

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived benefits of mentorship in Swedish companies from the mentee perspective. Hence, the research question is; what are the “real life” experiences of mentorship in Swedish companies? There are few up to date Swedish studies in the field and for persons considering to participate in a mentor program or engage in an informal mentorship this information is of great value.

Since the goal is to profoundly understand how the mentoring experiences have affected the mentees the study is done in a qualitative manner to receive personal and non-abbreviated narratives. Through twelve in-depth interviews large amounts of information was collected. These interviews were performed with employees from four different Swedish companies; Axis Communications, IKEA, Alfa Laval and ST-Ericsson. The data was processed through a data analysis methodology referred to as grounded theory. This includes several steps of reduction of the raw data to extract the essence of the information received. The study resulted in five hypotheses that we consider to mirror the most important aspects of mentorship as well as the leadership model which gives a clear overview of the mentoring process as well as mentoring’s effect on the leadership development.

Except for the twelve mentee interviews two further reference interviews with two mentoring experts were carried out. The data received from these interviews were compared with our hypotheses to check how our investigation is related to their expert knowledge.

The main findings of the hypotheses are that the focus of the mentees is personal development through reflection and discussions and not career climbing. The mentoring sessions often have a relaxed atmosphere which benefits the trust building and with that the openness in the discussions. Most mentees have the ambition to become mentors themselves one day since they consider the relationship to be beneficial for both parties.

Data bits constructing the hypothesis were found in the mentee interviews and were also confirmed by the information received from the reference interviews.

Due to the nature of qualitative studies with a low number of sample data sources compared to the relevant population the study cannot be considered to be statistically significant. We do therefore welcome a survey to confirm or disprove our hypothesis as a suggestion for a further study.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Climbing the career ladder is a common ambition among striving managers and emerging leaders. What do we actually mean when we speak about building a career? What is the actual goal and are there ways to speed up this process? Building a career is often referred to as a structured approach of getting in charge of your career path by gathering deep and thorough knowledge about the organization and industry and gradually advancing towards a higher position. Another way of taking an active approach to your career can be increasing the width of your knowledge base which will enable sideways movement in the hierarchy to a field you value higher.

Being good at what you do and having a great leadership experience is not always enough to get the position that you are aiming for. It is the combination of circumstances that works as a tollgate for the next career step. One important prerequisite to move up the career ladder is to be acquainted with the right people.

Mentoring can be a catalyst to develop leadership capabilities, skills and competence. It might also potentially lead to a broad useful network. One definition of mentoring offered by Noe (1988) describes the network engagement as an effect of mentoring: “The mentor is usually a senior, experienced employee who serves as a role model, provides support, direction, and feedback to the younger employee regarding career plans and interpersonal development, and increases the visibility of the protégé to decision-makers in the organization who may influence career opportunities” (Noe, 1988, p. 458).

This also means that mentoring is not necessarily a learning activity for new employees; it is rather a relation that connects a senior and an aspirant, a more experienced employee with a less experienced one. Hence, all co-workers, managers and leaders could be involved in mentoring at all levels in a modern organisation. More generally, mentoring is a process that connects a desire to learn and grow with a wish and capability to share knowledge and support others’ development.

There are two types of mentoring known – informal and formal mentoring. The first one is an informal relationship that is based on compatibility or a spark between two personalities (DuBrin, 2010). Formal mentoring could mean that a mentor is formally assigned from outside the mentee’s organisation as a part of an exchange program or mentorship program. According to DuBrin (2010), protégés with informal mentors receive greater benefits than protégés with formal mentors. This might be because someone who is able to attract their own mentor is more career-driven and socially skilled to receive higher benefits. On the other hand, an informal mentorship has no competition. A mentor program must be able to sell its services and does therefore have to reach a certain level. Consequently the program will have a higher merit value since the level will be more

obvious for an external person (Rasmusson, 2013).

Mentoring is a prevailing and interesting topic for academic research. According to Allen and Johnston there were already more than 500 articles published in management and education literature by 1997 (J. Allen & Johnston, 1997). Today, 15 years later, there are many more available. At the same time, according to a study done by Bozeman and Feeny (2007), a solid mentoring theory is not formulated and there are persistence problems to develop it. Despite having provided a wide array of valid and useful research findings, conceptual problems have impeded the mentoring studies' ability to provide compelling middle-range or broad-range theoretical explanations. (Bozeman & Feeny, 2007).

When we searched for publications about mentoring with the focus on our particular country (Sweden) or mentoring through a cultural perspective the outcome was quite poor. We just found three articles that described specific country-related findings in the field of mentoring. Countries covered by those articles are Greece (Apospori et al., 2006), India (Lather & Sharma, 2010) and a comparison of Sweden and Latvia (Golan et al., 2002).

1.2 Research question and objectives

Without aiming to develop the theory about mentoring but rather being interested in the actual affect of mentoring on the career development in the country we are working and building a career in - Sweden, we decided to conduct a qualitative study that should cover the research question: *What are the "real life" experiences of the mentorship in Swedish companies?* We aim to observe mentoring relations in Swedish companies to discover the characteristics of the relation and the outcome from a mentees' perspective. Therefore the objective of our study is to explore the process of mentorship relations in Swedish companies from the mentees' perspective.

In business, leaders get involved in mentorship relations as a result of different circumstances and are focusing on developing different fields. Keeping research questions and objectives in mind, we would like to explore the following topics deeper; which personality traits are mentees interested in to develop? How are objectives of mentoring changing along the way and what are the outcomes of the relation? How does mentoring affect career development of the mentees and their career advancement plans? Have managers of today used mentoring and their mentors to reach positions they have? Finally we plan to conclude if managers and leaders shall consider mentorship as a beneficial activity that will help them to take the next step in their career.

1.3 Process

Considering the open character of the research question and objectives we decided that an exploratory research is the most suitable method to create understanding of the process that we are investigating. We selected the grounded theory as the methodology to analyse the qualitative data and formulate relevant hypotheses that could create a base for more focused investigation or further explorative studies later on. We applied the systematic research design of grounded theory by Corbin and Strauss (1990). Therefore the process of our research reflects the main steps of grounded theory methodology and analysis.

The data for our research are taken from the real life business. Almost all interviewees, except two reference interviews are arranged through different networks which made it possible to collect data for the qualitative analysis.

1.4 Delimitations

To be able to focus on our field of interest the following delimitation are defined for our research: Experiences of the mentorship relations are observed and noted only from the mentees' perspective. Considering that human relations normally involve at least two participants, we stress that in our work only one side has been taken into consideration. We did not collect any responses from mentors or any other individuals that could be related to mentoring directly or indirectly – for example direct managers of mentees or managers of the human recourse department. We did however decide to explore additional opinions of two experts with long experience in mentorship. We consider their long practice in the mentoring field as valuable contribution to the qualitative data collection and analysis. We conducted these two reference interviews to compare their information to our conclusion and findings.

1.5 Structure

In order to fully describe the accomplished work and to clarify the research process and discovered findings we apply the following structure on our thesis: We start with introducing the methodology of the research describing our motivation in selecting the grounded theory method. We explain the advantages of using the grounded theory in qualitative researches in general and the strengths and benefits in applying it to our research in particular. We explain how we have collected data and how we have made the following analysis. We present the result of our research – the Model of

Leadership Development in mentoring in Swedish companies as well as five hypotheses that we concluded on our findings. We then compare our findings with other researches with a similar scope that have been written about mentorship. We finalise the research with a discussion about the results and possible interpretations as well as recommendations for further studies based on provided hypotheses. The reference list and appendices you can find in the very end of the document.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

There are several methods for social science research. They can be divided into two categories; qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research asks questions as “how” and “why” as opposed to the quantitative methods which answers “what”, “where” and “when”. A smaller amount of samples is needed for qualitative research but at the same time, it requires a more in depth analysis. Examples of qualitative research methods are case studies, grounded theory and analytic induction. Quantitative research on the other hand, is based on statistics and computational techniques, therefore surveys are a suitable way to collect data for such investigation. We have chosen to perform a qualitative study since we want to understand what the individual really feel and also to be able to consider major as well as minor subtle aspects of mentorship. A qualitative study will also allow us to discover unexpected conclusions through the large amount of detailed information that will be gathered (Gill et al, 2008)

To further benefit the flexibility of the study we will base our research on grounded theory. Normally when conducting qualitative research you begin with constructing a hypothesis. A hypothesis is an untested theory. You evaluate this theory as work progress to see if it is true or not. Grounded theory work in the opposite way, this means that you begin with collecting information through for example observations and interviews. This information is interpreted into conclusions and theories. Hence, the difference is that you ground your theories with empirical data instead of starting with groundless hypotheses (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). This methodology was introduced in the sixties by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who were very critical to the old groundless methodology. Together they studied the influence of awareness on the interaction with dying people at a California hospital. In 1967 they published the book “The discovery of Grounded theory”.

Used for this study is the Corbin and Strauss version of grounded theory which is more structured and has more focus on systematizing the collected data than the Glaser methodology. With grounded theory you can start with the analysis as soon as you have received your first data (Corbin Strauss 1990). Continuously as you are receiving more information you should revise and expand your model to consider all relevant aspects of the subject. All characteristics brought into the model have to earn its way into the theory by repeatedly appearing in the collected material. The processing of the material starts with the open coding. This means that you generalize the raw data into concepts. In the next step these concepts are grouped into categories that through certain characteristics are linked to each other and therefore seem to belong together. This activity is called axial coding. It is of great importance that you continuously compare already inserted characteristics with the new to generate a consistent interpretation. In this stage, the Corbin and Strauss methodology also recommends to create a “coding paradigm”. This is a chart where you structure how the different categories are related to each other. The last stage in the coding process is the

selective coding. In this step you reduce all collected data into a core category. This should summarize the investigation and represent the drawn conclusions. It might be identified from an already concluded category or it can be extracted as a conclusion from several of the earlier categories.

2.2 Data collection

2.2.1 Interviews

For data collection in this qualitative research we have chosen to perform interviews in order to get a high response rate and to increase the understanding of the answers and thereby being able to draw more accurate conclusions. The interviews took place in an environment free from distraction at the company of the interviewees. They lasted between 70-90 minutes and were therefore quite extensive and there were enough time to follow up on interesting aspects that came up spontaneously.

Suitable interview methodologies for grounded theory are unstructured and semi structured interviews (Duffy et al, 2002). We have chosen to perform the interview at a level close to semi structured, this by initially having very general and open ended question to start the conversation. After conversing freely for a while, the interviewee being able to tell their opinion in the subject, more detailed questions will follow to ensure that certain data from all the interviewees is received. The purpose for this is to be able to perform a more accurate comparison between each interview subject. This is also an effective method to secure that a large amount of data is received from persons that are less talkative and thereby would not have given enough details through a fully unstructured conversation. As earlier mentioned the questions are formulated open ended which promote the interviewees to give a wide spectrum of unbiased answers. Using semi structured interviews as data collection also gives the possibility to follow up on interesting threads that might come up during the discussions. This is very beneficial when new perspectives of the studied field are desired (Gill et al, 2008). Interviews will also give very spontaneous answers since there will be no chance for the interviewee to prepare or reflect on beforehand. The disadvantage with interviews is the effort and time consumption. Asking the questions will also take focus from listening what the participant have to say, interpreting body language and intonation. Since we took notes simultaneously this problem became even more noticeable. This could be avoided with a tape recorder but then you will not be able to include facial expressions and body language in your interpretation.

Since these interviews contain personal thoughts and considerations we have chosen to make the participants anonymous. Namelessness is an effective method to make the interviewee open up. If they know that everything they say can be traced back to them they would most likely have been more restrictive with career reflections and opinions. The disadvantage with anonymity is that it will

be difficult for them to maintain ownership of content, meanings and narratives (Richards et al, 2002). Some people even want certain information to be associated with their name to build their own brand.

2.2.2 Participants

The twelve participants for the interviews all are or have been mentees since that is the perspective for this study. They were all between 31-40 years old except for one who was slightly younger than 30 and one who was older than 40 so they are within a fairly small span regarding age. The genders were distributed as five women and seven men. The positions vary from lower management with limited managing experience to middle managers who have worked as managers for some years. The interviewees work in very different fields in the companies as for example with engineering management, product management, competence management, quality management, supply chain management and retail management. The companies where the mentees are employed are Axis Communications, IKEA, Alfa Laval and ST-Ericsson.

2.2.3 Company overview

Axis Communications is a Swedish based IT-company working worldwide with almost 1500 employees. The company is the global leader in network video communication and is driving the shift from analogue to digital video surveillance. Their products focus on security surveillance and remote monitoring. The global headquarter is located in Lund and this is where the Axis- interviews have been carried out (www.axis.com).

IKEA is the leader in life at home with focus on home furnishing products. The company vision is to create a better everyday life for many people. IKEA have more than 300 stores worldwide and employs 139 000 people. The global headquarter is situated in Delft in Holland and the Swedish headquarter in Helsingborg. All interviews were performed in Sweden but with representatives from different IKEA units, where each unit has own specific and purpose (www.ikea.com).

ST-Ericsson is an industry leader in mobile platforms and a joint venture between the Swedish telecommunication company Ericsson and the French-Italian semiconductor chip maker STMicroelectronics. They are supplying mobile device manufacturers with wireless products and semiconductors. They have 5000 employees worldwide and their headquarter can be found in Geneva in Switzerland. The ST-Ericsson interviews were executed at their main Swedish development site in Lund (www.stericsson.com)

Alfa Laval was founded in 1883 and is a heavy industry company that focuses on large scale operations such as the Marine, Energy, and Food industries. Alfa Laval focuses on energy optimization, environmental protection and food production through their technological leadership in heat transfer, separation and fluid handling. They have subsidiaries worldwide and they count

16000 employees in total. The headquarter is situated in Lund and this is also where the Alfa Laval interviews for this study were carried out (www.alfalaval.com).

Axis Communication, ST-Ericsson and Alfa Laval are all three using a mentor program where a mentee and the mentor never come from the same company. IKEA on the other hand rely on informal mentorship.

2.3 Property of study

Since we have found no earlier studies answering our research question or treating the subject with enough level of details and focus on the individual we have chosen to consider this as an exploratory study. Our goal is to gain insight and knowledge in the field and formulate relevant hypotheses. The exploratory research methodology works very well with grounded theory due to the low amount of preconceptions. The flexibility will be kept to a maximum during the entire research.

We have interviewed twelve mentees distributed at four large Swedish companies; IKEA, Axis Communications, Alfa Laval and ST-Ericsson. A suitable setup would therefore be to use our results as a base in a rigorous investigation later including a survey to receive statistically significant results. This means that in this study we will be able to extract some valuable thoughts in this subject but not be able to decide how common and widely spread these thoughts are.

The unit of analysis (Yin, 2009, p.30) for this study are individuals who are working as managers and presently are -or earlier have participated in mentoring activities as protégé. In this particular case the unit of observation and unit of analysis will coincide since we are interested in how the individual perceive the effect of mentoring. Hence, the level of analysis is therefore going to be performed on micro-level since we aim to find out how each individual manager considers the benefits of mentorship. At the same time we will limit the scope to Swedish companies only.

2.4 Data analysis

Very large amounts of data are received from the interviews and it has to be processed and interpreted to make any sense. This consists of trying to find out what part of the data is important and establish patterns in these crucial data segments.

Open coding

After performing a few interviews we started with the first stage in the processing of the data; the open coding. In this step we generalized and categorized the information that seemed important.

Below four answers from the interviews are cited. You can interpret several pieces of data from them but one of the conclusions is that they all reflect more due to the mentorship.

“I think and reflect more than before. I am pretty fast to have an opinion and also to communicate this opinion. The mentor program has made me think before I say something and reflect over it afterwards. I have also become better on giving feedback. Another thing I have understood is that a lot of people have the same thoughts as I have. So you are never alone with the thoughts. It is also important to adapt your leadership style to the situation.”

“It has given me the possibility to reflect about what I can do and what I should do.”

“Yes absolutely. I know myself much better now. What do I want and do not want. What are my values and probably theirs relation to the company values.”

“I get a lot of energy from the discussions with my mentee. Firstly because I get the possibility to reflect on my own approach by analysing her situations and benefit from that. Secondly it develops me further in my leadership role.”

In some of the answers it is expressed directly and in others more indirectly. This does not matter since the characteristics are still the same and they could be categorized similarly. Open coding could be seen as a basic generalization and filtration of the raw data.

When processing our interviews we wrote the open coding keywords in a column to the right of the questionnaire. This gives you a good overview of the coding at the same time as you can easily see the raw data from where the keyword was extracted from. This is important since when you continuously receive more data you have to be able to re-evaluate all the old data as well and see where and how the new and the old data fit together. In figure 2.1 below you can see an example of the open coding can be seen.

<p>1. What major changes have mentoring initiated in your professional life? <i>It has given me the possibility to reflect about what I can do and what I should do.</i></p> <p>a) What competence have you gained thanks to the mentorship? <i>Foremost leadership. To a certain degree planning.</i></p> <p>b) What competences do you primarily focus on to develop through your mentorship? <i>Definitely leadership. Also group dynamic.</i></p> <p>c) Have you got valuable connections thanks to the mentorship? How will you use them? <i>Yes. You always get along with some people better than others. I have also met some people internally as well. But the problems you face in your work are often the same regardless what you work with.</i></p> <p>d) How have it helped you in your career development regarding position? <i>That you have been elected to participate in this mentor program is very positive. I think the mentor program prepare you for a career more than it works as a stepping stone. It is also a practical leadership skill to be able to have a discussion with someone. It is also a completely different relationship than with your manager.</i></p>	<p><i>More possibility to reflect</i></p> <p><i>Increase leadership knowledge</i></p> <p><i>Met connections</i></p> <p><i>Well prepared for a career</i></p>
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Figure 2.1 The first step in the data analysis is the open coding procedure

To summarize the most important data bits Corbin and Strauss (1990) suggest you to write memos. Since the analytical process might not always be a linear iteration but can come simultaneously or even in reversed order the memos is an effective method to incubate these ideas and make sure they are not lost on the way. As more data is gathered the relevance of the memos must be updated continuously since the knowledge in the subject grows. In figure 2.2 below follows the most relevant memos from our data processing.

Memos

- The primary result of the mentoring process is leadership development of mentee. Both personal characteristics and self-awareness as well as practical skills
- The mentees regard relations with people as an important subject to develop. They try to understand these relations, improve and utilize them.
- Most mentees have a clear picture of what characteristics they want their mentor to have. The particular attribute does though depend on their purpose and expectations of the mentorship
- The absolute majority of the mentees describe the atmosphere during mentoring sessions as opened and relaxed.
- The feeling of equality with the mentor is mentioned in the majority of the answers.
- The mentee seldom or never focus on a concrete next position in their career planning. The career path contains certain wished direction and seldom desired position two steps ahead.
- The standard career approach for the mentees is the initial gap analysis of current competence level versus required for the wished position and further learning and development of knowledge and skills.
- Almost all mentee see benefits of becoming mentors one day. Some are already mentors. Expected benefits are connected to further career development.
- The mentees feel that they reflect more which give them deeper understanding in the leadership subject.
- Using the mentors as a sounding board works as a sanity check to confirm they are on the right track.
- The mentees feel they have developed new tools that will help them in their work.

- They feel it is very rewarding to have a vent they can discuss daily issues with without it affects their work relationships.
- The mentorship have improved the mentees self-confidence, partly thanks to the discussions and gained knowledge but also for the fact they were chosen to the mentor program.
- A common feeling among the mentees is that they feel more mature and more comfortable in their role.
- The primary objective for the mentorship does not seem to be the networking even though many mentee have made some connections.
- To increase the challenge/learning some mentees get tasks/homework from the mentor.
- The majority of the mentees wanted a senior mentor so he or she had and an appropriate insight and broad perspective.
- Most mentees do not care if the mentor is male or female. Female mentees do though to a higher degree have a preference.
- Most mentees would consider using the mentor indirectly to achieve a new position.
- The mentor and mentees in informal mentor relations have often worked together in projects or line work for some time to get to know each other before engaging in mentorship
- For the mentorship to be effective both parts need to be able to set aside time to meet regularly and prepare for the meetings. The meetings are almost always initiated by the mentee.
- The mentees in an informal mentorship have to a higher degree a clear career plan compared to the one participating in the mentorship program.

Figure 2.2 Memo list

Axial coding

After the open coding has been performed the axial coding can start. By finding patterns and common denominators among the open coding keywords and memos a number of axial coding categories can be created. The categories are crystallized from the open coding and should be able to contain the essence of the information received from the interviews. In figure 2.3 all the categories from this study can be found. To further visualize how the categories are connected together Strauss and Corbin strongly recommends you to construct a “coding paradigm” (fig. 2.4). The coding paradigm creates clarity and structure to the coding process by showing the characteristics in its context (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). This will be helpful when the categories and memos should be combined and concluded in more complete and interlinked hypotheses.

Axial coding categories

1. Mentees characteristics, needs, goals and expectations.
2. Entry point to mentoring.
3. Perception of the company values and recruitment policy.
4. Mentors characteristics.
5. Sustainability of relations.
6. Sessions preparations, frequency and atmosphere.
7. Personal development of mentees via reflection and awareness.
8. Development of skills.
9. Improvements of interactions with the people.
10. Positioning in organizational landscape, networks.
11. Career approach – position perspective.
12. Career approach - network utilization.
13. Career approach – involvement of mentor or current manager.
14. Intentions to become a mentor.
15. Promotion of mentoring and implementation in own business unit

Figure 2.3 Axial coding categories

Selective coding.

The last step of data analysis is a selective coding. At this point all categories defined in the previous stage are put together or unified in one common picture or process. The central phenomenon of the study is emerging and logical connections between different categories become very clear.

In our study the result of the selective coding are combined in the Model of Leadership Development in mentoring. The core category *Leadership development* is presented in relations with other categories that were formulated during the previous step – Axial coding. Different categories are combined under several headings and positioned around the core category depending on if they are influencing it or are consequences of it.

The description of the Model of Leadership Development (fig. 2.4) can be found in the next chapter.

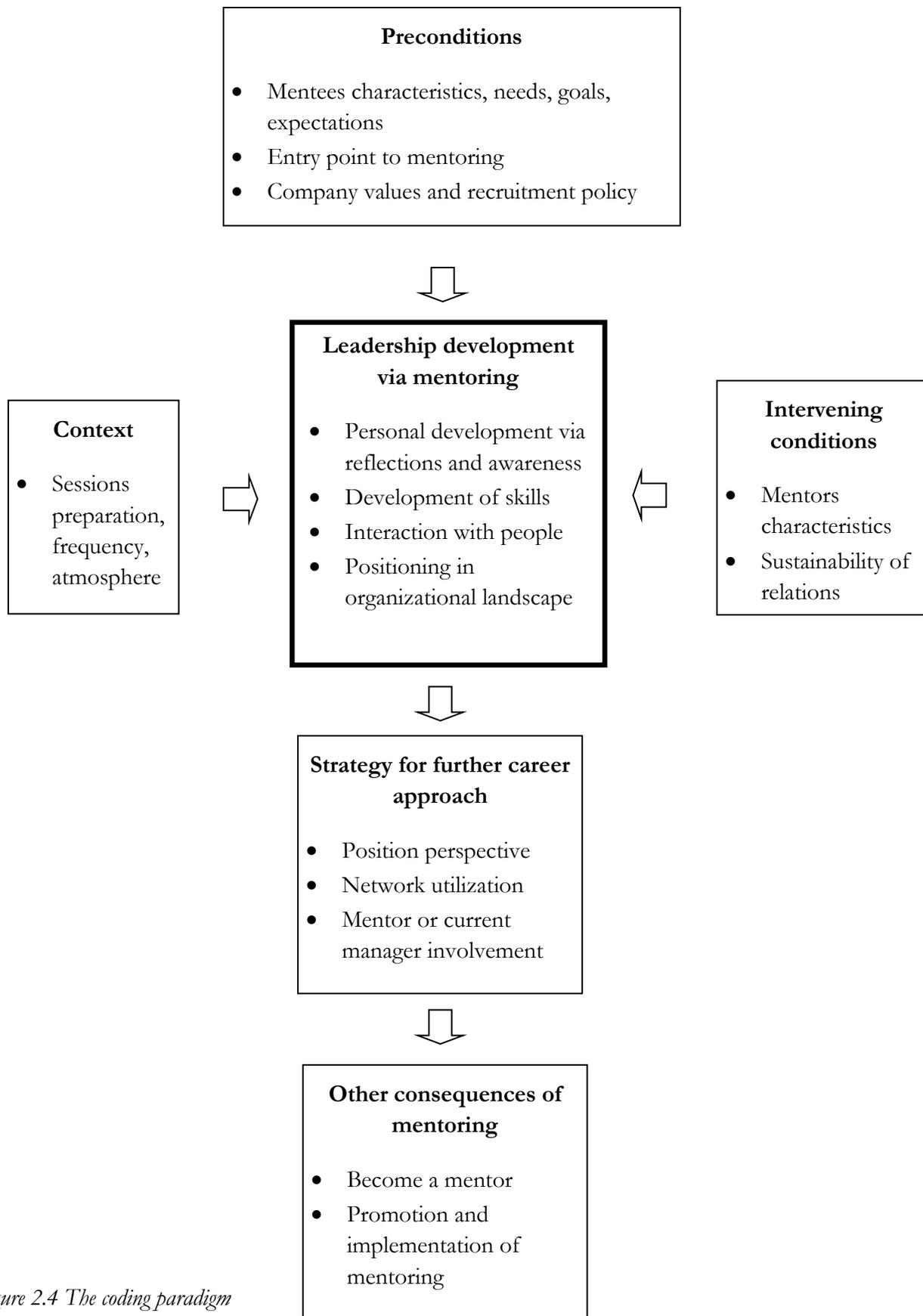


Figure 2.4 The coding paradigm

3. Qualitative findings and analysis

3.1 Model of Leadership development in mentoring

One result of performed qualitative study is the Model of Leadership Development (fig. 2.4). The model gives an overview of the studied mentoring process and its effect on leadership development. It applies a structural approach on different stages of the mentoring process. This includes; preconditions, intervening condition and the context that influences the leadership development as a result of the mentoring, as well as a strategy for further career approach and other consequences of mentoring process.

Preconditions

There are three main preconditions for the mentoring process and the following leadership development that have been identified from the respondents' answers. *Mentee characteristics, needs, goals and expectations* summarise the responses where the mentees specified their wishes and plans in connection to mentoring. These are very often individual development, goals, ambitions for example performance improvement as well as the ability to lead and drive changes. Sometimes it can also be more general expectations on mentoring, for example to understand leadership, its psychological aspect or to get broader view on business. The selection of respondents and their characteristics are also part of this category. We describe it more detailed in the data collection section.

Entry point to the mentoring represents two different ways of engaging in mentoring. These are mentoring programs and self-initiated mentorship relations. As mentioned in data collection section fifty percent of the mentees we have interviewed are participation in mentoring programs (N=6) and fifty percent have experience from informal mentoring.

Company values and recruitment policy reflects how different respondents experienced presence and effect of corporate values at the companies they are working for. Recruitment policy summarises the managers' opinion regarding promotion of internal recruitment within the company. The majority of the answers (N=11) reflect positive attitude to company values and have answered that internal recruitment and development is promoted at their work places.

Intervening conditions

These are additional conditions that indirectly influence the leadership development via mentoring. *Mentors characteristics* are a predefined set of personality traits and professional experiences that are listed by the mentees as necessary and important conditions for successful a relation. Often soft factors creating a positive relation were mentioned as for example similar life-values, hobbies, the importance of being alike and to feel certain chemistry with mentor. Sometimes also hard factors like certain professional expertise and experience in mentoring as well as capability to serve as a role

model were highlighted. Many respondents brought up the importance of the ability to build a trustful and open relation. The position of mentor in the company is also listed under this category and often mentees describe their mentors as a very influential and a very senior person which in our opinion could be a precondition for an initial respectful attitude towards the mentor.

Sustainability of relation describes the time horizon of the mentoring relation. For the respondents that were participating in the mentorship program the length of the program is predefined to one year. However for managers that were initiating the mentoring process themselves the length and sustainability of the relation is very often a parameter affected by the natural driving forces of relations like the satisfaction of the quality of the process or if the mentor fulfils the requested characteristics. Four out of six respondents that experienced informal mentoring characterised their mentoring relations as long lasting or sustainable.

Context

The *Sessions atmosphere, frequency and preparation* category combine the experiences and actual impressions of the mentees before and during sessions. Almost all interviewees mentioned that they were taking the responsibilities for the initiation of the meetings, setting the agenda and preparing the discussion subjects. For the mentees in the informal mentoring process the agenda was very often driven by their individual need or problem. For the mentees from the mentorship program there were a predefined set of thematic workshops and presentations that work as inspiration for the following discussions. In most of the cases the meetings took place quite regularly but in some cases sessions came quite spontaneous or the mentee and the mentor arranged a meeting to have a discussion in between scheduled sessions. Sometimes discussions were initiated as ad-hoc when the mentor observed the mentee in actual business situations and they decided to exchange the feedback straight away.

Leadership development via mentoring

Preconditions, Intervening conditions and Context together influence and shape the core part of the model – the leadership development. We named these topics the core part or the core category as it represents the central phenomenon of our research. We realised while processing and coding the answers that the mentoring process is about the development of leadership capabilities. Particularly when we defined the following categories; *Personal development of mentees via reflection and awareness* covers the growth of the mentee in individual focused characteristics like understanding of self-potential, self-analysis, reflections, thoughtfulness, maturity and broader view. Many respondents mentioned a clearer perception of their own strengths and weaknesses as well as an increased confidence. The mentees experienced mind shifts and insights as well as self-reflections can hurt. Nevertheless, all mentees indicated that all negative feedback they received they considered to be an effective development opportunity.

Besides enhanced knowledge about your own personal capabilities, a big part of leadership development is *development of skills*. This category combines different business handling skills that according to the interviewees' answers came as a result of the mentoring. These are fact-based

approach, refining their goal setting, striving to perform today and as well as in the future and communication skills.

Development of interaction with the people summarises a developed ability for better, more efficient and fruitful interaction with other people, particularly increased ability to feel and express empathy and build trust. Managers were mentioning their better understanding of underlying motives of other colleagues and consequently improved knowledge about how to “reach” other persons. The capability to influence others comes from better people skills. This category also includes better understanding of expectations from other colleagues and managers.

Positioning of mentee in organisational landscape. Answers within this segment are related to the actual position that the mentees reached as a result of mentoring, both with direct support from mentor as well as indirectly thanks to the recently acquired skills and personal development resulted from the mentoring. Many respondents indicated that they got much better understanding of the formal and informal network in their organisations. They became better aware of whom to involve in certain activities in order to get decisions faster and make things happen. In one case the result of the mentoring was a realization that the current position a person held did not match the fundamental values this person possessed and it was therefore necessary to transfer this individual to another position.

Strategy for further career approach

The next category summarises the codes that describe different strategies the mentees intended to apply in order to make the next step in their career. Normally it arises as one of the reflections during mentoring but at the same time, as we will elaborate later, leadership development and not career management reveals itself as the prioritised focus during the mentoring. When the respondents were asked about their future career plans, the question was often considered as difficult. Still it appears reasonable to combine the answers in the three following categories. *Position perspective* puts together replies that are related to a definitive assignment or a job name. Noticeable is that no one of interviewees (N=12) replied that they know which position they would like to take as a next step and that they are working towards this goal. Answers were rather drifting away from concrete titles. Almost everyone mentioned that they are rather flexible in their career planning; many were answering that they are thinking about a path and not a certain positions and is therefore planning a step after next job. Several mentees clearly stated that a new position is not the goal of their mentoring process.

Ideas regarding possible utilisation of new connections gained through the mentoring are combined in the category *Network utilisation*. Interesting to highlight and in line with the discussion above is that only one person would consider “using” the network to get take the next step in his or hers career. Other mentees were thinking about new connections as a possibility to get closer to key competences, even role models. Another thinking was to get access to another level of information, or to get faster decisions and actions.

Mentor or current manager involvement. We wanted to dig deeper and get better understanding if mentees want to involve their mentors in future career design. As we mentioned earlier, only one respondent specified that he or she would like to involve his mentor. Others directly answered that they will not involve their mentors in such direct manners but would maybe consider a more indirect approach. An interesting observation of answers in this category is that quite some mentees (N=4) are going to involve their current manager to plan the next step in their career. It seems to be a clear expectation on the manager to be involved and provide necessary support for the career advancement. Of course a precondition for that must be that the career plan is clearly communicated by the mentee and a development plan is set together with the manager and followed up by both parties.

Other consequences of mentoring

Additionally to the direct result of the mentoring process – leadership development, we identified other consequences of the mentoring process and specified two categories that reflect the answers about this topic. *Become a mentor* is the category that specifies responses and opinions if the current mentees would consider to become a mentor one day. The replies disclose a picture that some participants are already mentoring other managers (n=3) and others express a clear wish to become a mentor. The respondents see positive effects on their own careers and their personal development in case they are involved in mentoring as a mentor. They feel they will develop further as leaders, they will be up to date regarding new ways of thinking and competences, and they see benefits in including their future mentees in their professional network.

Promotion and implementation of mentoring is the last category and summarises other reflections of mentees regarding their experience of mentoring. Generally all mentees are very positive about their journey and results. Worth to mention is that several respondents highlighted an importance of taking own responsibility in initiating a mentoring relation and finding the right mentor. According to their opinions only by doing that a perfect match will be secured and the best result of the mentoring will be achieved. One responded shared her reflection about the necessity of implementation mentoring in all business units, as she realises that this is the best way to address and find solutions for own business development challenges as well as securing your own growth as a person and leader.

3.2 Hypotheses

The last step in the grounded theory process is to extract a few selected codes (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The coding paradigm also referred to as the Model of Leadership Development that we described in the previous chapter have helped to get a clear view on the core category, other main categories and their interconnections. It helps to get a coherent logic in the study. The main insights and understanding of the mentoring processes are though expressed in the patterns that we present in this chapter. The following five hypotheses are combined or extracted from the processed data throughout the study. We have utilized the earlier memos and axial coding categories.

- A. The reason for entering a mentorship is seldom directly focused on climbing the career ladder or using the mentor as a steppingstone.
- B. A relaxed and open session atmosphere and a feeling of an equal relationship benefit the discussion and exchange of ideas. A mentor with different experience will broaden the mentees perspective and a mentor with experience in the same field will sharpen the knowledge of the mentee.
- C. Mentorship is focused on developing the individual through reflection and discussions which will result in a more mature and confident personality with a higher degree of understanding for other human beings.
- D. For the mentee to feel that he or she can reveal their true weaknesses and thereby be able to improve parts that will benefit the most there must be trust between mentor and mentee. Trust can be built through a long relationship history or through an external mentor so the confidential information will not reach the mentee employer.
- E. The mentees consider mentorship to be beneficial for both parties and want to become mentors themselves.

Below we explain which memos having become the foundation for constructing a particular hypothesis. As mentioned earlier, memos are the essential extract of the data processing that incubates ideas emerging through the analysis. Therefore each memo is the summary of thoughts and ideas from several interviews. This means that even if a hypothesis is supported by only one or two memos it is still representing insights from many answers.

The **hypothesis A** has been concluded from the following memos. They all indicate that reaching a higher position is not the highest priority for the mentees.

The mentees seldom or never focus on a concrete next position in their career planning. The career path contains a certain wished direction and seldom a desired position two steps ahead.

The primary objective for the mentorship does not seem to be the networking even though many mentees have made some connections.

The primary result of the mentoring process is leadership development of mentee. Both personal characteristics and self-awareness as well as practical skills

Hypothesis B is built on the memos below. They indicate that the atmosphere at the sessions was relaxed without any significant hierarchic structure; that made it easier to create trust between the mentor and mentee.

The feeling of equality with the mentor is mentioned in the majority of the answers.

The absolute majority of the mentees describe the atmosphere during mentoring sessions as opened and relaxed

Most mentees have a clear picture of what characteristics they want their mentor to have. The particular attribute does though depend on their purpose and expectations of the mentorship

Hypothesis C states that mentorship is developing the individual. Several memos indicate that this is the focus for most mentees which through the mentorship have increased their time for reflection. Several mentees feel more confident and mature which will definitely benefit them professionally.

The primary result of the mentoring process is leadership development of the mentee; personal characteristics, self-awareness as well as practical skills

The mentees regard relations with people as an important subject to develop. They try to understand these relations, improve and utilize them.

The mentees feel that they reflect more which give them a deeper understanding in the leadership subject.

A common feeling among the mentees is that they feel more mature and more comfortable in their role.

The majority of the mentees wanted a senior mentor so he or she had an appropriate insight and broad perspective.

Trust is important in all relationships and mentorship is no exception. **Hypothesis D** explains that to have a successful mentorship experience there must be trust between the mentor and mentee. In informal mentorship, mentor and mentee are often acquainted since before as they often have participated in common projects or have been working on collaborating assignments. They have therefore been able to build trust before the mentoring was initiated. In a mentoring program the organizer make sure that the information stays between the mentor and mentee by formalising the

rules of the sessions and setting up the code of conduct. Additionally mentoring programs will make sure that the mentee and mentor never work at the same company.

The mentor and mentees in informal mentor relations have often worked together in projects or line work for some time to get to know each other

They feel it is very rewarding to have a vent they can discuss daily issues with without it affects their work relationships

Hypothesis E concerns the mentor role of the mentorship. Many of the today's mentees would like to become a mentor, now or in the future. Some of them have had a mentee already. This is a hypothesis supported just by one memo, nevertheless it discloses reflections from the majority of the respondents, and in our opinion it is relevant to put as a separate pattern.

Almost all mentee see benefits of becoming mentors one day. Some are already mentors. Expected benefits are connected to further career development.

3.3 Cultural context

The research is performed in four Swedish companies and it is therefore relevant to look for some evidences or signs of presence of Swedish culture in the respondents' answers. To discover and evaluate typical characteristics of the culture we used Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2004). This theory suggests five indexes or dimensions that describe the way of how the society in a particular nation is handling these defined dimensions. The suggested short description of the categories and positioning of Sweden are taken from the Internet site "The Hofstede Centre" at <http://geert-hofstede.com/sweden.html>. Below you can find a short explanation of each dimension.

Power distance - the extent to which the less powerful members of an institution and organisation within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Sweden scores low on this dimension (score of 31) which means that the following characterises the Swedish style: Being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, accessible superiors, coaching leaders, management facilitates and empowers.

Almost all respondents in our study (N=11) highlighted open and equal atmosphere of the mentoring sessions. Words that were mentioned in the interviews are *equality, openness, no hierarchy*. Some mentees stressed that they expect that their managers will support them in further career steps with facilitation and coaching. We could conclude that the context or atmosphere of the mentoring process that we observed reflects a typical way for handling relations in Swedish culture.

Individualism - the degree of interdependence a society maintains in between its members. Sweden, with a score of 71 is an Individualistic society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knitted social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In individualistic societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, management is the management of individuals.

In our interviews we did not have such questions and answers that would allow us to make any interpretations regarding individualism. Therefore we cannot make any conclusions regarding the presence of this cultural dimension from then collected data.

Masculinity / Femininity - the fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine). A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success. A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. Sweden scores 5 on this dimension and is therefore a feminine society. In feminine countries it is important to keep the life/work balance and you make sure that all are included. An effective manager is supportive to his/her subordinates and decision making is achieved through involvement.

Managers strive for consensus and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives.

Referring to the interviews from our research we can see that there are not so many attributes of masculinity in respondents' answers. The participants did not indicate that they would like to utilise mentoring to become the best in their areas or that they would like to become more powerful just for the sake of it. The motivation for the mentees to engage in mentoring are divided between some masculine dimension like *performance improvement, lead and drive changes* and feminine dimensions like *self-development, understanding a psychological aspect of leadership*. At the same time the respondents did not discuss their career advancement plans as a result of mentoring. Instead the mentees focused on the development of relations with people, building skills of how to understand other people better, find a way to influence others via discussions and agreements rather than direct orders and use of authority.

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) is the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions to try to avoid these. Sweden scores 29 on this dimension and do therefore has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. Low UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude and practice counts more than principles and deviance from the norm is more easily tolerated.

The questionnaire from our research gave us the possibility to have a discussion regarding career plans and future career steps with the mentees. They did however not mention the next planned position in any of the answers. Instead the participants replied that they would rather have an understanding of possible career paths and not on actual positions. Such responses could be interpreted as there is a certain degree of uncertainty willingness since it does not create any discomfort for the mentees and seems to be a rather normal situation. Considering the characteristics that are given in the paragraph above, such way of career planning could be explained by being a typical one for Swedish culture. One should have in mind though that even there was no such indication there is of course also a risk that the interviewees consider a specific position to be too sensitive information to share regardless if they were promised to be anonymous in this paper.

Long-term orientation is the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view. The Swedes score 20, making it a short-term orientation culture. Societies with a short-term orientation generally exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save, strong social pressure to “keep up with the Joneses”, impatience for achieving quick results, and a strong concern with establishing the truth i.e. normative.

In our interviews we did not have such questions and answers that would allow us to make any interpretations regarding long-term orientation. Therefore we cannot make any conclusions regarding presence of this cultural dimension from the collected data.

4. Observation of other studies and reference interviews

In this chapter we would like to position our research in comparison to other publications that have similar findings regarding the model of mentoring or our hypotheses. Additionally we would like to benchmark our work with other studies that have been made with focus on a specific country or culture. Finally we would like to make a short overview of studies with the topic – mentoring relation in Sweden.

4.1 Model of mentoring as a result of other studies

There are many published studies where the researchers are focusing on the development of models of mentoring relations in different contexts. In this paragraph we would like to cite two relevant ones.

The work of Kathy Kram (1983) “Phases of the mentor relationship” was published by the Academy of Management Journal and is referred to as an article that led the way in the contemporary research tradition in the field of mentoring. The article is still the most cited journal article in the topic of mentoring and her conceptualisation of mentoring has been either quoted or reworked only slightly in all the subsequent studies (Bozeman & Feeny, 2007). Without illustrating the actual model, Kram suggests a structural presentation of the phases of mentor relations, their definitions as well as the psychological and organizational factors that cause the movements into the next relationship phase. The phases of the mentor relationship are Initiation, Cultivation, Separation and Redefinition (Kram, 1983). For her research, Kram applied the exploratory and qualitative methodology and to motivate her selection of certain settings and sample collection she used the work of Glaser & Strauss (1967). To process carried out interviews the inductive process of the “constant comparative method of analysis” have been used, described in the already mentioned work of Glaser & Strauss. Looking at the similarities in a the research topic, applied research and analysis method as well as presented result, we could aim to make a statement that our research is the next step towards conceptualisation or modelling of mentoring in corporate setting, with the base set by Kathy Kram in 1983.

The second publication that we would like to mention is a study written by Kleinman G., Siegel P. H. and Echstein C. “Mentoring and learning: the case of CPA firms” (2001). The work analyses mentoring as a learning forum for accounting professionals. The collected data are utilized in the development of the model of mentoring, mediation and hypotheses. The analysis of the model offered by the authors indicates considerable influence of the mentoring process on socialization

and personal learning of the company's personnel. The mediation relationship between socializing and personal learning and important professional attitudes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment intention to leave, role stress and job burnout were examined. Despite the fact that the study has the biggest application in the area of public accounting, the model gives inspiration for similar researches in other professional environment. We think that our research question somewhat fulfils the further research direction suggested by this work. Important to note is that after the publication it became known that the content was plagiarised from a doctoral dissertation by Dr. Melenie Lankau. It is mentioned as well that the Lankau Committee has found no evidence of plagiarism by Kleiman G. or Eckstein C, However, in order to avoid any misunderstanding we refer to both publications. For our research, the model of mentoring mediations is of more interest and this model is presented only in publication done by Kleinman et al (2001).

4.2 Cultural aspects of mentoring in other studies

We mentioned in the introducing parts that there are limited amounts of researches issued that have focused on the cultural aspects of mentoring. Below follows a short summary of two publications and their relation to our research.

We would like to mention the study of Lather, A.S. and Sharma, H (2010) "Impact of national and organisational culture on mentoring environment in Indian context". The study provides an original perspective on factors responsible for mentoring success; initiative and taking national and organisational culture into consideration. The study specifies the Indian social context and national culture which has a particularly big power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, moderate masculinity and relatively much collectivistic orientation. Used as a reference classification of national culture and values are the definition proposed by Hofstede (1980) and Hofstede et al (2004). The practical illustration of organizational culture is taken from the work of Hofstede et al. (1990). The national culture and organizational cultures interaction with the work values provides the context for the mentoring environment in the organization. The authors are offering the contextual mentoring model that describes this interaction and its impact of success or failure of the mentoring efforts. The research of Lather and Sharma is particularly interesting for our work as it covers cultural aspect of mentoring as well as offers the model of mentoring. (We described other relevant studies in the paragraph above).

The study performed by Apospori E., Nikandrou I. & Panayotopoulou L examines the concept of mentoring as a career-strategy tool in Greek organizations from a protégé's point of view and the effect of mentoring on womens' career advancement. (Apospori E. *et al* , 2006) Similarly to our research this study is focusing on the mentee perceptive aiming to emphasize behavioural manifestations. The results of the study support the complexity of mentoring as a career strategy and career advancement. The latter is characterized by a broader network with peers and superiors inside

and outside the organization as well as visibility and exposure through better communication. These results are related to some findings of our research and its initial intention. One of the directions for our inquiry is to investigate the effect of mentoring on getting good connections. The cultural context of the study is presented by highlighting the observation that the Greek society as well as Greek organizations are characterized by a high level of assertiveness (Papalexandris, 2006). The discussion in the study is built around if women's masculine behaviour in an overall assertive environment is somewhat ignored as a factor of success or even interpreted as a gap between real and ideal culture for Greek society.

4.3 Researches about mentoring in Sweden

Taking into consideration that our research is performed in Sweden, we would like to give a short overview of a few relevant Swedish publications. Gunnela Westlander have written an interesting article where she treats the mentoring phenomenon in Sweden; "Mentorskap till stöd och inspiration I dagens Sverige" (2008). There she describes how mentoring is practiced, documented and researched in today's Sweden.

In the following sections we will point out how three other studies are aligned with our work.

The Phd thesis of Leif Nilsson "Att tillstro sin handlingskraft. Ett mentorsprogramms betydelse för fjorton kvinnors chefskarriär" (2000) focuses on studying the results of fourteen women engaged in a mentoring program with the focus on self-efficiency, particularly confidence in own capability to handle certain work related tasks that later lead to the choice of a certain career path. The output of the study is that for half of the participants the mentoring program negatively affected their career path and for the second half it becomes positive or at least neutral. We see a correlation to our study that the research focus for this thesis, as with ours, was personal development and further effect on career. There are some similarities with our results that suggest that mentoring not always provides the career advancement in the first step, but rather gives some insights regarding personal development, own strength and challenges. The difference is that Nilsson is focusing only on women and participants of the mentoring program, in our study we are covering both genders as well as two entry points to mentoring, namely mentoring program and self-initiated informal mentoring.

Another study, written by Tina Nilsson (2003) focuses on comparing mentoring program run by two different companies and the effect of those programs regarding competence development of the participants. The two companies arrange their programs in different ways – one more standardized program and another one in a way of informal mentoring or sponsorship (from Swedish: fadderskap). The study is therefore focusing on if there are any differences in the results of the programs due to the different approach of mentoring. The conclusion of the study is that both companies succeeded with their goal to develop competence despite the different approaches. The

author suggests that such positive results could be explained by the presence of company culture. There is a similarity to our study in terms of involving both men and women, so there are no gender specific conclusions. The strongest parallel to our work is that the participants are experiencing different types of mentoring, formal and informal. The half of our respondents are participating in an arranged mentoring program and the another half contribute with experience of informal mentoring. The results have some similarities as well, as we do not observe such a big difference in personal development or individual growth between mentees coming from the mentoring program and mentees from informal mentorship.

One more study worth to mention is the work of Helena Dovie “Mentorskap och karriärutveckling” (Dovie, 1998). In her study she focused on mentees as individuals and their personal development as a result of a mentoring program. The study investigates further effects on career development. Similarly to the findings in Nilsson’s (2000) research, Dovie argues that despite the fact that the program gave certain personal development to the mentee, its effect on the further career is controversial – for some it was positive and for other rather negative. Similarities with our research is the focus on mentees and their personal growth, that in our opinion and confirmed by our results is the primary objective of the mentoring.

4.4 Reference interviews

The common way to analyze a qualitative study is to assume some hypothesizes that reflect the major findings of the work and later on test them in real environment. In our work we have defined our hypotheses together with the Model of Leadership Development as well as the concluding steps of the data analysis in the grounded theory method. To test our hypotheses and position them in relation to existing knowledge we decided to compare them with the reference interviews performed with two experts and practitioners in the area of mentoring.

Bertil Rasmusson - the designer of a mentoring program. He has great experience in teaching adults through IFL. He has worked as an HR director at Gambro, HR director at CARDO and temporarily as HR director at Axis Communications.

Göran Alsén – a consultant in leadership and adviser in top management coaching. He participated in the development of the executive MBA at EFL and worked at the MIL institute with leadership development. He works today at the School of Economics and Management in Lund and at the School of Management in Blekinge.

Hypothesis A. *The reason for entering a mentorship is seldom directly focused on climbing the career ladder or using the mentor as a steppingstone.*

We can relate to this hypothesis in the interview of Alsén (2013). He explains that it is important that the mentee have realized that mentorship could potentially bring much more than just a career position. Understanding this shows a certain level of maturity of the mentee, and according to him it is a necessary precondition for entering the mentorship. He says: *“If the only purpose (of mentee) is to get a job with higher position, he or she is not ready (for mentoring).”*

Hypothesis B. *A relaxed and open session atmosphere and a feeling of an equal relationship benefit the discussion and exchange of ideas. A mentor with different experience will broaden the mentees perspective and a mentor with experience in the same field will sharpen the knowledge of the mentee.*

We find parallels with our hypothesis in the interview with Rasmusson (2013). He indicates that to further strengthen the creative atmosphere both parts must be able to say what they want and have different views and experiences on aspects of work and life. Here are some statements from an interview with him regarding important aspects of mentorship:

-Independence, mentor and mentee must be entirely independent of each other.

- A mentee from one kind of company will get a mentor from an entirely different kind. This is to increase creativity and also increase the amount they have to learn from each other.

Hypothesis C. *Mentorship is focused on developing the individual through reflection and discussions which will result in a more mature and confident personality with a higher degree of understanding for other human beings.*

Both interviewees bring up the aspect of reflections and increased confidence. Alsén says: *“The mentee will feel more confident in his or her role as a manager. He or she will also become better on reflecting over personal thoughts.”* In connection to the reflection process of the individual, Rasmusson, highlights the importance that the mentorship continues over a certain period of time, and this time is needed for personal reflection that later on lead to acceptance in a new behaviour.

Hypothesis D. *For the mentee to feel that he or she can reveal their true weaknesses and thereby be able to improve parts that will benefit the most there must be trust between mentor and mentee. Trust can be built through a long relationship history or through an external mentor so the confidential information will not reach the mentee employer.*

This is the side of mentoring that both referents highlighted mostly. Rasmusson specifies it in the following way: *“Trust, it is of vital importance to create trust. There should not be any doubt at all that the information will spread to the mentees manager. Usually I do not even have any mentors at all from any of the mentee companies in the same program.”* In the interview with Alsén we see the following: *“A trustful relation is the most important. It is advisable to met a couple of times to see how you fit together before you decide to engage in a mentor relation.”*

Hypothesis E. *The mentees consider mentorship to be beneficial for both parties and do want to become mentors themselves.*

Again both respondents comment on this aspect similarly. Rasmusson confirms the opinion that being a mentor is very rewarding as well. Following is extracted regarding this topic:

- *The joy of seeing a young person grow seem to be one of the main benefits.*
- *The mentors learn a lot as well.*
- *Get a feeling of being knowledgeable, a confirmation.*
- *Get new networks.*

Alsén brings up following arguments, specifying benefits for the mentor: *“The mentor will experience an ego boost by feeling that somebody needs him or her. It is also a common feeling that the mentor, who probably has come rather far in his or her career, enjoys the feeling of paying back the luck and help he or she has got through the years. They will also learn a lot themselves since they will get questions they have to answer that they have never thought about before. It is a way for them to vitalise themselves and their knowledge.”*

It is positive to see that reflections extracted from participants of our research, later on coded and formed into patterns or hypotheses, could be found in the real life practices of experts who are working with mentoring. This could be seen as some sort of a confirmation of the relevance and significance of our work that we would like to discuss further in next chapter.

5. Significance of research

Qualitative findings are often questioned regarding their significance. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss whether our findings regarding mentoring relations are important enough to be stated as significant.

By asking certain questions and offering some answers we are hoping to build arguments that our research is indeed relevant. To open the discussion we pose the question: “How solid, coherent and consistent is the evidence in supporting our findings?” In our study we establish the strength of evidence by complementing our hypotheses, which are logically derived from the collected data, with ideas from the references interviews. By doing this we offer additional expert opinions and explanations to the concluded findings. The Information from the reference interviews offer more arguments and angles to our findings as well as it supports the main line or logic of the mentoring process that we suggest.

Another question worth reflection upon is “How do our findings increase the understanding regarding the phenomenon we are exploring?” In the previous chapter we positioned our research in relation to other studies. We covered four different perspectives of comparison: Model of Leadership Development in mentoring, cultural aspect of mentoring, other researches about mentoring in Sweden as well as the already mentioned reference interviews to anchor our hypotheses. We shortly mentioned other researches and defined limitations, we explained how our research contributes to already existing knowledge and what additional perspective our research cover. We also argue how our findings deepen the insight of the mentee experiences of the mentoring process.

Last but not least is the question to what extent our findings are consistent with other knowledge from this field? Mentoring functions and leadership development are well-known and interesting processes for both social researches as well as practical application in business environment. Our findings contribute to a better understanding of mentoring and offer additional thoughts to existing experiences. At the same time, we are not proposing any new discoveries or innovative approaches to describe the process of mentoring. Considering the above we could state that our research has confirmatory significance, meaning our findings support and are supported by other works and studies and prove that this information is still valid and up to date.

Another way to evaluate the significance of our research is to relate it to criterions for evaluating a grounded theory that is explained by the founders of grounded theory – Corbin & Strauss. In their publication “Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria” (1990), the authors suggest that the qualitative research methods can be evaluated in the same way as quantitative researches. They offer scientific canons for qualitative research, the way that procedures and canons should be reported, as well as evaluative criterions to judge the research product. In

order to satisfy the requirements of the method, the major focus of the researcher should lie on a careful application of the methodology, the research process and empirical grounding of the findings.

We would like to especially focus in Criterion 7 in Empirical Grounding of Findings: “*Do the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extend?*” (Corbin and Strauss (1990). Here they insist that it is not enough to simply follow the procedures/canons of the theory without any imagination or insight into what the data is reflecting. It is important to try to see what the data *really* is saying except in terms of trivial or well-known phenomena. Corbin & Strauss suggest that a combination of researcher characteristics like analytic ability, theoretical sensitivity and sensitivity to the nuances of action/interaction as well as quality of the collected data significantly contribute to fulfilment of this criterion.

We believe that our research possess some of the characteristics mentioned above since the findings of our study are not only simple evidence that already existing and known mentoring processes have similar form in Swedish companies and mentees experience similar personal development as already conceptualised by other researches. We offer additional interpretation. Despite a fairly common belief that mentoring is a process to accelerate the career, mentees in our research highlighted other benefits of mentoring as well. They saw and experienced it as a personal development path with many positive and promising outcomes which potentially could affect career development rather than being the primary goal. By documenting and highlighting this important fact, we think that we succeeded to bring up the main message and focus on abstractions of the process rather than just a description.

6. Conclusion

The focus of our work is the “real life” experience of mentorship in Swedish organizations. To cover this question we created the Model of Leadership Development in mentoring as a conceptual model of the relations that we have observed during our research. Despite that the common opinion among people outside the process is that mentoring primarily is a stepping stone towards a higher position in your career our finding shows that it has a much broader purpose, coverage and effect on the participating mentee as well as the mentor. The model highlights that the key benefit of the mentoring process is the leadership development of the mentee through personal development by increasing the amount of reflection, awareness, development of skills, improvement of interaction with people as well as clearer positioning in the organizational landscape. Subsequent positioning of our research confirming it to be in line with other studies as well as anchoring it with the reference interviews establish a feeling of relevance and significance of our investigation.

To cover deeper insights of underlying processes from the observed relations we stated five patterns. These hypotheses give a clear picture on the mentoring phenomena. They are extracted from the interviews and observations and offer a qualitative understanding of mentoring together with the abstract Model of Leadership Development.

One of the main finding of the hypotheses is that the focus of the mentees is personal development through reflection and discussions and not career climbing. This do though contradict the fact that reaching a higher position have a more direct rewarding function considering salary and prestige. Therefore we have composed some alternative interpretation claiming that the goal for mentoring actually is reaching another position but for different reasons they do not admit it. This might be derived from several reasons. The purpose can be to reduce the psychological pressure of failure in this career goal if it is not accomplished, therefore it can either be self-denial reducing internal pressure or just towards other people reducing the pressure from the outside. Another explanation can be the political correctness in Sweden. Suggesting that you are fit for a higher position could be compared to insinuating that you actually think you are competent which would violate the Swedish law of Jante. The final explanation could be the mentoring consultant; Alsén (2013) states that that if your primary objective for mentoring is to reach a new position you are not ready to engage in mentoring. This attitude might get adopted by the mentees and thereby supressing their initial focus on reaching a higher position since aiming for personal development is considered to be the correct goal.

Considering the result of the research, shall managers and leaders regard mentoring as an important activity in their career paths? The answer is yes considering all the benefits that can be derived from the mentoring. Better personal and professional awareness create a good solid base for a sustainable development of the individual and which is serving as much broader and more long-term objectives than a new title on your business card.

7. Recommendations for further studies

To be able to study a certain topic deep enough it is necessary to have some limitations not to be overwhelmed by the vast amount of information available. Since our goal was to profoundly understand how the mentees felt about their mentoring program or informal mentoring we had to limit the scope in different aspects.

Since this is a qualitative study the number of sources for the collected data are too few to be considered as statistically significant. The hypotheses we have generated are based on twelve interviews from four different companies. Considering the depth of the interviews this have given us very good knowledge how these mentees feel about their mentorship but we cannot for sure state that this is representative for mentees in general. Therefore it would very interesting to use our hypotheses to create a questionnaire for a survey to proof if they are valid or not. Surveys are as opposed to in-depth interviews very suitable to reach out to a high number of individuals so therefore it should be possible to collect a sample size large enough to confirm or disprove the hypotheses as general facts. A detailed description how to calculate the correct sample size can be found in the article “Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research” written by Bartlett et. al (2001). Performing an anonymous survey could also clear out the question if the primary goal is personal development or reaching a higher position since we might have introduced a bias error due to the personal atmosphere when performing the in-depth interviews.

Half of the mentees from our study uses informal mentoring. During our literature search we noticed that the majority of the articles and studies focused on mentor programs of different kinds. This might be because mentor programs are easier to define since informal mentoring might take many different forms and constellations. It would therefore be very interesting with a study on informal mentoring defining the most common forms and also comparing it with formal mentoring in different aspects. Included in formal mentoring could be both external mentor programs and internal mentor programs since they have different characteristics (Alsén interview, 2013).

In this study we have touched the fact that different countries have different levels of hierarchy and different approaches how leadership should be performed. A field inviting for further studies is of course to deeper investigate how this affects mentoring. In one of our hypothesis we have stated that an open and equal atmosphere during the mentoring sessions benefit the discussions and therefore the impact of mentoring. This is of course related to the small power distance in the Swedish culture. Can this maybe also be a disadvantage? Since the mentors in most cases are older than the mentee the fact that some countries have high respect for the elderly could also greatly affect the mentoring? The question is how? Does it mean that the mentee does not dare to speak his or her mind and therefore it makes the exchange of ideas suffer? Or does it mean the mentee will come more prepared to the mentoring sessions and listen more carefully to the mentor and thereby use the time more efficiently and therefore learn more? Which is the most beneficial culture for

mentoring? It is an interesting subject just waiting to be explored further. A good foundation to start this study is Hofstede's classical book; *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (2004).

Close to the previous subject is the question how it works in large multi-national organizations. Since the codes of the company culture is written in one country and the majority of the employees at an office can have another nationality, will this cause a problem regarding mentoring? Generally if the mentee and mentor comes from different cultures, is that a problem for the mentoring or an advantage? One could imagine that in some cultures where gender equality has not reached desired level it would be problematic if the mentor was female and the mentee was male. On the other hand the mentee would have incredibly much to learn from this relationship; therefore if it would succeed it would have been a very beneficial mentorship. This leads us to another possible field of study, namely the optimal matching characteristics and combination of mentee and mentor. As mentioned above, the more different two people are the more they have to learn from each other? Or should they be rather similar so they understand each other better and the mentor easier can understand the questions and needs of the mentee? This is a subject where the outcome of the study can be of great value to mentor programs to refine their matching and thereby increase the success of the program.

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Appendix

A1 Interview questionnaire

Questionnaire - Mentoring as a factor of career success in Swedish companies

Mentorship setup and preconditions (15 – 20 min)

1. Do you have a mentor?
 - a) Have you had other mentors before?
 - b) How many?
 - c) For how long do you have/did you have mentor?
 - d) How did you find your mentor?
 - e) Is it a formal or informal relationship
 - f) How senior is the mentor
 - g) How influential is the mentor
 - h) Approximate age of mentor
 - i) Is it an external or internal mentorship (from your own company or another) ?
 - j) Does the mentor relationship have a relaxed atmosphere or more hierarchic?
How does this affect the communication/discussions? It is very relaxed

2. How often did you meet/or do you meet?
 - a) What do your sessions look like?

3. Did you have certain criteria's for selection of your mentor?
 - a) Could you specify those? Professional or life experience, position in the company, personal characteristics, "chemical" match), respect for each other?

4. Do you have a clear picture of your career path?
 - a) Did mentoring affect it?

5. Is there any general policy or rule in your company regarding mentorship?

Professional and personal development (50 – 60 min)

6. How is mentoring influencing your daily job?
 - a) Regarding performance?
 - b) Regarding relations with people?

7. What major changes have mentoring initiated in your professional life?
 - a) What competence have you gained thanks to the mentorship?
 - b) What competences do you primarily focus on to develop through your mentorship?
 - c) Have you got valuable connections thanks to the mentorship? How will you use them?
 - d) How have it helped you in your career development regarding position

8. What effect have mentoring had on you as an individual?
 - a) How have you grown as a person due to the mentorship?
 - b) Does it help you to become a better leader?
 - c) How can it sometimes be uncomfortable/painful to have a mentor? Negative experience?
 - d) Have you become more confident in yourself and your actions?

Mentorship influences on the future career (15 – 20 min)

9. Do you plan to work further on your career development?
 - a) Do you know your next step?
 - b) How will you approach it?
 - c) Will you use your mentor to support you?
 - d) Does your company promote internal hiring?

10. Do you plan to be a mentor yourself one day?
 - a) How do you think it will benefit you?

11. Any other comments regarding mentoring?

Is it ok to ask you a complementing question via E-mail later on if it would be necessary?

A2 Sample Interviews

A2.1 Alfa Laval

- Company: Alfa Laval
- Gender and age: XX , XX years old
- Position in the company: XX

Mentorship setup and preconditions (15 – 20 min)

1. Do you have a mentor? *Yes.*
 - a. Have you had other mentors before? *No.*
 - b. How many? *N/A*
 - c. For how long do you have/did you have mentor? *Aug 2012 – June 2013.*
 - d. How did you find your mentor? *Through the EFL mentor partner program. I was a good matching.*
 - e. Is it a formal or informal relationship? *Formal.*
 - f. How senior is the mentor? *Senior. 1-2 levels above me.*
 - g. Approximate age of mentor? *45-50yo.*
 - h. How influential is the mentor? *Very influential.*
 - i. Is it an external or internal mentorship (from your own company or another)? *External.*
 - j. Does the mentor relationship have a relaxed atmosphere or more hierarchic? How does this affect the communication/discussions? *It is very relaxed. Fairly Relaxed. It is more like a discussion.*
2. How often did you meet/or do you meet? *Every 4-6th week.*
 - a. What do your sessions look like? *Normally we meet during lunch. Usually we go through what I was supposed to think about from the last session. I then bring up a new subject present topic I want to discuss.*
3. Did you have certain criteria's for selection of your mentor? *Yes.*
 - a. Could you specify those? *Professional or life experience, position in the company, personal characteristics, "chemical" match), respect for each other? He or she should be open, honest and that he have long experience from leadership. Mostly because I have not been manager that long, only three years. It does not matter if it is a man or a woman.*
4. Do you have a clear picture of your career path? *No I have not focused on that.*
 - a. Did mentoring affect it? *Before I had a mentor I though mentorship was mostly about finding a career path. Now it is more about develop myself as a leader and hopefully be able to use it in the future. This means I will not make a career plan, I think it is very difficult.*

5. Is there any general policy or rule in your company regarding mentorship? *We have several mentor programs. Both internal and external.*

Professional and personal development (50 – 60 min)

6. How is mentoring influencing your daily job? *It influences parts of it. There are certain tool I have started to use in my daily work. Some are very practically as for example meeting management. The mentoring also gives me an opportunity to discuss.*
- a) Regarding performance? *I have changed how I think. I do not think I have increased the performance but the quality.*
 - b) Regarding relations with people? *It has helped me to find the balance when I interfere in my teams work or not. I have done the same job as my team members some years ago so it is sometimes tempting.*
7. What major changes have mentoring initiated in your professional life? *It has given me the possibility to reflect about what I can do and what I should do.*
- e) What competence have you gained thanks to the mentorship? *Foremost leadership. To a certain degree planning.*
 - f) What competences do you primarily focus on to develop through your mentorship? *Definitely leadership. Also group dynamic.*
 - g) Have you got valuable connections thanks to the mentorship? How will you use them? *Yes. You always get along with some people better than others. I have also met some people internally as well. But the problems you ace in your work is often the same regardless what you work with.*
 - h) How have it helped you in your career development regarding position? *That you have been elected to participate in this mentor program is very positive. I think the mentor program prepare you for a career more than it works as a stepping stone. It is also a practical leadership skill to be able to have a discussion with someone. It is also a completely different relationship than with your manager.*
8. What effect have mentoring had on you as an individual? *I think I reflect more than before. I am pretty fast to have an opinion and also to communicate this opinion. The mentor program has made me think before I say it and reflect over it afterwards. I have also become better to give feedback. Another thing I have understood is that a lot of people have the same thoughts as I have. So you are never alone with the thoughts. It is also important to adapt your leadership style to the situation.*
- a) How have you grown as a person due to the mentorship? *Yes a little. You learn things. When you do you grow as a person.*
 - b) Does it help you to become a better leader? *Yes I think so. Structure and the balance between strategic work and reactive work.*
 - c) How can it sometimes be uncomfortable/painful to have a mentor? *Negative experience? The only time that could be the case is when I feel I am wasting his time. When I feel I have not prepared and planned enough.*
 - d) Have you become more confident in yourself and your actions?

A bit more self-confident. It is about realizing that you do not have to do everything entirely correct. Sometimes it is enough to reach a certain level.

Mentorship influences on the future career (15 – 20 min)

9. Do you plan to work further on your career development? *I do not have a plan. When it comes to leadership it is mostly about doing something and then evaluate if you should do it again the next time.*
- a) Do you know your next step? *It would be interesting to lead other individuals than I lead now. Maybe being manager over product managers or something.*
 - b) How will you approach it? *If you want to change job you have to really make a decision to do it. Then you can start looking for an opportunity. You also have to determine if it should be internally or externally. I think you should change work before you are dissatisfied. But you have to deliver before you can change. Otherwise you will not be satisfied with your achievement.*
 - c) Will you use your mentor to support you? *I would discuss it with the mentor, using him as a sounding board, not as a reference.*
 - d) Does your company promote internal hiring? *I would say so. They promote that you apply for internal jobs but they do not actively work with job rotation.*
10. Do you plan to be a mentor yourself one day? *Yes I think so, you learn a lot from being a mentor.*
- a) How do you think it will benefit you? *Because you have to structure your thoughts. You learn things and you build your network. If you coach you will also learn to ask the right questions not to force your opinion on someone.*
11. Any other comments regarding mentoring? *I think you should consider it carefully before you look for a mentor. You should have some clear goals. If you do not have that it might take a long time to get something out of the mentorship.*

Is it ok to ask you a complementing question via E-mail later on if it would be necessary?

Yes!

A2.2 IKEA

- Company: IKEA of Sweden AB,
- Gender and age: XX, XX years old
- Position in the company: XX

Mentorship setup and preconditions (15 – 20 min)

1. Do you have a mentor? **Not at the moment.**
 - a. Have you had other mentors before? **Yes.**
 - b. How many? **Two**
 - c. For how long do you have/did you have a mentor? **For approx. 2 years.**
 - d. How did you find your mentor? **We were working on one project together.**
 - e. Is it a formal or informal relationship? **It was informal mentorship**
 - f. How senior is the mentor? **Very senior.**
 - g. How influential is the mentor **Very influential.**
 - h. Approximate age of mentor **40+**
 - i. Is it an external or internal mentorship (from your own company or another)? **From my own company.**
 - j. Does the mentor relationship have a relaxed atmosphere or more hierarchic? How does this affect the communication/discussions? **It was very relaxed and very open. It was two ways communication.**
2. How often did you meet/or do you meet?
 - a. What do your sessions look like? **As it was informal mentorship, sessions looked very different. Sometimes we were having discussions during our project related work, talking about work and then were continuing about personal issues. Sometimes we were meeting for a cup of coffee. Always during working hours. In the beginning every second week, again in connection to project, later approximately once a month.**
3. Did you have certain criteria's for selection of your mentor? **Definitely yes.**
 - a. Could you specify those? Professional or life experience, position in the company, personal characteristics, “chemical” match), respect for each other? **Life experience and being genuine, meaning not blindly mirroring company or society rules. Sharing own opinions and reflections openly. Very knowledgeable about informal networks and leaders in the company.**
4. Do you have a clear picture of your career path? **No**

- a) Did mentoring affect it? Yes, in a way... The best opportunities cannot be planned. They just pop up. And also you change as a person over time, which can change preferences in terms of next career step.
- 5. Is there any general policy or rule in your company regarding mentorship? There is no official mentorship program. However, HR is supporting high potential by facilitating mentorship relations. In addition, informal mentorship exists where mentors and mentees find each other, build and maintain relations based on the individual goals.

Professional and personal development (50 – 60 min)

- 6. How is mentoring influencing your daily job? It helps me to focus in my reflections.
 - c) Regarding performance? – Performance was never a goal in itself, as high performance is a vital part of the assignment.
 - d) Regarding relations with people? Mentoring helped to understand unofficial structures and networks in the company and how they can influence formal decision-making. I can utilize it in daily work – faster decisions, information sharing etc. I know whom to talk to in order to get things done.
- 7. What major changes have mentoring initiated in your professional life?
 - i) What competence have you gained thanks to the mentorship? Better understanding of psychological aspects of human behavior related to leadership.
 - j) What competences do you primarily focus on to develop through your mentorship? Philosophical and psychological aspects of human behavior.
 - k) Have you got valuable connections thanks to the mentorship? How will you use them? Yes, I got good professional connections and I use them in daily work to speed up things and get information.
 - l) How has it helped you in your career development regarding position? Not much, I would say.
- 8. What effect have mentoring had on you as an individual?
 - e) How have you grown as a person due to the mentorship? I got a broader view on philosophical and psychological factors of human behavior. Now I understand better how that could be applied in my own leadership.
 - f) Does it help you to become a better leader? Yes
 - g) How can it sometimes be uncomfortable/painful to have a mentor? Negative experience? Not directly. However, sometimes you don't share the same opinions, but that is natural in life. You need to be selective and focus on what develops you as an individual.
 - h) Have you become more confident in yourself and your actions? Yes, I got more confidence by understanding informal networks. I know how to navigate within the

organization. In summary, I realize that I grew as an individual. I was looking for someone, who could give me more brain food and develop me further, and I got that.

Mentorship influences on the future career (15 – 20 min)

9. Do you plan to work further on your career development? Yes.
- e) Do you know your next step? In career development, I am not focusing on position, neither on increasing specialist knowledge. I am interested in driving change. That is why it is difficult to specify concrete positions, as such assignments usually come as an ad-hoc project.
 - f) How will you approach it? I will wait for opportunities and at the same time ask the people in my professional network to let me know if an interesting project comes up.
 - g) Will you use your mentor to support you? Yes, of course.
 - h) Does your company promote internal hiring? Yes, the company is doing internal promotions, meaning growing people inside the company.
10. Do you plan to be a mentor yourself one day? I am.
- b) How do you think it will benefit you? Mentees are normally getting promoted faster and they become a part of your professional network with all connected benefits like information sharing, coaching etc.
11. Any other comments regarding mentoring? No

Is it ok to ask you a complementing question via E-mail later on if it would be necessary? - Yes

A3 Open coding sample

- Company and working area: IKEA of Sweden AB , XX
- Gender and age: XX, XX Years old
- Position in the company: XX

Mentorship setup and preconditions (15 – 20 min)

1. Do you have a mentor? **Not at the moment.**
 - a. Have you had other mentors before? **Yes**
 - b. How many? **Two**
 - c. For how long do you have/did you have a mentor? **For approx. 2 years.**
 - d. How did you find your mentor? **We were working on one project together.**
 - e. Is it a formal or informal relationship? **It was informal mentorship as does not have official assignment as a mentor**
 - f. How senior is the mentor? **Very senior.**
 - g. How influential is the mentor? **Very influential.**
 - h. Approximate age of mentor **40+**
 - i. Is it an external or internal mentorship (from your own company or another)? **From my own company.**
 - j. Does the mentor relationship have a relaxed atmosphere or more hierarchic? How does this affect the communication/discussions? **It was very relaxed and very open. It was two ways communication.**
2. How often did you meet/or do you meet?
 - a. What do your sessions look like? **As it was informal mentorship, sessions looked very different. Sometimes we were having discussions during our project related work, talking about work and then were continuing about personal issues. Sometimes we were meeting for a cup of coffee. Always during working hours. In the beginning every second week, again in connection to project, later approximately once a month.**
3. Did you have certain criteria's for selection of your mentor? **Definitely yes.**
 - a. Could you specify those? Professional or life experience, position in the company, personal characteristics, “chemical” match), respect for each other? **Life experience and being genuine, meaning not blindly mirroring company or society rules. Sharing own opinions and reflections openly. Very knowledgeable about informal networks and leaders in the company.**
4. Do you have a clear picture of your career path? **No**

work relations as a base for men relations

positioning of the mentor from mentee's view

openness, equality

spontaneity

casual sustainability of relations

clear opinion about mentors characteristics

opportunism reflections of life values mentor as a tool for career

flexibility in career planning

shared responsibility for development

<p>b) Did mentoring affect it? Yes, in a way... The best opportunities cannot be planned. They just pop up. And also you change as a person over time, which can change preferences in terms of next career step.</p> <p>5. Is there any general policy or rule in your company regarding mentorship? There is no official mentorship program. However, HR is supporting high potential by facilitating mentorship relations. In addition, informal mentorship exists where mentors and mentees find each other, build and maintain relations based on the individual goals.</p>	<p><i>individual goals in mentorship</i></p> <p><i>thoughtfulness</i> <i>responsibility</i></p> <p><i>network as a key to decision result orientation</i></p>
<p>Professional and personal development (50 – 60 min)</p>	
<p>6. How is mentoring influencing your daily job? It helps me to focus in my reflections.</p> <p>e) Regarding performance? – Performance was never a goal in itself, as high performance is a vital part of the assignment.</p> <p>f) Regarding relations with people? Mentoring helped to understand unofficial structures and networks in the company and how they can influence formal decision-making. I can utilize it in daily work – faster decisions, information sharing etc. I know whom to talk to in order to get things done.</p>	<p><i>search for route cause, learning, possibility to influence,</i></p> <p><i>network to access the information result orientation</i> <i>mentoring did not help with position</i></p>
<p>7. What major changes have mentoring initiated in your professional life?</p> <p>m) What competence have you gained thanks to the mentorship? Better understanding of psychological aspects of human behaviour related to leadership.</p> <p>n) What competences do you primarily focus on to develop through your mentorship? Philosophical and psychological aspects of human behaviour.</p> <p>o) Have you got valuable connections thanks to the mentorship? How will you use them? Yes, I got good professional connections and I use them in daily work to speed up things and get information.</p> <p>p) How has it helped you in your career development regarding position? Not much, I would say.</p>	<p><i>underlying motives of behaviour</i></p> <p><i>self-development</i></p> <p><i>acceptance of diversity</i> <i>individual goals</i></p> <p><i>access to information</i></p> <p><i>self-development</i></p>
<p>8. What effect have mentoring had on you as an individual?</p> <p>i) How have you grown as a person due to the mentorship? I got a broader view on philosophical and psychological factors of human behaviour. Now I understand better how that could be applied in my own leadership.</p> <p>j) Does it help you to become a better leader? Yes</p> <p>k) How can it sometimes be uncomfortable/painful to have a mentor? Negative experience? Not directly. However, sometimes you don't share the same opinions, but that is natural in life. You need to be selective and focus on what develops you as an individual.</p> <p>l) Have you become more confident in yourself and your actions? Yes, I got more confidence by understanding informal networks. I know</p>	<p><i>position is not a goal</i> <i>make a difference, lead, drive changes</i></p> <p><i>spontaneity</i> <i>flexibility in career planning</i> <i>network as a source for next step</i> <i>mentor will be "used"</i> <i>company culture</i></p>

how to navigate within the organization. In summary, I realize that I grew as an individual. I was looking for someone, who could give me more brain food and develop me further, and I got that.

*mentee to include in network
access to information*

Mentorship influences on the future career (15 – 20 min)

9. Do you plan to work further on your career development? **Yes.**
- i) Do you know your next step? **In career development, I am not focusing on position, neither on increasing specialist knowledge. I am interested in driving change. That is why it is difficult to specify concrete positions, as such assignments usually come as a ad-hoc project.**
 - j) How will you approach it? **I will wait for opportunities and at the same time ask the people in my professional network to let me know if an interesting project comes up.**
 - k) Will you use your mentor to support you? **Yes, of course.**
 - l) Does your company promote internal hiring? **Yes, the company is doing internal promotions, meaning growing people inside the company.**
10. Do you plan to be a mentor yourself one day? **I am.**
- c) How do you think it will benefit you? **Mentees are normally getting promoted faster and they become a part of your professional network with all connected benefits like information sharing, coaching etc.**
11. Any other comments regarding mentoring? **No**

Is it ok to ask you a complementing question via E-mail later on if it would be necessary? - **Yes**

A4 Reference Interviews

A4.1 Bertil Rasmusson

Industrial Background

HR director at Gambro, HR director at CARDO and temporary HR director at Axis Communication.

Mentor program organizer.

Have worked a lot with teaching adults through IFL.

The methodology behind mentorship is not very difficult. The difficulties lie in the execution. It is about having people skills and about relations.

The industry can learn a lot from each other.

Important aspects regarding mentorship:

Independence, mentor and mentee must be entirely independent of each other.

Trust, it is of vital importance to create trust. This is why the mentor and mentee should never come from the same company. They must be able to speak in confidence. Usually I do not even have any mentors at all from any of the mentee companies in the same program. This because there should not be any doubt at all that the information will spread to a manager in the mentees own company, all this to ease up the trust building.

Another important factor is diversity. We always try to match together people from different backgrounds. So a mentee from one kind of company will get a mentor from an entirely different kind. This is to increase creativity and also increase the amount they have to learn from each other. There is also less risk one will tempt the other to start working with them instead. We do not want to promote cross recruiting between the companies. We are not building a recruiting network. We do want them to create personal developing networks though.

When choosing a mentor you cannot just walk into a company and saying that we need five mentors. It must be done in the opposite order that you meet somebody that you feel that he or she works in a way that would fit perfectly as a mentor.

An important aspect with mentorship is that it often continues over a longer period of time, our program is for 1,5 year. Since leaders is working with changing behavior this is very important. To learn a new behavior you must be exposed to the information for a longer period of time compared what is necessary for normal information. The reason for this is that you will need time for personal reflection.

There are not so many different versions or methodologies of mentorship. We try to integrate the company of the mentee as much as possible to they get the company more engaged and involved.

The most important things with mentorship are:

- Independence and trust.
- Time.
- Close to reality. That the things they learn should be relevant and easy to apply in their tasks.
- The matching of the mentor and mentee. The mentor should for example be at least 15 years older to get enough knowledge and authority.

What does the mentor get out if the relationship?

- For a long time a thought it was just a cliché but they joy of seeing a young person grow seem to be one of the main benefits.
- The mentors learn a lot as well.
- Get a feeling of being knowledgeable, a confirmation.
- Get new networks.

Any negative sides of mentorship?

- They maybe would have been able to learn more on other ways using the same time.
- You might get very criticized so you must be able to handle that.
- Sometimes the mentor thinks that the mentee is too lacy.

Difference with informal/formal mentorship?

- It will be more difficult to get structure in a spontaneous mentorship.
- It would most likely become more of an ad-hoc situation. You call just for a specific situation when you need that information.
- Informal program have no competition. A mentor program must be able to sell and does therefore have to reach a certain level. Therefore the program will have a higher merit value since the level will be more obvious for an external person.

The relationship will change over time. In the beginning it will be maybe 90% talk regarding work and 10% concerning relations and persons. Over time when the mentor and mentee start to get to know each other the discussions about work will decline and talk about relations and persons will increase. It is a natural step in the development of the relationship.

The mentor program should satisfy the need for development for both the mentee and his or hers company, the priority is the mentee though.

Regarding personal development Sweden have come very far. In France for example they would never talk about personal development.

Important success factors for mentorship:

- Trust
- Learning
- Safety
- Long sightedness – Long exposure

Some companies have an instrumental view on mankind. It has to be humanistic. They treat leadership as it was a transaction when it should be treated as a transformation.

Regarding length of program – Diminishing marginal utility

Ikea have more of a sponsor (Sv. fadder) program and not mentorprogram. The purpose of the sponsor program is so learn the sponsee the values of ikea. A normal mentor program should widen the perspective and increase the creativity of the mentee. Hence, the function is almost the opposite.

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School of management in Blekinge.

Consultant in leadership and adviser in top management coaching.

Participated in the development of the executive MBA at EFL.

Worked at the MIL institute with leadership development.

Which are the most Important aspects regarding mentorship?

That the mentee thinks through way he or she wants a mentor. What development they see that they can benefit from a mentorship. It is also very important to learn the difference between mentor and coach. What is the most suiting for someone is a matter of personality of the mentee/coachee.

Who gains from the mentorship?

The mentee will feel more confident in his or hers role as a manager. The mentee will also learn how to pick up learnings faster/ more efficient. He or she will also become better on reflecting over personal thoughts. The mentee will also learn how to handle specific situations.

The mentor will experience an ego boost by feeling that somebody needs him or her. It is also a common feeling that the mentor, who probably have come rather far in his or her career, enjoy the feeling of paying back the luck and help they have got through the years. They will also learn a lot themselves since they will get questions they have to answer that they have never thought about before. It is a way for them to vitalizing themselves and their knowledge.

For the company it is a method to keep a good employee. They will probably also get a more competent and well-functioning employee. The key person is though the mentee, if the mentee is not satisfied or are gaining any knowledge, no one will gain on the mentorship.

Which are the most important success factors for a good mentorship?

A trustful relation is the most important. Important is also to have the strength to terminate the mentorship if the mentor-mentee relation does not work. The mentee should not feel obligated to continue of gratefulness to the mentor. It is advisable to meet a couple of times to see how you fit together before you decide to engage in a mentor relation. It is positive if the mentee have reached a certain level of maturity before entering a mentorship. If the only purpose is to get a job with higher position he or she is not ready. It is also important the mentee dare to speak his or her mind. If the power distance is too high it will just be a monologue from the mentor with no good discussions. One

can say that if the mentee cannot talk about this issue, the distance is too big.

What should a mentor-mentee session look like?

The most common model is the GROW model. Goal, Reality, Opportunities and Reality. There are heaps of different models thought.

Difference between formal and informal mentorship?

It does not necessarily have to be any difference. Both have pros and cons. In an informal mentorship you have to be careful who you chose. I would for example not recommend having your manager as your mentor since that relationship would be very complicated. There are also risks with formal but internal mentor programs since they are not under competition you do not know if they are good or not. Just because someone is a manager does not mean he is suitable to be a mentor. In an informal mentorship it can be recommended to formalize the relationship a little bit so it is clear who have what role and define the relationships purpose. External mentor programs sometimes include educational elements which of course can be seen as an extra bonus. Top managers sometimes have networks, as for example Hjärntrusten, where they discuss certain questions in groups. Another network for female mentees only is Ruterdam.