrepreneur and SME support in a holistic fashion. Namely, how entrepreneurs and business owner-managers need support not only with business management skills, but also psychological support structures and investments in their personal development in order to help them not only survive, but also thrive.

Although government policy has mostly been directed to providing mentoring and skills development supports for small businesses, a deficient understanding of the nuances of mentoring among policy makers is possibly one of the leading causes contributing to its lack of efficacy, as seen by the persistently high rates of established

business failure in South Africa (Herrington et al., 2018). While the study recognises that mentoring does not constitute a panacea to all the challenges that take hold in the SME development space, it also recognises that mentoring can be a powerful tool to alleviate many of the problems faced by entrepreneurs and SMEs.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report also highlights the fact that many of the government programmes offered to entrepreneurs use mentors who do not have prior business experience themselves (Herrington et al., 2018). Although individuals without prior entrepreneurial experience can also contribute meaningfully to the development of established business owner-managers, these types of support are not sufficient to address the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in various phases of business. This study highlights the importance of having mentors with prior entrepreneurial experience in order to support other for entrepreneurs and business owners effectively.

Furthermore, the rich insights provided by this study concerning the specific types of challenges faced by established business owner-managers (in the areas of people management, financial management, sales and marketing and low levels of motivation) can help government and entrepreneurial support organisations employ the right types of people to support established business owner-managers as well as create eco-systems of support, since the study demonstrates that mentoring does not happen in a vacuum. The nature of an individual business owner-manager's needs are dependent on a host of factors such as their backgrounds, their phase of business, their propensity and ability to deal with challenges and their relative access to and ability to form developmental relationships.

In terms of the practical applications for government and entrepreneurial support organisations, the findings from this study help to provide an approach on how to diagnose and help established business owner-managers. The approach taken could be as follows: conduct a needs assessment of the established business owner-manager taking into consideration various background factors; assess the challenges they face in business; and the availability of existing support systems for established business owner-managers to overcome these challenges in business. The next step would be to help established business owner-managers to access available mentor functions from existing relationships in their networks, and absent these, to help them or to teach them to form new ones. Lastly, the mentor functions

discovered in this study give government and entrepreneur support organisations an understanding of the types of networks that can be deployed to support established business owner-managers and the types of functions these support networks need to play for established business owner-managers.

Another manner in which government and entrepreneurial support organisations can benefit from these findings is by creating a constellation of experts in the various fields outlined in the mentor functions framework (Table 13) to support established business owner-managers. Apart from other experienced entrepreneurs and business specialists, these constellations of experts can include individuals such as psychologists and communication specialists who can together contribute to the established business owner-manager in a holistic fashion.

### **7.3 Research Limitations**

Since this study was conducted in a nascent field, using a small sample size, there are a few limitations to be made aware of.

The cross-sectional nature of the study given the time constraints meant that credibility could not be established through prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Furthermore, while the advantage of conventional qualitative content analysis is that it allows researchers to gain free flowing information directly from participants, the disadvantage is that it simultaneously prevents researchers from formulating a complete understanding of the contexts under consideration (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), especially in light of the time constraints associated with this cross-sectional study, which depended largely on the memories of participants in its collection of data operating under rigid time constraints.

Although member checking was used throughout the interviewing process, the conventional qualitative content analysis approach adopted by the study meant that the analysis and coding were affected by the researcher's own biases, and may not constitute an accurate representation of participants' perceptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Narrative inquiry as a methodology is particularly susceptible to being biased by participants' emotions during the conducted interviews (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, only elements and subjects directly mentioned by participants in the context of interviews were selected for subsequent analysis and inclusion in the study, with multiple possible variables and categories not being included due to the study's delimitations. Conducting future studies with more liberal time allowances and horizons will likely further enhance the understanding of mentoring as a phenomenon.

Although the researcher took adequate measures to prepare for conducting interviews, participants' responses may have been swayed based on the researcher's reactions or based on a fear of judgement from the researcher (Patton, 2002).

Despite the maximum variation purposive sampling technique employed, all participants were based in urban Johannesburg. This may affect the transferability of the study's findings to other contexts, even within other parts of South Africa, such as the rural areas. Furthermore, there may also be a chance of self-selection bias, where the participants who chose to be part of the study may have done so because of their strong experiences in the area of developmental relationships (Saunders & Lewis, 2017), hence this also means that findings may not be generalisable.

The nature of the research was to gain a broad overview of mentoring in the context of established business owner-managers. The breadth of this study meant that some of the depth had to be sacrificed. Each of the elements that constitute the developed framework in the study can be explored further in a deeper way.

The study adopted maximum variation purposive sampling of established business owner-managers in its sample. Thus, it did not control for variables within established businesses such as size of the business (based on turnover and number of employees). The results of the study may have been different if such factors were controlled for (i.e. if the research was to only study established businesses with 15 or more employees, for instance).

The research did not consider any negative experiences in the context of mentoring outcomes or developmental relationships. There was one negative case present in

the sample. While this was acknowledged, the experience was not studied in greater depth in the analysis process.

Many of the study's participants came from families who were also entrepreneurial. This may have been co-incidental, in which case this would affect some of the findings from this research, particularly in terms of the types of mentor functions played by various relationships in an established business owner-manager's life.

While the conceptual framework developed reveals some of the possible associations that derive from the research findings, causality could not be established due to the research being based nearly exclusively on the subjective oral testimony of participants.

Furthermore, the researcher might self-describe, in the name of transparency, as a novice in conducting research. This could have impacted the results of the data collected and analysed.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

The extant literature on mentoring has focused purely on developing mentoring theories as a standalone area for research, with a lack of integration from other disciplines in management or psychology (Allen & Eby, 2010; Kram & Ragins, 2007; St-Jean, 2011). Only a limited number of studies have drawn on social capital theory and social networks theory to explain mentoring as a phenomenon (Chandler et al., 2011; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007). Based on the findings that have been elicited from this research, a deeper exploration of mentoring through the lens of social capital theory could help researchers understand the phenomenon more deeply. Mentoring could also be viewed through the lens of complex adaptive systems and the resource-based view to enable a different perspective to emerge on the subject.

This study briefly identified a few relationships and types of support functions that were most valuable to established business owner-managers. Prior literature on mentoring and developmental networks has not undertaken to understand or expressed the relative value of relationships or mentor functions in any way. Future research could explore the perceived value of developmental relationships and mentor functions more deeply to understand it better.

The conceptual framework developed in this research drew on only a select handful of participant responses. Thus, future studies can explore different aspects of the model in the context of established business owner-managers (such as, mentor functions, different clusters of developmental relationships, mentoring outcomes, etcetera) through qualitative studies using larger sample sets, and by employing different approaches such as phenomenology or case-study research.

Furthermore, the concepts developed through this research could be explored via quantitative testing, not only of the framework itself, but also the individual components comprising the framework (for example clusters of developmental relationships under family and friends).

There was one negative case in the research. While this allowed an insight into the potential disadvantages of not having developmental relationships to rely on, this individual's business was still a success. While this case was not explored in depth in the study, more negative cases could be researched and studied to understand the effects of not having developmental networks that offer mentor functions a support. Expanding on this idea, other cases such as negative experiences arising from mentoring and developmental relationships can be explored further. To this end, future studies might place greater focus on the negative implications of unassisted entrepreneurialism, or instances in which business owner-managers deliberately choose not to avail themselves of council to ameliorate and temper their business-related decisions.

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## 9 APPENDIX A: LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS

107 Osborn Road  
 Houghton Estate  
 Johannesburg 2198

Dear Participant,

I am conducting research on developmental relationships that support established entrepreneurs, and I am trying to find out more about the nature and perceived value of these relationships how they contribute to an entrepreneur's growth.

Our interview is expected to last about an hour and a half and will help us understand the support established entrepreneurs require in order to grow their business.

*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 myself. Our details are provided below. Please consent to the interview if you wish to participate by signing below.*

**Researcher Name: Sadaf Vahedna**

Email: [18370502@mygibs.co.za](mailto:18370502@mygibs.co.za)

Phone: 082 5945709

**Research Supervisor: Dr Kerrin Myres**

Email: [myresk@mygibs.co.za](mailto:myresk@mygibs.co.za)

Phone: 083 263 4175

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10 APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Table 19: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Narrative Inquiry

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
<p><b>RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the mentoring needs of established business owner-managers?</b></p>	<p>8. First, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about your background            a. (Probe) How did you become an entrepreneur/ business owner?</p> <p>9. Tell me more about your experience of owning and running a business?            a. (Probe) How was it when you first started?            b. (Probe) What is that experience like today?                i. Probe – positive, negative – overall happiness</p> <p>10. Tell me about the challenges you face as a business owner in South Africa?            a. (Probe) Tell me about those challenges when you started out            b. (Probe) Tell me about some of the challenges you face today</p>
<p><b>RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: How do established business owner-managers deal with challenges in business, including engaging in mentoring?</b></p>	<p>11. How did or do you overcome any challenges you face in business?            b. (Probe) Tell me about any support mechanisms that enabled you to overcome these challenges. (include tv, books etc)</p>
<p><b>RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: How do established business owner-managers fulfil their mentoring needs from one or more relationships in their networks?</b></p>	<p>12. Were there any key individuals/ organisations in your life who supported you through this journey?            a. Tell me more about who these people/ organisations are            b. How did these individuals/ organisations support you?                i. (Probe) Tell me about people who helped or still help you gain insights into the workings of the industry and the market?                ii. (Probe) Tell me about any people who helped or still help you in terms of managing the business as it grew?                iii. (Probe) Tell me about any new skills you developed as a result of these key relationships</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. (Probe) Tell me about individuals who helped or still help make key introductions for your business</li> <li>v. (Probe) I'd like to know more about individuals who helped or still help support you psychologically when times were tough, or who celebrated victories with you</li> <li>vi. (Probe) Have any of these individuals helped you become more self-aware as an individual</li> <li>vii. (Probe) I'd like to know about individuals who helped or still help you physically by providing resources such as money, or services that helped you grow.</li> <li>viii. (Probe) I'd like to know about individuals who have supported and/or continue to support you in terms of your personal life</li> </ul> <p>13. I'd like to go a bit deeper to understand the ways in which certain people have supported you through your journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Have these or any other individuals helped you reflect on yourself as an entrepreneur in your interactions with others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. (Probe) If so, tell me how they do this?</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Tell me about any people that offer you reassurance during times of self doubt or anxiety? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. (Probe) If so, how does this play out?</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Tell me about how any of these or other individuals motivate you during times when you are feeling de-motivated</li> <li>d. Tell me about these or other individuals who help you think through your ideas and challenge them when necessary in order to provide you with some perspective or different points of view</li> <li>e. Tell me about these or other individuals who guide you, and offer you business advice</li> <li>f. Are there any individuals you look up to as role models for yourself? Tell me more about these people</li> <li>g. Tell me about how any of these individuals relate stories of their own experiences to help you through any challenges you face</li> <li>h. From your perspective, what have these individuals gained from supporting you?</li> <li>i. Are there any individuals who have helped you grow that you do not know personally, but</li> </ul>
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	<p>follow through the media and books or other mediums?</p>
<p><b>Research Question 4: What is the perceived value and outcomes of mentorship for established business owner-managers through their networks?</b></p>	<p>14. I'd like to know more about the value of some of the support you have received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Which of these relationships would you rate as most important to your success as a business owner?</li> <li>e. What kind of support received would you say has been or is key to your ongoing success as a business owner?</li> <li>f. What are the things you have learnt or gained from the individuals you have mentioned?</li> </ul>

## 11 APPENDIX C: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 20: List of Participants

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Industry	Additional Information
<b>Josh</b>	32	Male	Finance/ Fund Administration	Josh is an entrepreneur who has been running a business for the last six years along with his business partners, during which time he has overseen the dispensation of salaries.
<b>Mary</b>	50	Female	Interior Design Business	Mary is an interior designer who has been running an interior design and decoration company for the last 27 years. She has been paying salaries to her employees for the last 25 years.
<b>Yasmin</b>	34	Female	Catering Business	Yasmin is an entrepreneur who has been running a catering company with her business partner for the last four years and has been paying salaries for the last three and a half years.
<b>Mandy</b>	31	Female	Catering Business	Mandy is an entrepreneur and Yasmin's business partner in the catering business they run together.
<b>Farah</b>	34	Female	Preschool owner	Farah bought an existing preschool four years ago and currently runs it along with her brother. They have been paying salaries for the last four years and currently have six employees.
<b>Wendy</b>	35	Female	Audit Firm	Wendy is a partner in an audit firm along with two other individuals. The firm has been operational for the last 30 years and currently has 25 employees. Wendy joined the business as a partner recently and is involved in running the business on a day to day basis.
<b>Lily</b>	47	Female	Non-profit HIV support	Lily is a 47-year-old social worker turned social entrepreneur who runs a non-profit that supports HIV research. She joined the business in 2011 as an owner. The business currently has 15 salaried employees.
<b>Jamie</b>	34	Male	Driver Training	Jamie is an entrepreneur who has managed a driver financing and training company with his business partner for the last four years. He has been paying salaries for the last three and a half years.
<b>Derek</b>	31	Male	Health Food Restaurant	Derek is an entrepreneur who has been running a Health Food restaurant and paying salaries for the last four years.
<b>Devin</b>	65	Male	Jewellery wholesaler	Devin is an entrepreneur who started and ran a jewellery manufacturing business for over 30 years. Due to a change in market conditions and local regulation, he has now pivoted to jewellery wholesale only. He has been paying salaries for the last 30 years.
<b>Payton</b>	38	Male	Marketing Agency	Payton is an entrepreneur who runs a marketing franchise agency for the last ten years. He has other shareholders in the business who are not actively helping him run the business. They have been paying salaries for the last ten years.

<b>Robert</b>	36	Male	Uniform Manufacturing	Robert runs a uniform manufacturing business along with his brother and father.
<b>Mark</b>	68	Male	Media Rental Agency	Mark has had extensive corporate experience as the director of marketing for a large chain of supermarkets. He bought in to the media rental agency in 2005 and has since then grown it to employ over 15 people.
<b>Luna</b>	38	Female	Thai Massage Business	Luna is a 38-year-old massage therapist turned entrepreneur. She founded her business ten years ago and has enlisted paid employees for the last eight years. She currently has four employees in the business.

## 12 APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM

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

01 July 2019

Sadaf Vahedna

Dear Sadaf

*Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.*

*You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.*

*Please note that approval is granted based on the methodology and research instruments provided in the application. If there is any deviation change or addition to the research method or tools, a supplementary application for approval must be obtained*

*We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.*

*Kind Regards*

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee

### 13 APPENDIX E: LIST OF CODES CREATED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Table 21: List of Codes Created During Data Analysis

No	Code	No	Code2
1	balancing roles	143	LC/Business Man/SS/Lack of systems to deal with sudden growth
2	being turned down by customers	144	LC/Business Man/Strategy/Changing revenue model/moving from a sponsor base to revenue base for an NGO
3	fake it till you make it	145	LC/Business Man/Strategy/Lack of experience in new industry they want to diversify in to
4	dealing with challenges/ Google to look for solutions	146	LC/Business Man/Strategy/lack of innovation
5	Dealing with challenges/ patience	147	LC/Business Man/Strategy/No idea how to pivot the business
6	Dealing with challenges/Buddhist teachings	148	LC/Business Man/Strategy/Protecting IP
7	Dealing with challenges/Courses/Professional Bodies	149	LC/Business Man/Supply Chain/building networks of resources that they can rely on for services
8	Dealing with challenges/Hire Professionals/accountants	150	LC/Business Man/Supply Chain/challenges with suppliers
9	Dealing with challenges/Learn by doing	151	LC/External factors/change in government regulation
10	Dealing with challenges/People/Asking other business people for info	152	LC/External factors/Changing market and industry dynamics
11	Dealing with challenges/People/Building networks	153	LC/External Factors/Economy/volatile exchange rates
12	Dealing with challenges/People/looking to fellow entrepreneurs to learn from their stories	154	LC/External Factors/Government regulation that favours big businesses
13	Dealing with challenges/People/Partnering for skill	155	LC/External factors/increased competition

14	Dealing with challenges/People/seeking help	156	LC/External Factors/load shedding affecting production
15	Dealing with Challenges/People/Using existing networks for sales	157	LC/External Factors/not being taken seriously as a small business
16	Dealing with challenges/Professional/labour issues	158	LC/Other/Bullied by large competitors
17	Dealing with challenges/Professionals/Consultants and Trainers	159	LC/Other/Dispute with business partner
18	Dealing with Challenges/Professionals/Lawyers	160	LC/Other/lack of contribution from business partners
19	Dealing with challenges/professionals/Life Coach	161	LC/Other/Lack of track record
20	Dealing with challenges/Reading/biographies	162	LC/Other/Managing cyber security
21	Dealing with challenges/Reading/Published research	163	LC/Other/Managing relationships with board members
22	Dealing with challenges/Reading/research	164	LC/Personal challenges/lonely journey
23	Dealing with Challenges/Spiritual Help	165	LC/Personal/Abusive work relationships
24	Dealing with challenges/university course	166	LC/Personal/Emotionally trying times
25	Defining events in ent journey/ being cheated by someone in business	167	LC/Personal/fear of failure
26	Defining events in ent journey/ many failed businesses	168	LC/Personal/inability to focus due to personal life
27	Desired Mentor functions	169	LC/Personal/Lack of motivation
28	desired support/ someone to check decisions with	170	LC/Personal/lack of self efficacy
29	desired support/ someone to discuss ideas with	171	LC/Resource Constraints/lack of operational capacity to deal with sudden growth
30	desired support/ someone to give pure advice	172	LC/Resource Constraints/Lack of sufficient capital to grow
31	desired support/ someone who can relate	173	LC/Resource Constraints/limited personnel resources compared to corporate
32	Difference between starting a business vs buying business	174	MD/differences in values
33	Difference with mentors/ different approaches to business	175	MD/different personalities

34	Differences with mentors/ detailed oriented mentor vs bigger picture protege	176	MD/different socio-economic backgrounds
35	Differences with mentors/ different levels of integrity	177	MD/risk appetite
36	Differences with mentors/ different management styles	178	mentor characteristics/ critical
37	Differences with mentors/ different values	179	mentor characteristics/ detailed
38	EB/Business experience in Youth	180	Mentor characteristics/ highly experienced in field
39	EB/Educated parents	181	mentor characteristics/ innovative
40	EB/Exposed to difficult circumstances in youth	182	Mentor Characteristics/ intelligent
41	EB/Family of entrepreneurs	183	Mentor Characteristics/ larger than life
42	EB/Immigrant	184	Mentor Characteristics/ level headed
43	EB/Limited Corporate Experience	185	Mentor characteristics/ problem solvers
44	EB/Limited Education	186	Mentor characteristics/ similar interests and background working in NGO
45	EB/Parents encouraged study	187	Mentor characteristics/ supportive
46	EB/Socially Conscious Family	188	Mentor Characteristics/ tough love
47	EB/Substantial Corporate Experience	189	Mentor characteristics/ well educated
48	EB/Well connected family	190	Mentor Characteristics/Hand on support
49	EB/Well educated	191	Mentoring outcomes/humility
50	EB/Well off family	192	MF/info support/ new product knowledge
51	EB/Well Read	193	MF/info support/ salary and compensation info
52	EB/well travelled	194	MF/info support/ technical info on legal, HR, UT
53	EC/Business Man/Finance/Cash flow management	195	MF/info support/helping spot opportunities
54	EC/Business Man/HR/Limited knowledge of disciplinary procedures	196	MF/Info support/industry info
55	EC/Business Man/Operations/not knowing how long deliverables take	197	MF/Info Support/industry specific know how
56	EC/Business Man/Operations/not knowing how to run operations	198	MF/man skills/ managing customer relationship
57	EC/Business Man/Operations/risk management	199	MF/man skills/ managing operations
58	EC/Business Man/S&M/bullied by large customers	200	MF/man skills/advice on how to deal with challenges

59	EC/Business Man/S&M/Managing relationships with customers	201	MF/man skills/collecting debts
60	EC/Business Man/S&M/Not being taken seriously as a business from home	202	MF/man skills/exploring ideas
61	EC/Business Man/SS/Lack of structure in business	203	MF/man skills/exposure to different approaches to business
62	EC/Business Man/SS/lack of systems and processes	204	MF/man skills/help managing employees
63	EC/Business Man/Strategy/Limited knowledge of industry	205	MF/man skills/help understanding finances
64	EC/Business Man/Technical/Limited technical know how	206	MF/man skills/help with managing relationships
65	EC/Other/Explaining a complex business model to all stakeholders	207	MF/man skills/negotiation
66	EC/Other/Relational/adjusting to new business partner	208	MF/man skills/strategy
67	EC/Personal/Difficulty with perseverance	209	MF/man skills/systems and structure
68	EC/Personal/Emotional battle starting out	210	MF/personal dev/challenging ideas
69	EC/Personal/Limited support starting out	211	MF/personal dev/communications
70	EC/Personal/work-life balance	212	MF/personal dev/confrontation
71	EC/Resource Constraints/Financial/Extreme pressure to generate income	213	MF/personal dev/different perspective
72	EC/Resource Constraints/Financial/Limited income	214	MF/personal dev/honest feedback
73	experienced loss in business	215	MF/personal dev/teaching empathy
74	forcing creative thinking	216	MF/personal dev/teaching how to learn from mistakes
75	IR/Business partner	217	MF/personal dev/tempering personality
76	IR/Family/Business Partners	218	MF/physical resource/co-investing
77	IR/Family/Children	219	MF/physical resources/business loans
78	IR/Family/extended family	220	MF/physical resources/grant funding
79	IR/Family/Parents	221	MF/physical resources/product to sell
80	IR/Family/Siblings	222	MF/physical resources/raising money
81	IR/Family/spouse	223	MF/psych supp/ accepting protege
82	IR/friends	224	MF/psych supp/ protection from judgement

83	IR/Friends/acquaintances	225	MF/psych supp/alleviating loneliness
84	IR/Friends/boyfriend	226	MF/psych supp/celebrating victories
85	IR/Friends/other entrepreneurs	227	MF/psych supp/Encouragement
86	IR/Mentor/Formal	228	MF/psych supp/having one's back
87	IR/Mentor/Informal	229	MF/psych supp/listening to problems
88	IR/Other Networks/Classmates	230	MF/psych supp/motivation
89	IR/Other Networks/Ex-boss	231	MF/psych supp/reassurance
90	IR/Other Networks/ex-colleague	232	MF/psych supp/reflection
91	IR/Other Networks/Family's networks of industry entrepreneurs	233	MF/psych support/ help with analysing problems
92	IR/Other Networks/industry peers	234	MF/Role Model/behaviours
93	IR/Professionals/Life coach	235	MF/Role Model/Financial Success
94	IR/Professionals/Psychologist	236	MF/Role Model/values/ ethics
95	IR/Public Personalities/accomplished business people	237	MF/services/ help recruiting people
96	IR/Public Personalities/Business Gurus in media	238	MF/services/ services like marketing
97	IR/Public Personalities/Famous leaders	239	MF/services/influencing people to support ent business
98	IR/Public Personalities/Sportsman	240	MF/Services/key introductions in business
99	IR/Work Relationships/Board	241	MF/services/providing access to markets
100	IR/Work Relationships/Customers	242	MF/Story telling
101	IR/Work Relationships/Employees	243	Most valuable function/Sounding Board
102	IR/Work Relationships/investor	244	Most Valuable Mentor/Board
103	IR/Work Relationships/Networks	245	Most Valuable Mentor/Business Partner
104	IR/Work relationships/Suppliers	246	Most Valuable Mentor/Family
105	LC/ losing networks who can no longer get you business with corporations	247	Most Valuable Mentor/Father
106	LC/Business Man/Financial/Bad debts	248	Most Valuable Mentor/Friend who is entrepreneur/allrounder
107	LC/Business Man/Financial/Cash flow management	249	Most Valuable Mentor/Husband
108	LC/Business Man/Financial/Managing debtors	250	Most Valuable Mentor/Informal Mentor
109	LC/Business Man/Financial/Pricing and costing	251	Most Valuable Mentor/Mom

110	LC/Business Man/HR/challenges with unions	252	Most Valuable Mentor/Other CEOs and CFOs
111	LC/Business Man/HR/challenges working as a team as business grows	253	Most Valuable Mentor/Wife
112	LC/Business Man/HR/Change management as company grows	254	Most Valuable Relationship/ experienced employee
113	LC/Business Man/HR/Dealing with labour authorities (CCMA)	255	Most Valuable Relationships/Networks of key individuals
114	LC/Business Man/HR/demotivated employees	256	Most Valuable Supp/ key introduction
115	LC/Business Man/HR/Employees' resistance to digitisation	257	Most Valuable Support/Business Management Skills
116	LC/Business Man/HR/Having to retrench staff	258	Most Valuable Support/Emotional Support
117	LC/Business Man/HR/irresponsible employees	259	Most Valuable Support/Encouragement
118	LC/Business Man/HR/negative attitudes of staff	260	Most valuable support/Stories of other's challenges
119	LC/Business Man/HR/Negative mindsets towards change	261	not a reciprocal relationship with business partner
120	LC/Business Man/HR/not finding the right employees	262	not emotionally close to key influential relationship
121	LC/Business Man/HR/Performance management	263	other help/ bank loan
122	LC/Business Man/HR/Poor staff Skill Levels	264	other help/ bank overdraft
123	LC/Business Man/HR/Theft	265	Other help/ customer referrals
124	LC/Business Man/HR/Unable to fire poor performers due to law	266	Other help/ customers asking for service/ opportunity to diversify offering and add on services
125	LC/Business Man/Operations/balancing multiple roles played by entrepreneur	267	other help/ personal dev/ MBA/ reflection
126	LC/Business Man/Operations/Inventory Management	268	Other help/ repeat business from customers
127	LC/Business Man/Operations/Production efficiency	269	Other help/volunteers wanting skills
128	LC/Business Man/Operations administration heavy business	270	Other help/volunteers/supporting a vision for good
129	LC/business man/S&M/aging network of customers	271	Outcomes/Business Man/Negotiation skills
130	LC/Business Man/S&M/Customers resisting new revenue models	272	Outcomes/Communication Skills

131	LC/Business Man/S&M/declining sales	273	Outcomes/Compassion
132	LC/Business Man/S&M/Digital Marketing Know how	274	Outcomes/Confidence
133	LC/Business Man/S&M/Evolving behaviours of customers	275	Outcomes/Financial Management Skills
134	LC/Business Man/S&M/Increasingly long lead times for sales	276	Outcomes/General Management Skills
135	LC/Business Man/S&M/losing business from large customers	277	Outcomes/Learning how to think
136	LC/Business Man/S&M/Marketing know how	278	Outcomes/Motivation
137	LC/Business Man/S&M/Networking challenges	279	Outcomes/Patience and Calmness
138	LC/Business Man/S&M/stagnant business growth	280	Outcomes/People management skills
139	LC/Business Man/SS/ lack of operational efficiency	281	Outcomes/Personal Dev/Productivity and focus
140	LC/Business Man/SS/customers resisting new systems	282	Outcomes/Product Development
141	LC/Business Man/SS/Implementing systems	283	Outcomes/Self-awareness
142	LC/Business Man/SS/Inefficient manual systems	284	Outcomes/Systems and Processes
		285	Qualities looked for in a mentor

## 14 APPENDIX F: COPYRIGHT FORM

### G. APPROVALS

The applicant must please ensure that the supervisor has signed the form before submission.

#### *RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:*

24. I affirm that all relevant information has been provided and that all statements made are correct.

Student/ Researcher's Name in capital letters:

SADAF VAHEDNA

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11 November 2019

Supervisor Name in capital letters:

DR. KERRIN MYRES

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** GIBS shall do everything in its power to protect the personal information supplied herein, in accordance to its company privacy policies as well the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013. Access to all of the above provided personal information is restricted, only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to this information.



