

Academic Paper

Proposing the mentor development journey to facilitate engaged mentoring in a multinational corporation

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Abstract

In the fiercely competitive international business environment organisations need to actively engage in attracting, recruiting, and retaining top talent. Mentoring as a key part of talent management is pertinent, especially in the context of multinational corporations that employ diverse employees from across the globe. The study utilised a mixed-methods approach, commencing with a pre-assessment of mentors' competencies and psychological mindsets which informed the design of a mentor development journey. The latter was applied as an intervention to prepare mentors to provide engaged mentoring within a selected organisation. Findings show that the mentor development journey enhanced the competencies and psychological mindsets of mentors.

Keywords

mentoring, mentor development journey, mentor competencies, psychological mindsets

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Introduction

Mentoring and the implementation of mentoring plans constitutes a major activity, especially for large multinational corporations. The prevalence of failed mentoring programmes, including in multinational corporations, is well documented (see Mendenhall, Oddou & Mendenhall, 2017; Tung, 2011; Zhuanga, Wu & Wen, 2013). The high failure rate of mentoring programmes often results in strained mentor–mentee relationships that not only ruin work relationships, but also waste valuable time, resources, and money (Goldgrab, 2019; Robinson, 2014; Straus, Johnson, Marquez & Feldman, 2013). It is thus imperative that mentoring be a well-planned and coordinated effort.

Mentoring programmes need to be in place before mentors are appointed (Gandhi & Johnson, 2016). Like anyone stepping into a new role, mentors are more likely to succeed if they participate in a constructive mentor development programme prior to becoming mentors. According to

Erickson, Noonan, Brussow and Carter (2017), mentors require specific competencies that enable them to build healthy relationships with mentees. These include effective communication, active listening, rapport building, gaining of trust, goal setting, and the ability to give constructive feedback and to influence others (Wilson, 2012). Such competencies need to be supported by a positive psychological mindset which includes displaying positive emotions, building positive relationships, and caring for the overall wellness of mentees.

Previous research (see Brashear, Bellenger & Boles, 2006; Sange & Srivastava, 2012) confirms that mentoring boosts the confidence of mentees and enhances positive emotions, motivation, and organisational commitment. Moreover, it lowers not only employee turnover intention, but also actual employee turnover. In a study on United States Army officers, findings showed that positive mentoring relationships reduced the likelihood of turnover by up to 38% (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004) further found that mentored employees earned better remuneration and were more frequently promoted compared to employees who were not mentored. With regard to multinational corporations Chen and Vogel (2016) found that mentoring improves tacit knowledge transfer in these corporations. Md Yusoff, Kassim and Seenivasa (2011) reported that the absence of mentoring in multinational corporations was a stumbling block to the development of female managers in India. Research on mentoring within multinational corporations is scant. Thus, the value of this study lies in its contribution towards the limited body of research.

The current study was based on a single multinational corporation that employs around 45 000 employees from 119 countries. The company depends on the competencies of both expatriates and local talent; in other words, it has a culturally diverse workforce. In the past, this corporation experienced a plethora of failed mentoring programmes which resulted in failed assignments, increased staff turnover and, ultimately, a loss of revenue. After an internal investigation, management found that most of the challenges were related to interpersonal relationships and communication challenges between the mentors and mentees.

Extant literature reveals similar challenges, emphasising discordant relationships between mentors and mentees as a major stumbling block (Garringer, 2006). In addressing this problem, the study used an intervention-based approach to gauge and develop the competencies and psychological mindsets of mentors. First, a literature review was done followed by a pre-assessment of mentors. The findings were then used to design a mentor development journey. After the three-month intervention, mentors were assessed again. The results enabled the researchers to offer pertinent recommendations for mentoring in the context of a multinational corporation.

Literature Review

The literature review discusses the meaning and importance of mentor competencies and psychological mindsets in supporting positive organisational relationships and development. As the researchers advocate positive organisational relationships, especially related to mentor–mentee relationships, the PERMA model of Seligman (2002) served as theoretical framework for the study. This will be explained below.

The importance of mentor competencies

Armstrong (2010) explains ‘mentorship’ as helping employees to learn and enhance their understanding of their jobs including the required competencies they need. Wong and Premkumar (2007) argue that mentorship is a learning process where beneficial, mutual, personal, and reciprocal relationships are established. The term ‘mentor’ is generally used to refer to a person who has broad and profound knowledge; hence they can teach and guide the inexperienced to gain the desired workplace knowledge and competencies (Thompson, 2019; Zhuanga *et al.*, 2013). In general, mentors provide mentees with access to information, resources and opportunities, as

well as career support and reaching job objectives (Bouquillon, Sosik & Lee, 2005; Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

The roles of a mentor are shaped by the type, focus, and structure of the mentoring relationship. A mentor can follow multiple approaches in a single mentoring relationship; hence the need for mentors and mentees to collectively decide on the nature of their engagements. This can include both formal and informal mentoring. Formal mentoring is usually driven by organisational processes with specified objectives and outcomes. On the other hand, informal mentoring is more flexible and unstructured, which can involve organisational learning by means of networking with colleagues. Mentoring should continuously foster positive relationships, respect, and trust between mentors and mentees (El Din, 2011; Page, 2015).

The following mentor competencies were explored in this study: self and behavioural awareness, business and professional understanding, communication, commitment to own learning, helping others to learn, relationship management, goal clarity, active listening, rapport building, gaining trust, setting goals, and providing constructive feedback. These competencies were identified in the research of Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Moss and Yeo (2005) and Fleming, House, Hanson, Yu, Garbutt, McGee, Kroenke, Abedin and Rubio (2013).

Developing psychological mindsets

Because this study supported the development and advancement of positive and collegial relationships in organisations, there was a pertinent focus on the psychological mindsets of mentors. The notion of positive psychological mindsets hails from the field of psychology (which aims to identify, understand, forecast, and change/control human behaviour) and particularly positive psychology, which is the study of human ideas, feelings, and behaviour based on individual strengths rather than flaws (Seligman, 2002).

Positive psychology aims to identify the strengths and unique talents of individuals (in this study, mentors) by shifting focus towards increasing positive emotions and self-confidence, and enhancing goal setting and achieving targets (Aditomo, 2015; Avais, Wassan, Chandio & Shaikh, 2014; Khan, 2021; Lawson, 2016).

According to Gunderson, Gripshover, Romero, Dweck, Goldin-Meadow and Levine (2013), psychological mindsets are formed in the formative or childhood stages of individual development. This occurs mostly by means of praising (expressing admiration or approval) and labelling (or describing) a person. For instance, when children are praised and labelled 'smart', the message they receive instils a mentality that they have an ability to perform a task or reach an objective. On the other hand, a lack of praise and negative labelling can have the opposite effect (Cherry, 2020; Dweck, 1999; Gunderson *et al.*, 2013).

Apart from positive psychology, three other fields of psychology contribute to the conception of the mentoring process, namely cognitive psychology (which seeks to understand how people perceive, learn, remember, and think about occurrences); organisational and industrial psychology (which considers the influence of the physical environment and organisational culture on individual behaviour); and educational psychology (which seeks to understand how individuals comprehend, learn, and retain new information) (Neisser, 2003; Weathington, Bergman & Bergman, 2014).

There is a strong relationship between cognitive psychology and mentoring as the mentor attempts to understand how mentees acquire, store, process, and use new and existing information (Akbari, Behzadpoor & Dadvand, 2010). Related to industrial and organisational psychology, the mentor seeks to develop mentees that function effectively in the organisational context (Cable & O'Driscoll, 2010). Educational psychology relates to mentee learning and the acquisition of competencies and acceptable behaviours that enable them to fit in as part of the organisation. This, in turn, engenders

cognitive processes like comprehension, learning, and memory (Mukundan & Kalajahi, 2013; Schoeman, 2018).

Theoretical framework

Positive psychology underpins the PERMA model and therefore emphasises the development of positive relationships that can enrich a mentor's life and work interactions (Ackerman, 2018). The PERMA model has five components that apply directly to effective mentoring: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (Lopez, Pedrotti & Snyder, 2014; Seligman, 2010).

Positive emotions relate to individual emotions such as joy, gratitude, and love. *Engagement* encapsulates the extent to which individuals are immersed in their work and the pleasure they derive from their jobs and life in general (Butler & Kern, 2016; Stuart & Jose, 2014). Being engaged requires cognition, thought, and emotion at an individual level (Stuart & Jose, 2014). Because positive experiences are related to one's interaction with other people, *relationships* are a crucial component. Maintaining positive relationships can contribute to employees' feeling less lonely and more happy, which, in turn, impacts positively on their wellbeing (Chopik & O'Brien, 2017; Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

Good relationships and social connection among employees enhance self-esteem and community, which, again, increases a sense of *meaning*. Meaning relates to a sense of worth that individuals derive from relationships, creativity, generosity, etc. Relationships can thus enhance meaning and a sense of community with others in the workplace. In many cases, the workplace has become the substitute for the traditional family or communal units from which many modern employees have become alienated (Butler & Kern, 2016; Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan & Kauffman, 2017). *Accomplishments* refer to the desire to achieve or accomplish a goal for its own ends, which can contribute to engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2018).

Methodology

The philosophical stance of the study adhered to critical realism as the researchers believe that both absolute truths and people's subjective opinions are valid ways of looking at reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). The study was also directed at solving a real-world problem, namely, to develop mentor-mentee relationships in a multinational corporation (Morgan, 2014). The study applied a mixed-methods approach and a case study design as it was focused on a single multinational corporation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants

The target population for this study was 15 mentors which constituted the mentoring team of the corporation. The demographic composition of the respondents is displayed in table 1 below.

Most participants were males, and the majority were between 31 and 40 years of age. Most participants were from middle management and the majority had a tenure of between six and 10 years. Forty-seven per cent (47%) of participants had mentoring experience of between four and six years. Twenty per cent (20%) of participants had a PhD qualification.

Table 1: Demographic composition of respondents

Gender	Females 33% Males 67%
Age	20 to 30 years 7% 31 to 40 years 53% 41 to 50 years 27% 51 and above 13%
Position	Artisan 7% Supervisor 7% Engineer 40% Junior management 7% Middle management 32% Senior management 7%
Tenure	1 to 5 years 13% 6 to 10 years 40% 11 to 15 years 27% 16 to 20 years 13% 21 and above 7%
Years of mentoring experience	1 to 3 years 33% 4 to 6 years 47% 7 and above 20%
Highest qualification	Bachelor's 13% Honours 20% Master's 47% PhD 20%

Source: Authors' own construction

Procedure and data collection

The study was conducted in three phases. In phase 1 respondents were requested to complete a questionnaire, and in-depth interviews were conducted to ascertain their competencies and psychological mindsets. This was the pre-test phase. The literature study and the pre-test informed the design of the mentor development journey (phase 2). After the three-month mentor development journey was completed, respondents were requested to again complete the questionnaire followed by another structured in-depth interview (phase 3) to ascertain the developments/outcomes that flowed from the mentor development journey.

After obtaining permission from the multinational corporation to conduct the study, participants were contacted individually to secure their participation in the study. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents' identity and data were confirmed and clearly communicated in writing before the commencement of the study. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary.

Measure

The mixed-methods data gathering was conducted in two phases: the quantitative phase involved the completion of a questionnaire (pre- and post-intervention), and the qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews with respondents (pre- and post-intervention). Both phases are detailed below.

Quantitative phase: Self-assessment questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to allow mentors to reflect on their own competencies and psychological mindsets (Brown & Harris, 2013; Panadero, Brown & Courtney, 2014; Tan, 2013). The questionnaire was informed by the PERMA model of Seligman (2002) and the research of Berk *et al.* (2005) and Fleming *et al.* (2013). The questionnaire was administered using Microsoft Forms and respondents received a link to complete the questionnaire online.

Qualitative phase: Structured in-depth interview

For the qualitative part of the study, in-depth interviews captured the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the company's headquarters in Abu Dhabi. As this was during the Covid-19 period all safety protocols were adhered to (e.g., negative Covid-19 results, wearing of masks, sanitising, and social distancing). Owing to the stringent security policies of the corporation, the main researcher was not allowed to record the interviews. Instead, comprehensive notes were taken during the interviews and read back to respondents to ensure their accuracy.

Data analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test which compared the pre- and post- mentor development scores for mentor competencies and psychological mindsets.

Regarding the qualitative data analysis, Saunders *et al.* (2007) state that there is no standardised approach to present qualitative findings. Qualitative researchers use inductive reasoning, make observations, and then draw inferences about larger and more general phenomena. For this investigation a thematic content analysis was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the collected interview responses (Kim & Kuljis, 2010; Mayring, 2000). The following themes emanated from the responses: 1) competencies of effective mentors, 2) the ability to form positive relationships and display positive emotions, and 3) the ability to accomplish mentoring goals. Focusing on these themes allowed the researchers to make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences of mentors.

Results

The section below details both the quantitative and qualitative results, as well as the design of the mentor development journey.

Quantitative and qualitative results

As a large percentage of items deviated from normality, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed to compare the pre- and post-intervention scores (Laerd Statistics, 2018; 2019). Cronbach's alpha scores were 0.931 and 0.698 for the mentor competency and psychological mindsets sections respectively, which indicate acceptable reliability.

The **pre- and post- mentor development scores** are presented in tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Pre- and post- mentor development results for mentor competencies

Item	Mentor competencies	N	Pre-mean scores	Post-mean scores	Mean difference	Z-value	P-value
2.1	My mentoring approach contributes to mentees finding meaning in their jobs.	15	3.27	4.87	1.6	3.097	0.002
2.2	I am well acquainted with the roles and responsibilities of being a mentor.	15	3.27	5.33	2.06	3.220	0.001
2.3	I am well acquainted with the roles and responsibilities of mentees.	15	3.33	5.20	1.87	3.209	0.001
2.4	I can communicate effectively with mentees from different cultural, language and religious groups.	15	3.53	4.93	1.4	3.111	0.002
2.5	I practise empathic listening.	15	3.47	4.93	1.46	3.236	0.001
2.6	In partnership with the mentee, I support and guide them to set realistic goals.	15	3.87	5.00	1.13	2.984	0.003
2.7	I can provide constructive feedback to mentees.	15	3.60	4.80	1.2	3.140	0.002
2.8	I can stimulate creativity in mentees.	15	4.07	4.40	0.33	1.667	0.096*

Item	Mentor competencies	N	Pre-mean scores	Post-mean scores	Mean difference	Z-value	P-value
2.9	I provide networking opportunities to mentees.	15	4.13	4.87	0.74	2.230	0.026
2.10	I can effectively manage my own time and energy.	15	3.20	4.13	0.93	2.739	0.006
2.11	I prioritise my mentoring engagements.	15	3.53	4.73	1.2	2.694	0.007
2.12	I can effectively support mentees to identify future career opportunities/aspirations.	15	3.93	4.87	0.94	2.558	0.011
2.13	I effectively support mentees to bridge developmental gaps.	15	4.27	4.80	0.53	1.705	0.088*
2.14	I am well acquainted with the corporation's mentoring plans and tools.	15	3.40	5.00	1.6	3.114	0.002
2.15	I follow the corporation's mentoring plan.	15	4.00	4.67	0.67	2.140	0.032
2.16	My mentoring approach helps mentees understand work-related expectations.	15	4.13	4.87	0.74	2.157	0.031
2.17	My mentoring approach support mentees to find innovative solutions to challenges.	15	4.00	5.07	1.07	2.539	0.011
2.18	I praise mentees when they excel.	15	4.07	5.00	0.93	2.558	0.011

*Indicates no statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention scores

Source: Authors' own construction

Table 2 indicates that the mentor development journey had a positive impact on all mentor competencies, except for two items: Question 2.8 'I can stimulate creativity in mentees' (0.096) and question 2.13 'I effectively support mentees to bridge developmental gaps' (0.088).

Table 3: Pre- and post- mentor development results for psychological mindset

Item	Psychological mindset	N	Pre-mean scores	Post-mean scores	Mean difference	Z-value	P-value
3.1	I invite and welcome feedback from mentees for my own developmental purposes.	15	3.93	4.60	1.22	-2.232	0.026
3.2	I can develop good inter-personal relationships with mentees.	15	3.80	4.67	1.32	-2.266	0.023
3.3	I understand inter-cultural differences and associated challenges in a multinational setting.	15	4.00	4.13	1.07	-0.707	0.480*
3.4	I can comprehend both the personal and work-related challenges of mentees.	15	4.07	4.67	1.10	-1.983	0.047
3.5	I can create a safe space for mentees to excel, shine, and build confidence.	15	3.73	4.73	0.88	-2.762	0.006
3.6	I regard myself as a positive role model for other mentors.	15	4.07	4.73	1.10	-2.332	0.020
3.7	I can gain the trust of mentees.	15	3.80	4.80	0.94	-2.719	0.007
3.8	I can motivate mentees.	15	3.73	4.67	1.28	-2.547	0.011
3.9	I can effectively resolve conflict with my mentees.	15	3.80	5.00	0.94	-3.166	0.002
3.10	My mentoring approach helps the mentee to develop a clear sense of purpose.	15	3.80	4.33	1.08	-2.271	0.023
3.11	I support mentees in developing a growth mindset.	15	3.87	5.00	0.92	-3.213	0.001
3.12	I maintain a positive attitude throughout my interaction with mentees.	15	3.67	4.40	1.11	-2.653	0.008
3.13	In setting goals, I have a clear vision of what I personally want to achieve.	15	3.80	4.40	1.15	-2.251	0.024
3.14	I focus on the strengths of mentees rather than their weaknesses.	15	3.53	4.87	1.19	-2.862	0.004
3.15	I interact with mentees in ways that promote positive behaviour.	15	3.87	4.87	1.06	-3.035	0.002
3.16	I maintain meaningful and fulfilling relationships with mentees even after the formal mentoring stops.	15	3.47	4.00	1.13	-2.271	0.023
3.17	I display compassion and concern towards the challenges faced by mentees.	15	3.67	4.67	1.11	-2.683	0.007
3.18	I am receptive to ideas from mentees.	15	3.93	4.73	0.88	-2.762	0.006

*Indicates no statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention scores

Source: Authors' own construction

Table 3 shows that the mentor development journey had a positive impact on all psychological mindsets of mentors except for one: Question 3.3 'I understand inter-cultural differences and associated challenges in a multinational setting' (0.480).

The qualitative findings revealed that the major factor related to the low level of mentor competencies recorded in the pre-test (table 2) was a lack of training and development opportunities. The mentors strongly felt that they needed training opportunities to improve their mentor competencies. This notion is supported by Azman and Jui (2014) who noted that communication, support, and mentee performance are closely connected to an effective mentoring programme. Furthermore, empathic listening is critical in mentoring relationships, acting as incentive for mentees to participate in the programme (Rodriguez, Dolan & Brady, 2018). According to Rodriguez, et al. (2018), empathy is crucial as it supports the processes that sustain the mentoring relationship over time, such as friendship and reciprocal understanding.

Another factor raised by mentors involved their tenure at the organisation. In the pre-assessment mentors who have been working for the company for less than five years displayed the lowest mentor competencies. They indicated the lack of mentor development programmes as the major cause. This finding supports the need for continuous mentor development and the need for structured mentoring programmes (Aderibigbe, Gray & Colucci-Gray, 2018; Trevethan 2017). The qualitative findings also revealed that mentors did not fully understand the concept of 'meaning' and how mentees can develop a sense of meaning. At its core, meaning and meaningful work enhance the motivation, effort, and productivity of employees as they adopt attitudes of ownership, responsibility, and citizenship towards their organisation, while simultaneously experiencing greater wellbeing, health, and belongingness (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

The literature review, as well as the findings of the pre-test, informed the design of the mentor development journey, which will be discussed in the next section.

Designing the mentor development journey

In designing the mentor development journey, a modular blended learning approach was followed. Blended learning includes a teaching and learning process that incorporates both face-to-face teaching and Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017). Blended learning was chosen because the ICT component assisted in minimising instructor–mentor physical contact as part of the safety measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. The blended learning approach also allowed instructors and mentors to work both online and offline; thus mentors were afforded more time to develop creative and cooperative exercises. A range of delivery methodologies were spread out across the different modules to ensure mentor engagement and to accelerate development. These included the following:

- *Concept development through in-person instructor-led training sessions:* These sessions allowed for engagement with mentors. One major advantage was the fact that experienced instructors facilitated the presentation of instructor-led training and instructor-led mentoring. This, in turn, allowed mentors to get feedback immediately from the instructors (Gross, Ling, Richardson & Quan, 2022).
- *Concept development through virtual instructor-led training sessions:* Instructor-led virtual training entails mentor teaching via recorded videos that can be accessed at any time (Stöhr, Demazière & Adawi, 2020). Given that the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, instructor-led virtual learning enabled participants to communicate in real time. The pandemic increased interest in synchronous virtual online training (AlAteeq, Aljhani & AlEesa, 2020).

- *Simulations and case studies*: Simulations and case studies were adopted as teaching methods in the mentor development journey. The advantage of simulations and case studies are that they provide mentors with the opportunity to practise solving job-related challenges. Both simulations and case studies presented mentors with opportunities for reflection and feedback on the decisions made throughout the process, resulting in enhanced comprehension of the problem and potential solutions (Daggett & McNulty, 2014).
- *E-learning*: Unlike instructor-led virtual training, e-learning offers a broader environment in which to find mentorship resources. Among these were the utilisation of YouTube videos, Blackboard, social media, and other internet-based learning applications. According to Mohsin and Sulaiman (2016), e-training equips mentors with problem-solving, analytical skills, specialised knowledge, and character attributes required to build successful and competent mentees who will benefit the organisation.
- *Role play and interactive learning using mentoring toolkits*: In a multinational context, the usage of role play in the mentor development journey was suitable. Role play is a strategy that allows mentors to gain expertise by acting out roles in case situations and providing practise and feedback (Lekhi & Nussbaum, 2015). The relevance of role plays in transforming theoretical ideas into an actual format for mentoring is emphasised by Chlup and Collins (2010). Mentors were able to place themselves in circumstances they had never encountered before. This allowed them to empathise with and comprehend other people's motivations, which, in turn, affected behavioural and attitudinal changes (Chlup & Collins, 2010).
- *Experiential learning through application*: The experiential learning paradigm emphasises the relevance of mentee engagement in all learning processes and addresses the question of how experience influences learning (Zhai, Gu, Liu, Liang & Tsai, 2017). The mentor development journey used experiential learning to improve mentors' conceptual knowledge and to apply what they have learned to real-world challenges (Guo, Yao, Wang, Yang & Zong, 2016). Giving mentees additional authority and responsibility, as well as integrating them directly in the mentoring programme, is part of this.

The mentor development journey included formal modular competency assessments and all modules contained a final assessment to ensure that participants understood the content. The assessment consisted of a combination of 10 explanatory and multiple-choice questions. The pass mark for each module was 80% and mentors were allowed to retake the assessment if a mark of less than 80% was obtained. Table 4 details the modules that formed part of the mentor development journey.

After the completion of the three-month mentor development journey the questionnaire was administered again, and a second round of in-depth interviews were conducted.

The findings of the post-assessment of mentors revealed that the mentor development journey improved both mentor competencies and psychological mindsets (see tables 2 and 3). For example, it enabled mentors to not only develop a sense of meaning, but also to better comprehend its importance. It also allowed mentors to better understand their roles and responsibilities, and to receive and give feedback. It encouraged mentors to be part of the company's mentoring plan, to provide mentee support, bridge developmental gaps, stimulate creativity, and improve networking. The findings also revealed that the mentor development journey significantly improved mentors' ability to communicate, listen empathically, set realistic goals, manage their time and apply the principles and tools required by the company (see tables 2 and 3).

From the findings, it became clear that the mentor development journey resulted in a significant improvement in mentors' abilities to engage and communicate with mentees. Owing to the mentor development journey mentors experienced greater self-esteem and self-knowledge to accomplish their own career goals. Other competencies that improved were empathic listening, giving feedback, setting realistic goals, accomplishing goals, giving praise, displaying positive emotions, as well as building positive relationships.

Table 4: Mentor development journey modules

Module 1	Introduction to mentoring (types, functions, and benefits)
Module 2	Difference between coaching and mentoring
Module 3	Roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees
Module 4	Mentoring pitfalls and risk management
Module 5	Mentee goal setting and personal development plans
Module 6	Fixed mindset vs growth mindset
Module 7	Individual learning preferences (learning styles)
Module 8	Myers-Briggs personality types
Module 9	Brain-based conversation theories
Module 10	NLP techniques 101
Module 11	Emotional intelligence and psychological safety
Module 12	Habits (developing new and discarding the old)
Module 13	Mentor–mentee relationship management
Module 14	Building rapport with a mentee
Module 15	Building and maintaining trust with a mentee
Module 16	Conflict management
Module 17	Effective communication and influencing
Module 18	Empathic listening (listening for potential)
Module 19	Giving and seeking feedback
Module 20	Motivation and encouragement of personal growth in mentees
Module 21	Effective questioning skills
Module 22	Having difficult performance conversations
Module 23	Fostering collaboration and engagement with mentees
Module 24	Mentoring plan and tools
Module 25	Managing your own time and energy

Source: Authors' own construction

Conclusion

Given the challenges of the post-Covid-19 world of work it is imperative for mentoring programmes to be flexible and adaptable. Mentoring needs to actively engage mentors and invest in their personal and professional development. The use of ICT is also critical for mentor development in the new world of work, as well as a combination of learning techniques like instructor-led training sessions, simulations, case studies, e-learning, role plays, and experiential learning through application.

This study provided evidence of the importance of mentoring especially in the context of a multinational corporation. Multinational corporations typically have large organisational structures. This implies more complex organisational processes and the necessity to manage pertinent issues like workforce diversity and job performance. In addition, all of this occurs amid the challenges of the new world of work, for example, increased virtualisation and digitalisation.

Professional and personal growth is central to mentor development, and organisations must commit and support mentors by allocating appropriate resources and providing targeted training and development. According to Garza, Reynosa, Werner, Duchaine and Harter (2019), mentoring programmes must deliver professional development opportunities that are tailored to the needs of the organisation, mentors, and mentees.

The following recommendations emanated from the mentor development journey proposed by this study:

- Technology-enhancement tools should be used to foster reflective activities, such as videotaping and peer evaluation.
- Mentors must be exposed to the principles of effective feedback by employing a variety of methods such as role play, recapping content, and asking probing questions.

- Scientific literature should be drawn upon to inform and enhance the professional and personal growth of mentors.
- The communication skills of mentors need to be fostered to improve mentoring relationships.
- Best practices in mentoring should be focused on, such as designing meeting agendas, facilitating teamwork, and employing mentorship strategies for instance providing constructive feedback, emphasising active listening, and inspiring mentees.
- Modules need to provide easy access to online resources and information that mentors could access at any time.
- Formal assessment needs to be part of mentor development. In the mentor development journey mentors had to obtain 80% for each module.
- Assessments must be flexible and mentors should be allowed to repeat assessments, if necessary.

Limitations

The study was conducted at a single multinational corporation.

Areas for further research

The study can be replicated in other multinational corporations.

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