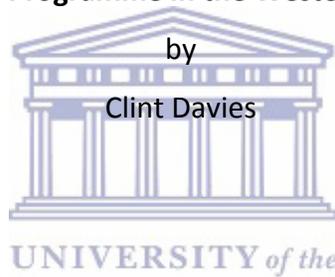




UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning
The Case of a Support Programme in the Western Cape Clothing Sector



by
Clint Davies

A mini – thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Commerce in the School of Business and Finance, University of the Western Cape.

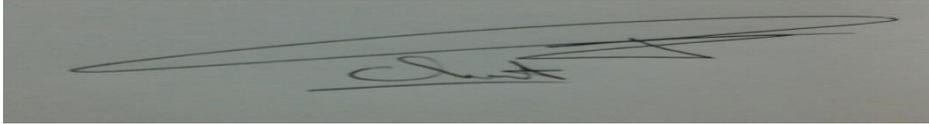
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

March 2017

Supervisor: Professor Philip Hirschsohn

Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.



Signed



Acknowledgments

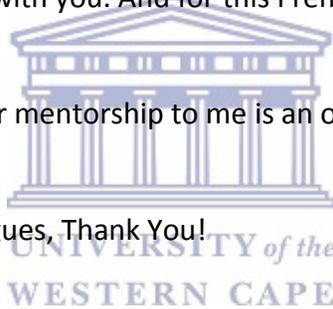
Thank you to the participants who generously gave their time to make this research possible. Without you, there is no research.

Thank you Prof Philip Hirschsohn; words fail to express my complete gratitude and admiration. Thank for sticking it out with me Prof, I don't really know who gave each other more anguish...

On a more serious note: "who will we learn from, when those we learn from are no longer there." These words are dedicated to you. They are not my own words, I remember them from a conversation concerning you. I believe they reflect just how much learning so many of us have opportunity for, when we engage with you. And for this I remain forever thankful.

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Abstract

How entrepreneurs learn to cope and survive in the South African clothing sector, with its high levels of macro-environment turbulence, may engender particular lessons for entrepreneurial learning and related outcomes such as business innovation. Although SME support measures worldwide offer mentorship to assist firm survival and growth, little is known about how entrepreneurs learn under the guidance of a mentor. Formal mentorship is employed with increased frequency as a training intervention suited to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial learning is linked to experiential learning in the personal development of the entrepreneur and development of the business venture. Formal mentorship as a medium to enhance entrepreneurial learning is the focus of this study.

Past research does not adequately address entrepreneurial learning in the context of prolonged turbulent competitive environments, and the role of formal mentorship as a significant contributor to entrepreneurial learning. This qualitative case study is set within the clothing industry of the Western Cape, which is affected by high levels of competitive turbulence. Entrepreneurs and their mentor's accounts are collected through unstructured and semi-structured personal interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. The mentors are contracted to an organisation that provides business development support to SMEs within the clothing sector. Key participants within this organisation, and their sponsor, are interviewed to study strategic influences on formal mentorship. This constitutes the case and a purposive-snowball sampling strategy was employed.

The research shows how strategic sponsorship agreements influence the functions and roles that mentors adopt within a top-down approach to mentoring. While formal mentorship provides a valuable intervention as a training mechanism in the SME sector, a propensity for technically driven mentoring outcomes is specific to the clothing industry case. While entrepreneurial learning is associated with formal mentorship, it does not necessarily influence business innovation.

Key Words: entrepreneurial learning, formal mentorship, organisational support, business performance, business innovation, SME, clothing industry

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List of Acronyms

AGM: Annual General Meeting

ATC: Agreement on Textiles and Clothing

CMT: Cut, Make and Trim

EET: Entrepreneurship Education and Training

EL: Entrepreneurial Learning

GATT: General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs

GEM: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

MFA: Multi-Fibre Agreement

NBC: National Bargaining Council

SA: South Africa

SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority

SME: Small and Medium Size Enterprises

SMME: Small, Micro and Medium Size Enterprises

TEA: Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurship



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Entrepreneurship in South Africa is performing poorly. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) South Africa (SA), reports very low levels of entrepreneurial activity including a drop of 34% in total early-stage entrepreneurship activity (TEA) in 2014 compared to 2013 (Herrington, Kew, P and Kew, J 2015). Much lower numbers of entrepreneurs are setting up businesses in South Africa, and furthermore, few survive beyond 42 months. This dire situation contributes to the high unemployment rate in SA (highest in sub-Saharan Africa), particularly amongst the youth (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/>, retrieved 20 June 2015).

In South Africa 3.4% of the adult population aged between 18 and 64 years are self-employed in established businesses, older than 42 months. The 3.4% is very low in comparison with other efficiency driven economies, such as Mexico, Hungary and Poland that average 8% (Herrington & Pew 2016, p. 4). Part of the problem is the closure rate of businesses due to poor profitability (42%). The situation is appalling for wealth creation and gross domestic product expansion as successful high growth enterprises sustain economic growth and job creation (Wong, Ho and Autio 2005, p. 345). High potential entrepreneurship grows firms rapidly (World Economic Forum, 2014) and to increase successful entrepreneurship activity in South Africa, interventions are drastically needed.

This study evaluates formal mentorship as a training intervention for entrepreneurs. Mentorship has been revealed as a valuable part of the training provision to support SME growth and overcoming failure in Canada (Audet & Couteret 2012), South Africa (Ayer 2011), Australia (Barret 2006) and Ireland (Bisk 2002).

Despite this, mentorship to the small business remains poorly researched despite the importance placed on the SME sector to economic development (Mckevitt and Marshall 2015, p. 263). Studies have revealed how mentorship assists the mentee in finding solutions to their business problems (Sullivan 2000), although the mentorship programmes are not always clear as to how learning is passed on between mentor and learner (Gibbs 1997).

1.2 Broader Motivation for the Study

The South African government is serious about SME development, and organisational support to the SME sector including mentorship programmes are a priority. This is evident as the South African government in 2014 established a new Department of Small Business Development headed by the Hon. Minister Lindiwe Zulu (<http://www.dsbd.gov.za/>, retrieved 20 June 2015).

In 2015 the department committed R3.5 billion to SME training in South Africa, including mentorship support (<http://www.smallbusinessconnect.co.za/news - 12/04/2015>).

Greater government intervention within the SME sector has contributed to the economic success of the Pacific Rim countries where robust interventions support industrial and human resource development strategies (Kraak 2009). State involvement in SME support structures can have a significant impact on entrepreneurial training. Government led Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) within South Africa, have developed a clothing and textile industry specific skills plan with a strategy that focused on SMME training to up-skill owner-managers (Kraak, 2009 p. 203). The Clothing and Textiles Sector Training Authority led initiatives for sector specific support organisations such as the one this study is focused on.

This study investigates how organisational support for a mentorship programme, government funded and managed by a third party, supports and enhances entrepreneurial learning. Entrepreneurial learning is largely experiential, as entrepreneurs learn how to develop themselves as individuals and enhance their entrepreneurial ability (Cope 2010, 2003; Rae 2005, Politis 2005).

1.3 Applied Context for the Study

Since South Africa agreed to the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) in 1994, entrepreneurs in the South African clothing sector have been under severe pressure to learn and adapt to an ever-changing business environment (van der Westhuizen 2007, p. 1). Worrying trends indicate that growth in the domestic production of apparel grew in value from R14.5b to just R15.2b (2005-2011), while imports increased from R4.8b to R10.1b in the same period.

Domestic sales by local production decreased from 76% to 60% over the same time (Morris and Barnes 2014). Many factors contribute to on-going macro environment turbulence in the South African Clothing Industry including:

- (i) Export incentives coupled to favourable Rand/Dollar exchange rates influenced strategic decisions by the South African clothing manufacturers to target the supply of lucrative export markets. This resulted in local retailers being side-lined and local retailers were obliged to find alternative suppliers, particularly from China (Morris and Barnes 2014).
- (ii) The South African Clothing Industry is reportedly in crisis, exacerbated by a 'compliance drive' launched in 2010 through the National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry (NBC) to set minimum wages (Nattrass and Seekings 2013).
- (iii) The ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) in 2004 gave rise to China flooding the global market with fabric and finished garments (Morris & Einhorn 2008).
- (iv) Leading up to the end of the MFA was the gradual reduction in tariffs that was phased in under the country's commitments under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as from the late 1990s (Hirschsohn, Godfrey and Maree 2000)
- (v) Low levels of investment in this industry since the early nineties indicate that investment in technology required R2.7 Billion (United States International Trade Commission 2004).
- (vi) Severe shortages of senior management and professionals skills within the clothing sector, as well as the artisans and skilled workers, such as machinists and machine mechanics (Kraak 2009).

1.4 Rationale for the Study

How entrepreneurs learn to cope and survive in the South African clothing sector, with its high levels of macro-environment turbulence, may engender particular lessons for entrepreneurial learning and related outcomes such as business innovation. Government policy and spend in SA motivates very strongly for research within SME development and support programmes, in particular regarding mentorship, as empirical research may have valuable findings to be incorporated into such programmes already planned through the Department of Small Business Development (<http://www.smallbusinessconnect.co.za/news - 12/04/2015>).

The potential benefits of SME support programmes that include formal mentorship are mostly neglected in prior research (Mckevitt and Marshall 2015; St-Jean & Audet 2009). Within South Africa little research has been conducted on the role of mentorship for SME training and support (Ayer 2011).

St-Jean & Audet (2009) argue that the learning outcomes from mentorship such as the moderate to long term effect on turnover, employment numbers and profits needs to be studied (2009). This research hopes to contribute to a better understanding of formal entrepreneur mentorship programmes.

Finally, most previous studies have been conducted within developed economies. Knowledge gleaned on this topic from these contexts may not be a good proxy to understanding the phenomenon within a developing economy like SA.

1.5 Aims

This is an explorative case study to investigate the role and influence of formal mentorship, provided by and managed by a third party, on entrepreneurial learning and business innovation within selected SMEs in the clothing sector in Cape Town.

To study the phenomenon in its lived context will provide empirical backing for understanding formal mentorship, and this is best achieved through a case study research design, of an existing formal mentorship programme.

The assumptions that underlie the study are that mentorship adds value to entrepreneurs who will learn from the mentorship relationship, which will result in better business performance and business innovation.

Further assumptions are that the third party management, and sponsorship, of the mentorship programme have an influence on the mentorship relationship, and therefore the learning outcomes.

The research aims to answer the following main research question, with a sub-set of investigative questions.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the preceding discussion the overarching research question is:

How does formal mentorship influence entrepreneurial learning and business innovation within selected clothing sector SMEs?

More specifically;

(i) How does formal mentorship and organisational support influence entrepreneurial learning?

(ii) How does formal mentorship influence the mentor-mentee relationship?

(iii) How is business innovation and business performance influenced by formal mentorship in the SMEs studied?

(iv) How does strategic sponsorship influence the formal mentorship programme?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study contributes to a better understanding of how a formal mentorship programme, managed by a third party influences entrepreneurial learning, business innovation and enhances SME performance. Findings will be shared with all relevant stakeholders and those interested in entrepreneurial education and training, in developing human capital within the SME sector.

As the SA clothing sector is confronted with ongoing competitiveness challenges, government provides support to reduce further job losses and create jobs, by enabling entrepreneurs to become more innovative. The study is focused on an organisation that supports clothing sector SMEs to develop greater levels of efficiency and innovation.

<http://www.xxxxxxx.co.za/index.php/ourservices/mentorship-and-coaching>

One aspect of the study that was particularly difficult to do was to interpret the findings within existing literature. This is a result of the paucity of prior studies into formal mentorship and aspects such as technically driven mentorship that is one original aspect on this study.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This chapter introduces the study following which chapter two reviews the relevant literature and presents a conceptual framework that is modeled on the literature discussion.

Chapter three presents the methodology in conducting the study; including the case protocol, data collection and analysis stages of the research. Chapter four presents the case findings.

Chapter five analyses and discusses relevant aspects of the case for answering the research questions. Lastly, chapter six will conclude the study and make recommendations - both practical for entrepreneurial training practitioners and for future research opportunities.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Overview

The topic of mentorship and entrepreneurial learning (EL) is fairly unexplored in the Western Cape clothing sector. While this literature review is mainly concept-centric, the sub-section on EL is author-centric.

The author-centric approach to EL is useful to overcome the fragmented, diverse and individualistic state of the EL literature that hinders further research according to Wang and Chugh (2014, p. 24). The seminal works of Jason Cope (2000, 2003, 2005, 2010), David Rae (2000, 2005) and Diamante Politis (2005) on EL contribute to a coherent conceptual framework for the study.

Concepts of entrepreneurship, EL, business innovation, business performance, mentorship, SME development and organisational support to the SME sector are discussed and incorporated into the conceptual model. This conceptual model provides a clear plot of the anticipated relationships between points of interest investigated in the study (Rocco & Plakhotnik 2009). The conceptual model (Figure 2.1) is the basis for the analysis and interpretations further on in the study and the model is subsequently revised (Figure 5.1) based on the empirical evidence.

The conclusion to this chapter motivates for investigating EL through the lenses of formal mentorship and organisational support programmes. Lastly, the final comments of the chapter demarcate the boundaries of this study.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Scholars of entrepreneurship do not share a common understanding of entrepreneurship (Cunningham and Licheron 1991, p.45). Some argue that entrepreneurship should be regarded as a multidimensional construct (Busenitz, Gomez and Spencer 2000). Conversely, others focus on entrepreneurship as revolving around opportunity recognition and to commercialise and start a new enterprise to exploit such opportunity (Acs & Szerb 2007).

Entrepreneurship can be defined as:

The doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way (innovation). It is...an advantage, that such a definition does not draw any sharp line between what is and what is not 'enterprise'. (Schumpeter 1947, p. 151).

A more recent definition from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Extended Report 2011, defines entrepreneurship as "Any attempts at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organisation, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business" (Bosma et al 2012).

An expanded definition suitable for this study is by Schramm, Arora, Chandy, Cooper, Jorgenson, Siegal and Menzer (2008), to include "design, intervention and/or implementation of new or altered products, services, processes, systems, organisational structures or business models" in the pursuit of value creation and increased profitability by the firm (Schram *et al* 2008, cited in Love and Roper 2015, p. 8).

2.2.1 Economic role of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship as an economic activity that combines all factors of production into value creation stems from 19th century economics (Gartner 1989) and is the creative response in business to economic conditions (Schumpeter 1947). According to Frederick, Kuratko and Hodgetts (2007), entrepreneurship has its origins in the industrial revolution and this risk-bearing activity is rooted within economic theories - most notably the theory of creative destruction (Schumpeter 1947).

More recently entrepreneurship is argued to drive business growth and economic development (World Economic Forum 2014 p. 6-7), as entrepreneurship, including business start-up and exits, contribute to economic growth and development (Stevenson & Lundström 2001, p. 11). Economic growth and job creation are dependent on entrepreneurship which grow firms rapidly (Wong *et al* 2005, p. 345), or in fact redefine their industries (World Economic Forum 2014).

The economic importance of entrepreneurship highlights the argument by Schumpeter (1947), for “creative destruction”. While high rates of firm closures may seem negative, this is now more widely accepted as a requirement in the longer term for economic growth and job creation (Acs Carlsson and Karlsson 1999, cited in Stevenson & Lundström 2001, pp. 18-19).

2.2.2 Entrepreneurship Personality Traits

Entrepreneurial traits such as being goal driven and self-efficacy have been found to have a positive effect on venture growth and performance (Baum and Locke 2004, p. 596). The role, character and behaviour of the entrepreneur and firm is significant; firstly in contributing to economic growth (Acs and Szerb 2007, p.112), while secondly, inherent entrepreneurial personality and traits are associated with successful entrepreneurs (Chell 2008).

Entrepreneurial orientation at a firm level is similarly attributed traits such as autonomy, competitive aggressiveness, innovation and risk taking (Lumpkin and Dess 1996, pp. 139-140) and is positively associated with firm success. Gartner (1989) argues for a behavioural approach to the study of entrepreneurship as the study of entrepreneurship traits has had limited success.

2.2.3 Entrepreneurial Behaviours

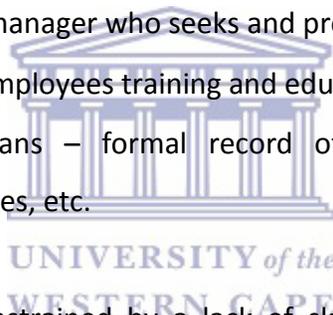
Gartner (1989) builds a comprehensive argument for the study of entrepreneurship behaviours to identify specific activities, and the frequency thereof, in order to build a more comprehensive understanding and definition of entrepreneurship. A detailed ordering and systemisation of entrepreneurship is required, and “research must observe entrepreneurs in the process of creating organisations” (Gartner 1989, p. 62). According to Venter, Urban and Rwigema (2010, p. 17-18) entrepreneurship behaviours may be characterised by the undertaking of risks within a set of interrelated parts; opportunity recognition, business planning, marshalling of resources, organising the entrepreneurial structure and overseeing venture creation and growth. Rae (2005) considers the entrepreneur as the driving force behind the practices of blending opportunity, resources and the team into value creation (p. 324), consistent with Schumpeter (1947, p. 151) who advocates entrepreneurship as process and doing.

2.2.4 Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Schumpeter argues for the interrelatedness between business innovation and entrepreneurship (1947). Business innovation is evident in producing new goods or services, new techniques (systems or process) of manufacture, developing new markets, acquiring new supply of raw materials or supply chain and the configuration of new organisational structure (Schumpeter 1947, as summarised in Brundin and Wigren-Kristoferson 2013, p. 455).

New firms that replace those that are exiting, offer consumers newer and more innovative products and improved services. The introductions of new products and services, either new to the firm (competitor imitations) or completely new to the industry (De Jong and Vermeulen 2006, pp. 593 -594), rely on innovative practises that include:

- Managerial focus - owner manager who seeks and provides support to opportunities.
- Training and education – employees training and education to raise skills.
- Document innovations plans – formal record of renewal ambitions, targets and milestones, planned changes, etc.



However, innovation is often constrained by a lack of skilled workers and management, as training staff is expensive and time consuming and highly skilled workers may find better prospects in larger firms (Freel 2000, p.62). Management issues holding back innovation within SMEs include poor planning, poor financial skills, limited management functional capability and poor delegation skills.

Freel (2000, p. 71) finds that technical skills are highly rated as an enabler amongst innovative small business, followed by marketing, managerial, financial and exporting skills that are required in the internal labour pool, to boost innovation. Business owners with higher levels of human capital, ostensibly in themselves and in highly skilled employees, have better ability to create and manage viable enterprises (Astbro and Bernhardt 2005). Business innovation will ostensibly result in improved business performance and growth, when sales increase as a result of new products being sold and increased market share, or new markets are developed. Profits will improve when greater efficiency in the systems and process improvements take place.

Employee numbers will increase as the business grows and additional workers are employed. According to Hossain, Ibrahim and Uddin (2016, p. 221) there is no unified model to describe business growth or performance in the small firm, and prior research may refer to measures such as sales and employment.

2.2.5 Summary

Entrepreneurship is multi-dimensional. The purposes and aims of this study are primarily drawn to the behavioural and economic dimensions of entrepreneurship. Product and service innovation are evident in the production of new products and services at the firm level, including competitor imitation, and those that are completely new to the industry. Business innovation may also be process improvements and organisational structure that may be altered and improved on in the pursuit of higher levels of profitability.

2.3 Learning

Learning is complex (Cope and Watts 2000) and takes place at the individual, group and organisational level including network level learning (Warren 2004, p. 7). Prior research of EL draws theoretical insights from individual and organisational level learning (Cope 2003; Rae 2005). EL is a continuous process that takes place within routine and non-routine activity, and past research has individual learning by entrepreneurs as the unit of analysis (Wang & Chugh 2014).

While cognitive modes of learning and experiential learning (learning through doing) are both elements within EL it is generally acknowledge that experiential learning is vital to EL (Deakins and Freel 1998, p. 146). Experiential learning takes place through doing, analysing and observing that contributes to subsequent modified behaviours (Kolb 1984, p.21). And cognitive learning is described as a process of acquiring knowledge that results in the potential for behavioural change (Cope and Watts 2000). Organisational learning gets people involved in collective innovation, change and recreation of their reality (Senge 2006) and individual learning is a precondition for such organisational learning (Franco and Haase 2009, p. 631).

Organisational learning is not an extension and sum of individual learning; rather, organisations develop learning systems where learning is transferred to others in the organisation and influences their collective behaviour (Fiol & Lyles 1985, p. 804). Cope argues that individual learning of entrepreneurs is synonymous with organisational learning (Cope 2003, p. 432). Cope's view is consistent with researchers who argue for organisational learning as greatly dependent on individual learning (Franco and Haase 2009, p. 630- 631). Similarly, Warren (2004, p. 7) argues that learning by the owner-manager needs to be assimilated by the enterprise if they are to survive within the wider macro-economy.

Argyris (2002, p. 206) defines single loop learning as the detection and correction of error. Whereas double loop learning requires a vital shift in the underlying values that govern action, prior to error correction. Double loop learning suggests a re-programming of the mind-set resulting in new modified behaviours, consistent with transformative learning (Mezirow 1990). Transformative learning requires reflection and reassessment of the assumptions we have taken on knowingly or not; and then allowing the insights from such reassessment govern our actions. Cope regards "transformative learning" (Mezirow 1990), "double loop learning" (Argyris 2002) and "generative learning" (Senge 1990) as being distinctive forms of higher level learning (Cope 2003, pp. 433-434).

2.4 Entrepreneurial Learning

In an entrepreneurial context learning by the individual can be regarded as tantamount to organisational learning (Cope 2003; Warren 2004). This study will investigate how entrepreneurs are assisted through mentorship to learn. The study has an interest in how such learning (lower/higher) is assimilated into their organisations (organisational learning) and with what effect on business innovation, operations and overall business performance.

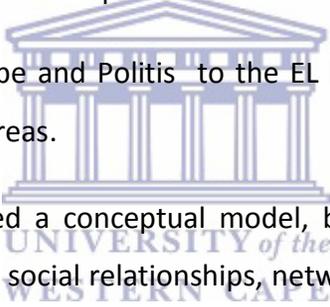
Entrepreneurial behaviours are more complex than merely managing business ventures; entrepreneurial behaviours are modified and include the learning processes in growing the enterprise (Deakins and Freel 1998, pp. 145-146). Entrepreneurial behaviours begin to be learnt in the formative years of the entrepreneur in pre-start up experiences.

Learning also takes place when the entrepreneurial identity is developed through experience and introspection that working for others is not suited to oneself (Rae 2000, 2005).

While Politis (2005, p. 399) acknowledges that EL is largely experiential learning, exactly how entrepreneurs develop entrepreneurial expertise from their prior work and former venture start-up experiences is unclear. EL is argued to occur through situational learning from critical incidents, when entrepreneurs are forced to learn and grow through difficult times in their personal and business lives if they are to survive (Cope 2000, 2003, 2010).

The above mentioned authors emphasise the importance of the continuous learning that influences personal change in the entrepreneur and subsequently in the management of their enterprises. Their studies draw theoretical frameworks and insights on the phenomena as socially constructed behaviours and development of the self (Rae 2005; Cope 2003).

The key contributions of Rae, Cope and Politis to the EL literature will now be discussed for their importance in the following areas.

- 
- Rae (2000; 2005) developed a conceptual model, based on empirical research, which found that EL occurs within social relationships, networks and within context such as the immersion of the entrepreneur within industry. Formal mentorship in the study involves networks of an industry specific support organisation and their mentorship programme.
 - Cope's extensive research on EL during periods of distress, when entrepreneurs learn significantly with correlated business developments (Cope and Watts 2000, Cope 2003, 2005, 2010). The study proposes prolonged distress in the turbulent competitive environments of the SA clothing sector as suitable situations for EL.
 - Politis's (2005) research on the entrepreneurial expertise that is developed through experiential learning. The research wants to establish how EL under the influence of formal mentorship translates into increased entrepreneurial ability, SME practices, business innovation and operational improvements.
 - The authors consistently validate qualitative research designs for studying EL.

2.4.1 David Rae

Rae (2005, p. 324) defines EL as the personal development of entrepreneurs, in learning how to act on opportunity recognition, “interacting socially to initiate, organise and manage ventures.” Rae argues for EL as the modification of behaviours which follows sense-making processes (Mumford 1995, cited in Rae 2005). Modifications of behaviours are driven through knowledge acquisition, reasoning and doing, which result in the ability to modify subsequent behaviours.

Ostensibly such modified behaviours involve the discovery in one-self of innovative entrepreneurial behaviours to exploit opportunities, create and grow ventures. Rae (2000) argues for the transition to a qualitative research design and the use of interpretative approaches in the study of EL (p. 148). Rae makes the point that to understand entrepreneurs and their worlds, or cultures, “we need an approach which enables exploration of the choices they make, through the accounts they give” (Rae 2000, p. 148).

Rae (2000, 2005) builds on the work of Gartner (1989) who recommended that research on entrepreneurs should focus on the behavioral aspects, moving away from the study of entrepreneurship through psychological and economic lenses. Building on social constructivist theory, Rae (2000) uses narrative research methods and a life story approach to build a deeper understanding of EL from the perspective of the entrepreneurs and their lived experiences. Rae (2005) develops a conceptual framework that identifies the important factors that contributes to EL. These include developing confidence, self-belief and self-efficacy, goal setting, personal values and motivation to achieve, learning through social relationships and action.

Rae (2005) argues that entrepreneurs learn within three broad domains. Entrepreneurial learning embodies firstly, the personal development of the entrepreneur including early life stages in the identity of the entrepreneur being shaped. Secondly, the negotiated enterprise domain encapsulates networking and engaging with others in the establishing, running and growing of the enterprise. And the negotiated relationships will then enable EL by learning through others through such negotiation. Thirdly, contextual learning occurs through the entrepreneur interacting within community, industry and other networks. And through comparison and sharing with others learning is enabled within social contexts (Rae 2005, p. 326).

2.4.2 Jason Cope

Cope's (2000, 2003, 2005, 2010) finds that "critical incidents" life experiences of entrepreneurs, in both personal and business events including venture failure, are important catalysts for EL. EL may be coupled with great emotional turmoil of the entrepreneur, during discontinuous events, in a parallel process of the personal development of the entrepreneur and correlated business developments (Cope and Watts 2000, p. 116).

Learning emerges as a consequence of entrepreneurs overcoming crises and opportunities. Participants in a phenomenological case study, refer more to "the worst of times" in the interviews - despite the authors conceptualising of critical incidents as "the best and worst of times" (Cope and Watts 2000, p. 115). Cope and Watts (2000) argue that critical incidents herald higher level learning outcomes, in contrast to Burgoyne and Hodgson's (1983) view that slow and steady change results in higher level learning. Cope (2003 p. 430) emphasises discontinuous events as a catalyst for EL, through the process of critical self-reflection that accompanies such discontinuous events, resulting in distinctive higher-level learning. The term discontinuous event is used in the organisational behaviour discourse to refer to a breakdown in an organisational functioning;

The identity of the organisation after the breakdown is different from before. The difference and the expression of good intention regarding the effort to not incur in the same breakdown again, are called "what we have learned" (Nicolini and Mesnar 1995 p.739, as cited in Cope 2003)

Cope (2003) acknowledges the on-going learning that also takes place outside of discontinuous events, as lower level learning outcomes. This builds on organisational learning theory by Fiol and Lyles (1985). Cope recognises that learning outcomes may be supported through mentorship in assisting the entrepreneur to reflect and learn through experience (Sullivan 2000, as cited in Cope 2003). The author presents growing evidence that the learning within a small enterprise is more prevalent during turbulent and discontinuous events, although how and what exactly is learnt is not very clear. Cope (2005, 2010) subsequently develops a framework of the key elements proposed as outcomes of EL in five key areas;

Learning about oneself, learning about the business, learning about the environment and entrepreneurial networks, learning about small business management, learning about the nature and management of relationships (Cope 2005, p. 12)

The framework by Cope (2005, 2010) takes entrepreneurship research a step forward by identifying what it is that entrepreneurs need actually learn, or learn about. Cope (2010) investigates the ultimate entrepreneurial distress, business failure, and he finds that entrepreneurs who fail indeed have higher level learning outcomes, similar to his 2005 study;

Oneself - Learning about one's strengths, weaknesses, skills, attitudes, beliefs. ***The venture (and its demise)*** - Learning about the strengths and weaknesses of the venture. ***Networks and relationships*** - Learning about the nature and management of relationships, both internal and external to the venture. ***Venture management*** - Learning how to run and control businesses more effectively in relation to the wider environment (Cope 2010, p.34)



2.4.3 Diamante Politis

Politis (2005) critiques extant EL literature as weak and insufficient on how experiential learning develops into entrepreneurial knowledge. Entrepreneurial knowledge includes opportunity recognition and exploitation as well as coping with the liability of newness in venture start-ups. The author questions how, and what, entrepreneurial expertise is developed from personal, former venture and enterprise start-up experiences (Politis 2005, p. 399). Furthermore a single factor, such as EL is very hard to identify as the ultimate influence on venture performance.

Politis (2005, p. 402) presents a conceptual framework and argues that an entrepreneur with more career experience of previous start-ups, management and industry experience, is more effective in recognising and acting on opportunity and coping with the liability of newness. Politis (2005) argues that career experience is developed, or transformed, into entrepreneurial knowledge through either a mode of exploration or exploitation. Politis (2005, p. 10) proposes that entrepreneurs who rely more on the mode of exploration, leads to them learning about and being better in recognising and acting on opportunity.

Entrepreneurs, who rely more on the mode of exploitation, leads to them learning about and being better in overcoming the liability of newness in starting new enterprises.

2.4.4 Summary of Entrepreneurial Learning

EL is embodied in the personal development of the entrepreneur and improvement in their capacity to recognise opportunity, grow their enterprise and overcome the liability of newness (Cope 2000, 2005; Rae 2000, 2005; Politis 2005). Entrepreneurial behaviours will ostensibly change as learning manifests itself and becomes explicit within the management of their enterprise.

Entrepreneurs learn about themselves as well as the management of their business. EL is evident when entrepreneurs learn through others, and about others, in their networks; when they learn how to use their networks as a source of growth for the enterprise; and learn to take advantage of opportunities for the supply of new products to new customers (Rae 2005). The behaviour of the firm will change with improved operational practises and innovation in the enterprise.

EL takes place as lower and higher level learning (Cope 2003, 2005). Lower level learning is a gradual incremental change of behaviour - for example in the management of the business that does not require fundamental shifts in the pattern of thinking by the entrepreneur. Higher level learning is associated with fundamental shifts in the mind-set of the entrepreneur, and there needs to be a shift in the beliefs of the individual preceding the change of behaviour. The focus of the next sub-section is the role that government policy and SME support measures play in developing entrepreneurs.

2.5 Government and Organisational Support to SME Development

Human capital formation through entrepreneurship education and training (EET) is increasingly a focus of government policy and spend through investment in “advice-provision” to entrepreneurs and existing SMEs (Martin, McNally and Kay 2013, p. 211). Similarly Chen (2006, p. 140-141) discusses at length how the Chinese government have through policy, regulation and expenditure significantly impacted on entrepreneurship and SME growth in that country.

Government policy and state funded organisations have a role to play in entrepreneurship development. Gibb (1997, p. 22) argues that those responsible for ensuring that the regulatory environments is supportive to SME success and developments, are policy makers and bureaucrats. Gibb (1997) argues for more research into learning at SME level, particularly into the relationship between mentors and learners within the SME sector as many public funded mentorship schemes operate in a vacuum as to how knowledge transfer takes place between mentor and the SME. The research setting for this study offers an opportunity to explore a local government funded mentorship programme in the SA clothing sector, and whether or not the intended outcomes, such as business growth and entrepreneurship development, are achieved. (<http://www.xxxxxx.co.za/index.php/ourservices/mentorship-and-coaching>)

Mentorship is a non-financial support measure to the small business that provides value, as part of the training provision in SMEs overcoming failure (Barret 2006, p. 615). Barret (2006) argues that mentorship provides assistance to the mentee to finding solutions to business problems, based on the exploration of options and ideas. Upfront diagnosis and prescription of the issues and objectives of the mentoring played an important role in the formal mentorship program that was government sponsored and delivered in regional Australia (Barret 2006).

2.6 Mentorship

Recent definitions of mentorship stem largely from the seminal work by Kram (1983), where the mentor is seen as a more experienced person providing two functions in the development of a junior person through career growth advice and personal psycho-social support. A more comprehensive understanding of mentorship is provided by Bozeman & Feeney (2007, p. 17).

***Mentoring:** a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psycho-social support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and over a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor), to a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).*

Mentorship is usually viewed as a mentor-mentee dyad where the mentor gives guidance and support in the development of the mentee (Kent, Dennis and Tanton, 2003 p. 441), or the process of shielding and directing newcomers by experienced veterans (Sullivan 2000). Other forms of mentoring have developed such as peer mentoring, group mentoring and e-mentoring (Paek 2004).

2.6.1 Formal Mentorship and Coaching

Armstrong *et al* (2002, p. 1111) use the term formal mentorship to refer to organisations that develop mentorship programmes that match mentor and mentee. Formal mentorship incorporates the selection and matching of mentor and mentee, and scheduled meetings with the terms of the mentoring dependent on funding (Bisk 2002, p. 264). Mentorship programmes are potential contributors to entrepreneurship development, mainly in preventing business failure (Bisk 2002). Coaching and mentoring are similar and sometimes considered interchangeable in the literature according to Audet & Couteret (2012, p. 517). Luecke, however, goes to great lengths to distinguish between mentoring and coaching (Luecke 2004, as cited in Ayer 2011).

One distinction is where mentoring is defined as long term while coaching is short term. Garvey's (2004, p. 6) concerns are that coaching is well paid and concerned with financial gain, but do not provide the same quality and help as mentoring. Mentoring is focused on the longer term personal development of the entrepreneur, while coaching tends to be focused on immediate problems and learning. Further distinctions indicate coaching as leading the learning outcomes, whereas the mentor allows the mentee to take charge of their own learning (Luecke 2004, as cited in Ayer 2011, p. 17).

Mentor-mentee matching is a vital stage as the chemistry between the two significantly influences the subsequent relationship (Audet & Couteret 2012, p. 522). Although over the years other forms of mentoring have evolved such as group mentoring, peer mentoring, virtual or e-mentoring, the dyad model of mentoring still remains the basis of many mentor relationships (Paek 2004).

2.6.2 The Roles and Functions of the Mentor

Mentorship has its origins within organisational behaviour, HR management and adult development psychology. Kram (1983) finds two distinct development functions within mentoring as (i) career and (ii) psychosocial development within the mentor-mentee relationship. Career development takes place through advice, sponsorship, coaching, protection and exposure with stimulating work assignments through early career stages. The psychosocial function relates to the enhancement of “acceptance and confirmation, role modelling and friendship” (Kram 1983, p. 614). Kram (1983, p. 621) further identifies the stages of the mentor relationship as initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition.

Paek (2004) argues that mentoring may be associated with management depending on the chosen style of implementation (p. 369), suggesting that the mentor may act as a manager to the mentee. The author further finds that formal mentoring is normally shorter in time frame and better structured, akin to coaching, whereas informal mentoring lasts longer and is less structured. Klasen and Clutterbuck’s (2002, p. 17) views of mentorship are complex and the multi-purpose roles of the mentor are extended into distinct areas; coach, guardian, supporter, counsellor and networker, within an integrated approach including active and passive activities:

1. Active coaching through goal setting, critical friendship and collaborator.
2. Active guardianship, acting as a protector and guide.
3. Counsellor through a passive role in listening and being a sounding board, advising.
4. Network contact in a passive manner acting as a bridge and catalyst.

The mentor requires great tact to enable *learning by* the mentee rather than *doing for* the mentee (Sullivan 2000; Ayer 2011). Mentors need to allow mentees their own decisions and take control and responsibility for their future. With the mentoring relationship lasting on average between 3-5 years (Kram 1983, Klasen and Clutterbuck 2002), observations are that friendship and emotional support bases develop as part of the relationship (Bozeman & Feeney 2007, p. 13). Psycho-social support in the context of entrepreneurial learning is related to “value systems, self-worth, personal advice, and issues of interpersonal relationships” (Bisk 2002, p. 263).

St-Jean and Audet (2009) find that mentoring offers the chance for reasoning and real learning by the mentee. The authors identify no less than 57 learning outcomes of the mentor-mentee relationship that may be categorised into cognitive, skill-based and affective learning outcomes. The authors furthermore argue that learning by the mentee occur through activities that include; verbal exchanges, explanations, questioning, role modelling, working together and encouragement by the mentor (St-Jean and Audet 2009, p. 12).

2.6.3 Mentorship and SME Training

Entrepreneurs are often cited as too busy managing their enterprise to attend training, and in such circumstances mentorship may be a very good facilitator of learning through experience (St-Jean and Audet 2009). Similarly, Ayer (2011) finds that mentorship is valuable in support of learning experiences by entrepreneurs and enhances reflective learning when encouraged by the mentor (Sullivan 2000, p. 172).

Despite overwhelming evidence that the SME sector contributes significantly to economic development, the literature on mentorship suggests that research is neglected into mentoring on SMEs (Mckevitt and Marshall 2015; St-Jean & Audet 2009).

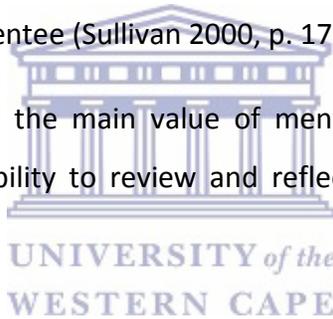
Despite such neglect mentoring programmes were found to be a successful enabler of SME retailers in meeting their objectives within one year of mentorship (Kent *et al* 2003, p. 446). Several studies find that mentorship programmes, often government funded, deliver value to SME sector entrepreneurs (Waters 2002; Bisk 2002; Barret 2006; St-Jean and Audet 2009; Ayer 2011; Audet and Couteret 2012).

In the entrepreneurship context mentorship may be the equivalent of training to manage and grow the enterprise (Waters, McCabe, Killerup, D and Killerup S 2001; Paek 2004). Bisk (2002) finds that in Ireland the type of advice sought by the mentees is indeed more general business in nature (p. 268) and that the recommendations implemented by mentees were mainly basic management advice by their mentors.

Sullivan (2000) recognises the complexity in mentoring to entrepreneurs, finding that the interpersonal skills and attitudes of the mentor are as important as the content of the mentoring support. Conversely a positive attitude and openness of the mentee is critical if learning is to take place (Audet & Couteret 2012, p. 528). The authors argue for further research into the role of the person who oversees the coaching relationship as such oversight may influence the success of the relationship (Audet & Couteret 2012).

Sullivan (2000) found that nascent entrepreneurs require specific skills and mentors have greater success, when transference of such skills takes place, as opposed to doing for the entrepreneur (p. 167). Sullivan (2000) agrees with Kram (1983) that the interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee is critical and mentor-mentee matching may be problematic. Moreover the needs of the mentee changes as they learn and grow, and mentoring needs to be “flexible and responsive” to the needs of the mentee (Sullivan 2000, p. 170-172).

Cope and Watts (2000) find that the main value of mentors is to encourage “double-loop” learning by the entrepreneur’s ability to review and reflect on critical incidents as found by Sullivan (2000).



2.6.4 Summary

Mentoring as a training mechanism for SME sector entrepreneurs may be very valuable (Waters 2001; Bisk 2002; St-Jean and Audet 2009; Ayer 2011; Audet and Couteret 2012). This study will focus on career (entrepreneurial) and psycho-social (personal) developments of the entrepreneurs (Kram 1983; Sullivan 2000; Cope 2003, 2010; Rae 2005; Politis 2005) that may be influenced by mentorship. Behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurship are important aspects in this study (Gartner 1989). Furthermore the dyad model of mentorship is investigated, within formal mentorship as defined by Armstrong (2002) and Bisk (2002).

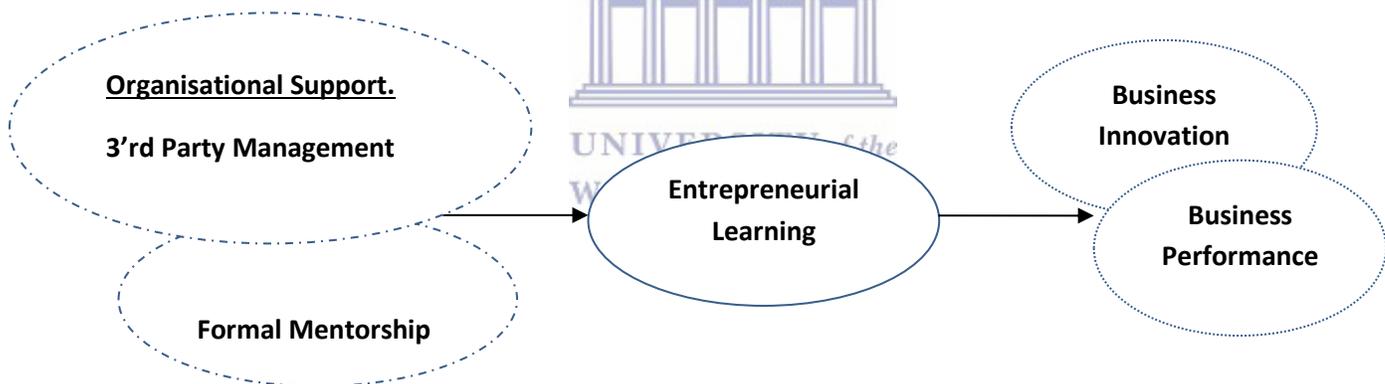
This study explores how a formal mentorship programme may influence EL, and correlated business innovation and business performance within selected clothing SMEs.

2.7 Conceptual Model

This literature review has sketched the context for further research into the relationship between organisational support for formal mentorship, entrepreneurial learning and related outcomes such as business innovation and business performance. In particular, knowledge transfer between mentor and the mentee should translate into learning by the firm (Gibb 1997, Warren 2004).

The advantage of a conceptual model and research questions is the narrowing of the research focus and preventing vast overwhelming amounts of data being collected (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 536). The conceptual model below points at the type of organisation to approach in the study, who to investigate and what types of data are to be collected, and how. The unit of analysis is clarified for the empirical research to follow.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model



Armstrong, Allinson and Hayes (2002, p. 1111) use the term formal mentorship to refer to organisations (3rd party management) that match the mentor-mentee within an agreed framework that specifies procedure and is expected to have controls and checks (Barret 2006). The model (Figure 2.1) represents the relationships the study will investigate and proposes that formal mentorship influences entrepreneurial learning, which contributes to business innovation and improved business performance (Cope 2003; Warren 2004). Formal mentorship of SME owners is a core focus of the study to build a better understanding of the organisation responsible for the mentoring programme in third party agency.

2.8 Conclusion

SME support organisations are expected to have controls and checks for mentorship programmes (Bisk 2002, Barret 2006), and clear written objectives and measures should be in place to oversee such mentorship (De Jong and Vermeulen 2006). What are these measures and how do checks and balances impact on formal mentorship and its outcomes?

Prior research (Gibb 1997; Barret 2006; Martin *et al* 2013) has recommended government and organisational support for the SME sector through policy and programmes that promote entrepreneurship skills development. Gibb (1997) argues that many public funded mentoring schemes operate in a vacuum as to how knowledge transfer takes place between mentor and the SME or entrepreneur. Audet and Couteret (2012) argue for further research into the role of the person who oversees the relationship and those who match the mentor-mentee.

The knowledge gap between organisational support for formal mentoring and subsequent EL and business innovation is evident - not much is known about how and what takes place, in delivering valuable outcomes through such programmes.

How EL and business innovation is influenced by formal mentorship programmes, and with what outcomes in firm performance are points of interest in this study to build a better understanding in how personal entrepreneurial development is influenced by mentors.

The next chapter discusses how data was collected in interviews with the sponsoring organisation, the entrepreneurs and their mentors.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design, unit of analysis, sampling, case protocol and methods of data collection and analysis with reference to answering the research questions. The chapter closes with the limitations of the study defined and declared. The purpose of this chapter is to clearly demonstrate why the research design and methods are best suited for achieving the objectives and aims of the study.

3.1 Design

Yin (1981, p.59) argues that a case study research design is suitable when the boundaries between the unit of analysis and context are not clear. Boundary is an issue in the study in the context of how learning by the entrepreneur is influenced by a formal mentorship programme, which is sponsored and managed by a third party. The case study design is thus suitable for investigating EL in its everyday context as the study does.

Furthermore a case study design is suitable when the cases focus on understanding the dynamics that exist within single situations and may also be used in multiple levels of analysis (Yin 1984, as cited in Eisenhardt 1989, p. 534,). The case study strategy is appropriate because formal mentorship implies multiple domains (Bisk 2002). These domains are the third-party management (The Organisation) of the mentorship programme, and the actual mentor-mentee relationships (sub-cases).

Multiple sub-cases allow for cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt 1989) within the context of a formal mentorship programme. The case study research strategy aims to build an understanding of the transmission of learning and knowledge between the mentor and the entrepreneur, within a formal mentorship programme.

As set out in the research question (p.5);

How does formal mentorship influence entrepreneurial learning and business innovation within selected clothing sector SMEs?

This exploratory study is suitable as the benefits of mentorship are mostly neglected in prior entrepreneurship research (St-Jean & Audet 2012), particularly in SA (Ayer 2011, p. 7). The exploratory research design is suitable to address the 'what' and 'how' investigative research questions, as suggested by Yin (2003, p. 8-10).

The qualitative research design here follows a pragmatic research approach. Within the structured framework of the formal mentoring programme and the conceptual model outlined in chapter 2, the meanings constructed by the mentors, mentees and other respondents are their own interpretations of "reality" (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark and Gutmann 2003).

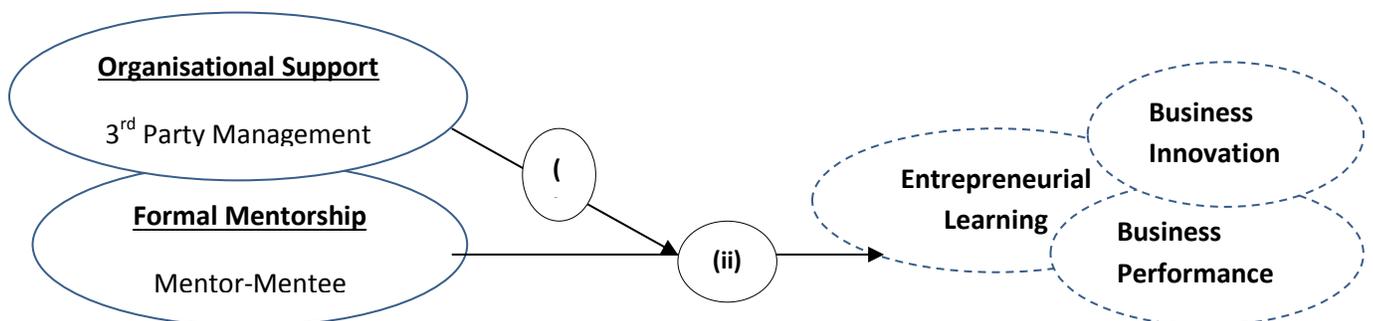
The interpretative qualitative research paradigm is employed to make sense of the realities that respondents reveal in their lived experiences (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler 2011). The study is cross-sectional and retrospective as research participants reflect and recall past events when interviewed during the data collection stage.

3.2 Unit of Analysis

This study investigates the constraints and influences of a formal mentoring programme, managed by a third party, on the mentor-mentee relationships of two mentors and their mentor-mentee relationships with four mentees. The study wants to determine the impact of the formal mentorship programme on the entrepreneurs and their SMEs.

Two relationships (see Fig 3.1) that influence the individual's EL, business performance and business innovation are (i) the formal mentorship programme management, and (ii) the actual mentor-mentee relationship.

Figure 3.1 Unit of Analysis



3.2.1 Identification of Respondents

The identification of participants in the case study was determined by the research questions (Eisenhardt 1989 p. 537), as only clothing sector based organisations conform to the criteria and purpose for the study (Blumberg *et al*, 2011 p. 194-196). Respondents were selected in cooperation with the clothing sector support organisation that operates a mentoring programme funded by the City of Cape Town.

Once the Organisation was located, the sample followed a judgemental-snowball strategy as the mentors were identified and they in turn identified clothing sector entrepreneurs who suited the study. As a result the data collection was from multiple sources (Johnston, Leach and Liu 1999, Eisenhardt 1989).

For background and insights into the mentorship programme I interviewed the director of the organisation that manages the programme. The director referred me to a training coordinator who I then interviewed. The two mentors interviewed are contracted to the organisation's mentoring programme and were recommended by the organisation. The mentors in turn recommended of their mentees who were beneficiaries of the programme. Based on this recommendation by the mentors, their selected entrepreneurs were interviewed. Much later on in the study, the sponsor of the mentoring programme was also interviewed.

In total four mentor-mentee pairs were identified for participation in this study. Without assistance and recommendations from this inner circle described above, respondents for this study would be difficult to identify, and identification was really assisted in this snowball sampling technique (Blumberg *et al* 2011). Each pairing (mentor-mentees) is to be considered as part of the formal mentoring programme and these sub-cases allow for comparison of data between the respondents to analyse how their accounts and the meanings they attach to them correspond, match and overlap (Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 2003).

The sub-cases represent entrepreneurs at different stages of the entrepreneurship process, as mentorship needs may differ and mentorship has to be customised to the needs of the mentee (Sullivan 2000).

Sub-cases were selected for potential and compelling evidence in backing of the conceptual framework and answering the research questions. Participating businesses have at least 10 employees and sales of at least R1 000 000 per annum. This criterion ensures “qualitative data that is rich with meanings and interpretations” (Rule and John 2011). The entrepreneurs finally interviewed for the study have all been in business for at least 5 years, received mentorship, and have had their fair share of success and failure.

3.3 Case Protocol

The case protocol starts with the research questions that indicate possible respondents and what evidence is required as recommended by Johnston *et al* (1999, p. 207). Case protocol procedures ensure a rigorous approach and increase the reliability of the study when procedure is reviewed prior to conducting the research (Yin 2003). Furthermore such rigour is essential to case study design, in determining the unit of analysis, how to select cases and what data needs to be collected (Johnston *et al*, 1999).

I conducted preliminary meetings with the Organisation during December 2014 and January 2015 to explore their suitability for the study. Furthermore, desktop research on the Organisation website revealed details of their mentorship programme. Apart from the mentoring programme the Organisation offers several other services including business development, technical training, networking and business linkages. The Organisation was deemed suitable for the study and will be referred to as The Organisation throughout to protect the anonymity agreement with them.

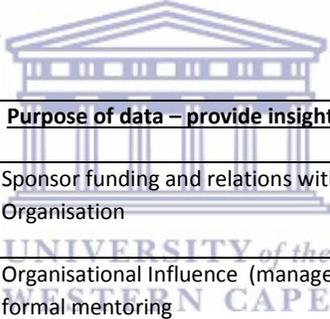
The Organisation receives funding from local government. In the advanced stages of the research it was decided to include the views of the sponsor in the research, to make better sense of the initial findings, and provide a balanced viewpoint in the analysis of the findings.

3.4 Methods

Data was collected through personal interviews; unstructured in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The interviewees are listed in Table 3.1 below. The multiple sources of evidence allow for triangulation and increase the validity of the knowledge claims (Johnston *et al* 1999).

For the interviews with the director, training coordinator and sponsor, in-depth unstructured interviews were practical to fully explore and uncover the dynamics of their mentoring programme and the funding arrangements. The unstructured conversations were vibrant and questions developed through the discussion and probing. The semi-structured interviews with the mentees followed an interview protocol, see Appendix 1.

Table 3.1 Data Collection Schedule



Respondents:	Purpose of data – provide insights into:	Data collection protocol:
Sponsor Organisation – local government	Sponsor funding and relations with The Organisation	1 X In-depth, unstructured interview
Organisation Director - Extensive industry experience in executive positions	Organisational Influence (management) on formal mentoring	2 X In-depth, unstructured interviews
Training coordinator in training, 10 years with Organisation	Organisational Influence (management) on formal mentoring	1 X In-depth, unstructured interview
Mentor 1 - 22 years' experience in clothing sector sub-contracted as mentor since 2008	Formal mentorship practices and influences on EL & innovation	2 X In-depth, unstructured interviews
Mentor 2 - 43 years' experience in clothing sector, subcontracted as mentor since 2011	Formal mentorship practices and influences on EL & innovation	1 X In-depth, unstructured interview
Dave – currently employs 500+. (Mentored by Mentor.1) Started with 20 employees in 2007.	Formal mentorship relationships. Outcomes such as EL and innovation	2 X Semi-structured interviews
Clive - 45-50 employees. (Mentored by Mentor.1)	Formal mentorship relationships. Outcomes such as EL and innovation	1 X Semi-structured interview
Adeel - 15-20 employees (Mentored by Mentor.1)	Formal mentorship relationships. Outcomes such as EL and innovation	1 X Semi-structured interview
Gawa - 10 employees (Mentored by Mentor 1 and Mentor 2)	Formal mentorship relationships. Outcomes such as EL and innovation	1 X Semi-structured interview

3.4.1 Data Collection Procedures

Open-ended interviews were conducted with the sponsor, director and coordinator of the organisation and the mentors to allow the respondents the latitude over the content and narrative of their experiences (Rule & John 2001, p. 65) to inform the researcher on their roles and that of their organisation on formal mentoring.

The mentees were interviewed in semi-structured interviews guided by the interview protocol (see Appendix 1). Questions were open-ended to guide the interviewee to points of interest, while allowing some measure of “free reign” over the content and narrative of their experiences (Rule & John 2001).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed immediately or soon thereafter, by the researcher in preparation for analysis. One advantage of the researcher doing the transcribing himself is for the opportunity for reflection on the interview during the transcribing (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 18). The memories of the respondents are the key evidence and a weakness in this data collection strategy, is when respondents may not remember events with great accuracy (Johnston *et al*, 1999). To overcome such weaknesses, interview notes were shared with respondents in a member-checking process and respondents were given the opportunity to review the interview notes, to increase the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Miller 2000).

The semi-structured interview protocol was designed to start with questions that are easy and fairly straightforward to talk about, such as background. Then I proceeded to questions of value or opinion that were a bit more complex. Further on sensitive and potentially controversial questions were asked (Britten 1995, p. 252).

For the semi-structured interview protocol, questions were grouped together, e.g. like those aimed at the organisation and those specific to the mentor, under different sub-questions. This was intentional for two reasons; firstly to assist the respondent making sense of the questions and increase the validity as the question grouping is aligned to the research questions they are motivated by (Adams and Cox 2008). Secondly the grouping facilitates analysis, when the responses are interpreted.

Reliability within semi-structured interview questionnaire depends on the same meaning being conveyed through the questions, rather than using the same words (Adams and Cox 2008, p. 18.). It was therefore important that I explained more carefully when needed to the respondents, to ensure equivalence of meaning. I did not encounter any great difficulty in this as all respondents spoke English reasonably well.

3.4.2 Data Analysis Procedures

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis and following the six step process by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79). The authors describe a six-step process of thematic analysis as a method for “identifying, analysing and reporting” themes from the data (see Table 3.2). This qualitative method of data analysis is a concurrent process of data collection and analysis. This was evident in the study as themes that initially emerged during the data collection and transcription stages were confirmed later through in-depth analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The study derives meaning within themes that are built up out of codes (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, DuToit, Masenge, Van Aardt and Wagner 2014). For this reason I coded across the whole data set of all interviews, to identify “repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 86). Starting with coding allowed me to examine and think through data extracts (Braun and Clarke 2006) as I identified words and phrases that made sense and formed ideas related to the conceptual framework guiding the study.

This is typical of a top-down approach to thematic analysis, where analysis is informed by a theoretical framework (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83). Reading through the transcribed data sets, I manually made notes, underlined and colour highlighted the initial notes of words, phrases and sentences. This level of detail ensured a rigorous approach to the data analysis – (see Table 3.3 for a sample of the data analysis procedure). This coding process initiated the identification of common themes across the interviews for aggregation later on, as suggested by Yin (2003, p. 54). As I matched certain extracts the initial themes started to emerge from the data. The frequency and importance attached to the data codes by respondents became more evident in the transcribed notes.

Patterns emerged from the data as several respondents made similar points when offering their opinions, based on their experience, albeit from different points of view. This validated the emergence of the themes. The data analysis was approached as an interactive and simultaneous process (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark and Morales 2007). I extended the literature review like Ayer (2011) to make better sense of the data, resulting in an on-going search for additional literature as the data was collected and analysed (Creswell et al, 2007; Ayer 2011). In addition I needed to follow up certain points with the respondents through an email, or telephone call.

Table 3.2 Thematic Data Analyses Steps (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 87)

Phases of thematic analysis		Description of the process I followed.
Phase 1	“Familiarise yourself with the data”	I listened through the data several times in transcribing, and then read through transcribed data in making notes of the early ideas.
Phase 2	“Generating initial codes”	Transcribed the data across the entire set, then divided into smaller segments per respondent (coding). Coded interesting features of data, systematically in line with the conceptual model.
Phase 3	“Searching for themes”	After codes were developed the focus changed to the aggregation of codes that act together under initial themes. Different codes may combine to form an overarching theme, checked alignment of themes in relevance to conceptual model - identifying similar patterns between respondents’ data that relate to similar themes.
Phase 4	“Reviewing themes”	Themes were critically assessed for coherence and sense making, providing a deeper understanding and fit to the conceptual model.
Phase 5	“Defining and naming the themes”	Sense making of the themes, on-going analysis specific to and in confirmation of their relevance and consistency to the conceptual framework. Hierarchy of importance and sub-themes were explored as I defined and named each theme.
Phase 6	“Producing the report”	The reporting and final analysis from the final themes, in a manner that builds credibility and validity. And enforced through sufficient and compelling extracts from the data to “demonstrate the prevalence of the themes”, while the discussion is aimed at an enhanced understanding of the conceptual framework.

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The identification of themes from the transcribed data is illustrated below to show how the data is broken down, extracts selected, codes developed and subsequently grouped into themes.

Table 3.3 Sample of Data Analysis Steps 4-5

<u>Raw Data – names withheld to protect identify</u>		
<p><u>CD</u>, starts the interview giving a brief background of the research aims, in investigating the influence of mentorship and organisational support on EL, and poses a question on what support measures the Organisation has in mentorship programmes?</p>		
<p><u>AS</u>, explains that the Organisation is a non-profit organisation (NPO) with a mandate to support SMEs within the clothing sector only – Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). <u>The Organisation looks at strategic projects in the industry</u>; for instance improving competitiveness. They [the Organisation] <u>write up a proposal and design the project</u> in line with what is required, such as identifying across a group of 10 CMTs inefficiencies and gaps within the SME’s and how to best to support such SMEs in what they are lacking in – improving productivity. And the <u>project objectives are written up that will require mentorship</u> and the <u>support of mentorship (contracted out) comes into play</u> to give the support across the different support measure required. Projects are designed with <u>key performance areas (KPI), in line with mandates from the sponsors who require certain outcomes within the projects that they sponsor</u>. <u>The Organisation has a pool of mentors, they are highly technical</u> and this is important <u>as mentors need to be skilled, experienced in the industry and have capabilities in line with the work-study, productivity, quality control, finance, marketing, market development</u> – i.e. different types of mentorships are required.</p>		
<p><u>CD, (Q)</u> How has mentorship been taking place within the past, specific to how mentors assist entrepreneurs in growing their businesses? What is it that mentors are required to do, in what time-frame or what objectives are they set to achieve after being assigned a client?</p>		
<p><u>AS, (R)</u> The experience of this over the past four months is that <u>mentors are given a 100 hours (to a client) according to budget</u> within a very broad framework as every business has different needs at different levels. <u>A mentor is given a contract</u> and can for instance mentor around financial issues, industry specific issues or social related issues depending on the client needs. <u>A mentor contract is given and an assessment is done</u> but the assessment may not be extensive enough and when the mentor gets involved there may be both personal (softer issues) and technical issues and issues around the psyche of the business owner.</p>		
Theme	<u>codes</u>	<u>Data extracts</u>
<p>Project</p> <p>Funded</p> <p>Mentorship</p>	Mentoring projects are sponsored	<p>“The Organisation looks at strategic projects in the industry”</p> <p>“write up a proposal and design the project”</p>
	Set project outcomes, in line with sponsor requirements	<p>“key performance areas (KPI), in line with mandates from the sponsors who require certain outcomes within the projects that they sponsor”</p> <p>“project objectives are written up that will require mentorship”</p>
	Mentorship contract with mentor	<p>“support of mentorship (contracted out) comes into play”</p> <p>“The Organisation has a pool of mentors, they are highly technical”</p> <p>“A mentor contract is given and an assessment is done”</p>
	Mentorship technical skills and capabilities	<p>“as mentors need to be skilled, experienced in the industry and have capabilities in line with the work-study, productivity, quality control, finance, marketing, market development”</p>
	Mentorship budget is allocated	<p>“mentors are given a 100 hours (to a client) according to budget”</p>

3.5 Limitations

The small number of mentor-mentee relationships that were studied implies that the findings cannot be generalised to other mentorship programmes within the clothing sector of the Western Cape, or SA. This is necessarily a result of the exploratory nature of the study and future studies may investigate the topic on a larger scale and with greater depth. The study is exploratory and cross-sectional and is not intended to build any causal basis or imply causality.

As a novice researcher completing my masters' dissertation, my supervisor provided expert oversight to ensure the robustness of the research. This was indeed invaluable due to my limited experience as a novice researcher.

3.6 Truthfulness and Credibility

Qualitative research is not generally concerned with validity and reliability and generally is focused on the truthfulness and credibility of the knowledge claims (Creswell *et al* 2003). Case study research, based on empirical evidence, is strengthened by triangulation when multiple sources and types of data converge on similar meaning (Eisenhardt 1989, Johnston *et al*, 1999).

The researcher went to extensive lengths to collect data from multiple participants that included the accounts of the sponsor to The Organisation. Multiple types of data (primary and secondary), were collected from personal interviews, desk-top research and archived documents. Personal interviews were both unstructured and semi-structured and give better credibility to the findings of the research, as data from multiple collection methods corroborates the knowledge claims.

The data collection instruments allowed participants free reign over the content of the discussions, to allow the researcher to come as close as possible to understand the respondent's reality (Creswell *et al* 2003). Respondents were given copies of the transcribed interview notes for their comment on accuracy and meaning (Creswell & Miller 2000), and Mentor 1 had this to say: "nothing really, I found the notes very comprehensive."

CHAPTER 4: CONSIDERING THE CASE

This chapter aims to explain the data by describing in detail what the respondents had to say. Qualitative research characteristically results in data overload (Eisenhardt 1989, Creswell *et al* 2003, 2007), and was found in the study which generated 86 pages of transcribed notes. The criterion for the inclusion in this chapter is two-fold; firstly the data that is most important in understanding the case study and secondly to answer the research questions (Blumberg *et al* 2011, p. 433).

The chapter starts with a brief overview of the South African clothing industry, setting a broader context for the case study. Then the role of the sponsor is discussed to understand their influence on the Organisation and the formal mentoring programme. The discussion then focuses on the Organisation's background, purpose, general activities outside of mentoring and the mentoring programme. This provides the immediate context for the findings in this case study (Yin 1981; Eisenhardt 1989).

The mentors are then described to understand who they are and what they do. Lastly the entrepreneurs (mentees) are described, their stories are told mainly from the semi-structured interviews. The reader will by the end of this chapter's narrative have a comprehensive understanding of the case study.

4.1 Introduction

The South African clothing sector has since the 1990s been under severe pressure to learn and adapt to an ever changing business environment (van der Westhuizen 2007, p. 1). Despite overall growth in the domestic retail market, sales by local production have decreased (Kraak 2009, p. 200). China has significantly increased their global market share of fabric and finished garments, mainly through cheap exports (Morris & Einhorn 2008, p. 355).

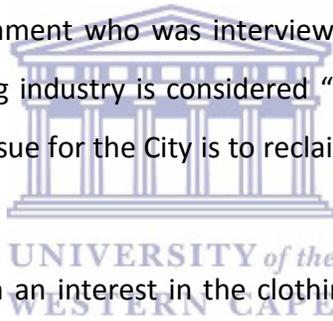
However, the problems in this sector are not all external. The South African clothing industry crisis is exacerbated by a compliance drive launched in 2010 through the National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry that set minimum wages in the sector (Nattrass & Seekings 2013, p. 2).

In addition shortages of skills exist within the sector; including senior management and professionals, and the artisans and skilled workers needed such as machinists and machine mechanics (Kraak 2009).

In the Western Cape, Cape Town is considered one of the most important areas for clothing production and a number of studies have been conducted into this local clothing sector (Van der Westhuizen and Deedat 2003; Morris, Barnes and Esselaar 2004; Sawkut 2008). According to Van der Westhuizen (2007), Cape Town holds promise for “niche market production for domestic and international consumption” (p.19). This partly explains the sponsorship by local government for business development support to the local clothing SMEs.

4.1.1 The Role of the Sponsor within the Clothing Sector

The respondent from local government who was interviewed, indicated that they sponsor the Organisation, because the clothing industry is considered “a vital component of the economy” and a strategic focus area. A key issue for the City is to reclaim jobs that were lost, especially as a result of the cheap imports.



Organisations (sector bodies) with an interest in the clothing industry were invited to become their (local government) strategic partners; to support and facilitate their focus on increasing the competitiveness of the industry through training and skills development. Potential partners are required to draw up funding proposals. If successful, the proposal becomes an annexure to the sponsorship agreement.

The sponsor and the Organisation together agreed to “negotiate the final deliverables based on the finalised budget for intervention in the clothing and textile industry”. However the sponsor does not stipulate the technical requirements of the proposal, but focuses on budgets and outcomes. The Organisation proposes the technical aspects in their proposal. The activities for mentoring specified in the proposal are;

1. Source suitable trainers
2. Provide operational mentoring/coaching
3. Provide business mentoring and coaching

4. Provide specialised mentoring and coaching in supervision, costings, mechanical skills, HR etc.

The budgeting for mentoring is also very specific and is allocated a Rand value within the overall funding amount and not all funding is reserved for mentoring. Intended benefits for the enterprises selected for the programmes include increased turnover and job creation, which then meets the sponsor's overall strategic objectives.

The local sponsor respondent stated: "You can't be dictating to industry, we need to collaborate." The sponsor and the Organisation have very close working ties, with interactions between sponsor and the Organisation taking place a few times per month. The annual agreement requires 12 monthly reports, 12 project reports and quarterly narrative reports for "reflecting progress on deliverables." In addition the sponsor attends the AGM of the Organisation. The current funding agreement stipulates an annual funding value of R412 000.00, for the 2015-2016 period, and this includes R72 000.00 for the mentoring of three enterprises. The targeted output of the collaboration is included in an annexure to the signed agreement.

4.1.2 Background and Purpose of the Organisation

The Organisation, a registered (not for profit) company was established in the mid-1990s with private and public institutional support and funds to focus on increasing job creation in the clothing sector. It focuses on developing entrepreneurs who operate small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

The Organisation website (<http://www.xxxxxxx.co.za/index.php/ourservices/mentorship-and-coaching>) refers to them as a catalyst to increase the competitiveness of clothing sector SMMEs and a first in SA as a sector specific local business service center. Key stakeholders and funders of the Organisation include local and provincial government departments, business support organisations, tertiary institutions and the regional chamber of commerce.

Mentorship and coaching services for their members is a key focus as SMEs typically encounter problems such as poor profitability, poor productivity, poor quality (high levels of rework) and human resources issues such as high absenteeism.

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The learning mode of the mentorship programme is described as action driven, in transferring skills from mentor to the business client striving to “adapt, survive and grow”.

The Organisation also facilitates enterprise development through other interventions, such as productivity improvement exercises and skills training. The projects have stages that include the role of mentor’s activities, such as “evaluate [learning] transference and report back to the Organisation on a weekly basis regarding company progress”.

The amount allocated for mentoring is a portion of overall funding and currently allows for 80 hours each for the mentoring of three recipients, over the 2015-2016 budget, at R300 per hour. The funding proposal compiled by the Organisation forms the basis for the objectives set within the funding agreement – as an annexure.

The director explained their process in greater detail:



The Organisation designed projects with key performance areas (KPI), in line with mandates from the sponsors who require certain outcomes within the projects that they sponsor - for instance improving competitiveness. They write up a proposal and design the project..., such as identifying across a group of 10 CMTs inefficiencies and gaps within the SMEs in what they are lacking in, such as improving productivity. And the project objectives are written up that will require mentorship and the support of mentorship (contracted out) comes into play to give the support across the different support measure required. Pro-active interventions is when there are outcomes based KPI’s, such as job creation, turnover increase, profit increase. The number one outcome is job creation given the jobs that have been lost within the clothing industry; government is trying to re-employ the jobs lost and bringing in more youth into the industry. Other interventions may be company specific outcomes.

Mentorship facilitates interventions, such as improving productivity and achieving the Organisation’s overall objectives as per the funding agreement. The mentoring is contracted out to independent mentors who are technically experienced in areas such as work-study, productivity, quality control, finance, marketing and market development.

4.1.3 General Organisational Activities

In addition to mentorship the Organisation provides additional services for all its members. For example technical training, business development workshops and sessions for tax and bargaining council compliance are held. These workshops and training sessions are usually held on Saturdays; all members of the Organisation and their employees may attend.

Mentors are sometimes involved in the additional training and interventions although it is mostly delivered by other independent service providers. Respondents mentioned the involvement of the Organisation for additional services. The Director talked about the support services to mentoring, “the mentors are brought in for the technical aspects. The Organisation provides for instance business skills development in short courses.....pattern making, mechanical or skills development alongside SETA.”

Dave talked about the workshops and networking opportunity, “The Organisation also offers regular workshops - for example how to register a CC, or Tax, SARS compliance, workshops on tendering, and technical ability of your staff, basic diagnostics of a machine. And they had regular networking sessions with the big design houses and the CMTs onboard.”

And furthermore Clive, “they provided services with other service providers besides the mentor directly giving support. Like the additional HR service, and from SARS, and like a technical mechanic. And the mentor would be part of that discussion and workshop, but would be driven by the outside service provider.” Adeel sent his staff to the additional training opportunity sessions held at the Organisation, “They would always send me information, there was training here and training there. I send my three ladies for training, computer, also to do with costing.”

Gawa explained:

They will phone me and tell me there is a workshop or someone is coming in. They are going to explain SARS or the bargaining council, can you make it? I did follow up a lot of their workshops, like there was a workshop that for a month every Saturday, where different people came on board - like the bargaining council lady and HR who taught us how to run our business

The additional workshops and training interventions seems to be a regular feature for the entrepreneurs interviewed. These were both for training of the entrepreneurs and their employees, and also provided opportunity for networking and business growth.

4.2 The Mentoring Programme

The mentoring programme is made possible through external funding as the director candidly pointed out: “Mentorship stops when funding is no longer available, as it is never stand-alone but linked to a project.” The mentors also refer to the mentoring programme as a project.

4.2.1 Project Funded Mentoring Programme

Project funding determines the mentorship schedule hourly contact time allocations, and determines the number of mentees. Mentors are paid R300.00/hour. Before a mentoring contract is initiated there is a process whereby suitable clients for the mentoring programme are identified. The selection process of clients / mentees is aligned with the project stipulations of the funding agreement, as in “linkage programme between a designer or designers and three SMMEs”. The selection is not random and needs to identify the clients who are best suited to the intended outcomes of the projects.

4.2.2 Mentoring Planning and Logistics

Formal mentoring relationships develop at the initiative of the Organisation or clothing SMEs in two ways. Firstly, the Organisation selects from its members for mentoring, and contacts the entrepreneurs to participate in the mentoring programme. Entrepreneurs need to match the scope and criteria for the planned outcomes of the projects in key performance areas (KPIs).

And potential participants are called to arrange the mentor’s initial assessment visit.

When I started off with them [the Organisation], they phone me to ask if it is possible for them to send someone around. And that is how I got to know the mentors. They will phone me to inform me to find out if I have time and then the mentor will obviously call to arrange a suitable time. (Gawa)

A mentor is allocated to do an assessment, “go and conduct an investigation and come up with some type of scope or plan of action to best support that entrepreneur” (Mentor 1).

Secondly, clients contact the Organisation and a mentor is sent out to complete an evaluation and explain the mentoring programme to the client, “as they (clients) may have a wrong expectation of what the mentor is coming to do” (Director). The Organisation’s training coordinator further explained: “Participants set up their own businesses, and later on realise they are not sure how to go about certain operations, then they will contact me and I will link them to a mentor”. Mentoring takes place with weekly visits and mentors are required to: “Evaluate [learning] transference and report back to the Organisation on a weekly basis regarding company progress”. Mentors are required to write up monthly progress reports on the mentees.

4.2.3 The Initial Client Assessment

The initial assessment with the mentee is a checklist to identify key deliverables that the mentors and their mentees work towards. This assessment is technical covering “from the legal to the technical and operation side, is extensive and at the end of the checklist there are recommendations as a mentor (Director).”

Based on their initial assessment the mentor presents a proposal or plan of action to the Organisation for implementation. The Organisation has the final say in what will be done, and: “allocate hours and the scope of work and then we go in and do the actual interventions with the owners (Mentor 1).”

4.2.4 Mentoring Contact Time

Mentoring contact time and number of mentees within projects are determined at the funding stage. In the current funding period 2015-2016 , only R72 000.00 is allocated for 240 mentoring hours in total, to three beneficiaries, equaling 80 hours of mentoring time per client for the year and includes the initial client assessment. When the Organisation schedules the contact time at operational level it considers the initial client report by the mentor said the Training Coordinator:

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The mentors will come in and sit down with their report and to plan, discuss what needs to be done, work out a programme that will indicate how many hours need to be spent with the client in which areas. And work scheduled for days spent and so.

But mentors did not always receive the hours they considered needed as a result of budget constraints:

The Organisation decides what hours they will allocate, many a time it was not enough. Time-line works like this - the Organisation says to you, this is the funding we have received; this is what we can afford, so you are getting X-amount. By and large the Organisation decides what hours they will allocate. (Mentor 2).

Table 4.1 Data Extracts – Mentee Complaints over Limited Contact Time

Respondent	
Dave	<p>“mentoring was inconsistent, as the mentors would spend nominal small amount of time and not follow up whether any learning had in fact been the outcomes of the intervention”</p> <p>“mentors can’t come and spend two or three hours,...and expect your technique will progress”</p>
Clive	<p>“I would say the only negative that we would love to have them more than the allocated time... they were not always readily available as we need” “</p>
Adeel	<p>“I argued and complained you people always here when its busy....But the moment you hit the short-time and having dips we do not see you guys, that is the time when I want you to be there to see, how do I survive now through that patchy area”</p>

This situation raised questions as to how limited contact time influenced the quality of the mentoring, even by the Director who asked “whether any effective mentorship can take place in such short time-frames.” All the mentees generally viewed the contact time as insufficient and complain about the quantity and quality of mentoring, as illustrated in Table 4.1.

However the study finds that mentees are included in successive years of the mentoring programme, and the average time frame for receiving mentoring extends over several years for all the mentees interviewed.

4.2.5 Mentor Placement Policy

The Director believes that: “The Organisation has a pool of mentors that are highly technical and this is important as mentors need to be skilled, experienced in the industry and have capabilities in line with the work-study, productivity, quality control, finance, marketing and market development.”

Mentors have technical expertise – to address the needs of the mentee and nature of the operational problem a mentor is placed who is best qualified. The Organisation has a technically focused placement policy but the Director notes that, “There is the human angle we need to look at as well.”

Mentor placement is not always successful as in a case where the client “asked for the mentor to be removed as the mentor did not understand the client” (Director), and a second mentor had to be assigned. The Director also believes that The Organisation should become, “more interactive in the way they were dealing with the situations and not just outsourcing....we need the client to interview the mentor, so that they may connect”.

4.2.6 Mentor Remuneration

Mentors are contracted when needed, as explained by the Director, but “budgets are limited as mentors need to be paid”. However, “mentors do not want to be managed, and we want to be cost effective.” The Organisation is concerned about the affordability of mentoring costs and the wasting of donor funds, when overruns of planned hourly contract time occurs seemingly without adequate explanation. This raises issues around the ‘professionalism’ of the mentors:

Looking at the integrity in certain instances when mentors go over the hours allocated, they need to step forward and explain why this was necessary....raises questions as to what type of partnerships, working relationships there are currently...some mentors want to become social mentors, and this becomes unprofessional. (The Director)

4.3 The Mentors and their Approach to Mentoring

Both mentors who participated in the study have extensive industry experience within the clothing sector with a combined total of 65 years between them. Mentor 1 has had experience in the clothing industry since 1993 in various capacities, including production and over the years completed various training courses in training and education. Mentor 2 has 43 years' experience in the clothing industry, and has worked both in and outside of SA. He has had in-house management training as far back as 1972 when consultants from the UK conducted training programmes that he participated in.

4.3.1 Mentor 1

Mentor 1 believes that entrepreneurs need to be taught to do for themselves, although exceptions exist, for instance in the initial stages of the mentoring relationship, as he explained:

Mentorship is not about *doing for*; I never *do for* a business owner. There are important times at the very early, infancy stage where we have just met that I will *do for*. I will measure; give a target, point out things. As soon as the relationship is established, and there is a framework for the relationship, then I no longer *do for*. I prompt, probe, ask questions, I share, say let's integrate information, let's look at our results. If you *do for* the owner, you are actually destroying their business because if you leave they cannot do these themselves. And that's the last thing you want.

He believes in putting the needs of the mentee first and not only meeting the goals of the mentoring project: "My goal is to service that entrepreneur, in terms of what they want to achieve with their business. If a further outcome to that is growth, expansion, further opportunities, innovation- then that become a new phase, new venture, and new scope."

He has a long term view on mentoring relationships:

You establish a lifelong relationship. Even when you leave the situation, even when the mentorship term comes to an end then that owner will still seek your counsel and input - Still be in communication with you and invite you to events in their life, basically you become a family. Because that is what mentorship does.

However, he thinks that some relationships do need to end when there are no positive outcomes and explained “Because the entrepreneur does not want to change their ways, a wise mentor will actually just stop it and say it’s over, finish, end”. Another reason to end the mentor-mentee relationship is when “entrepreneur becomes very taxing in their reliance on you.”

4.3.2 Mentor 2

Mentor 2 believes that “true” mentoring is more about the very small enterprise and believes in close mentoring relationships:

We were involved with smaller companies, like the 5-6 people, those were the true mentoring opportunities. You took the person’s hand; they were not really business people, not even entrepreneurs for that matter. They knew how to make a garment and this is what they do. And then we had to work with them, and say here is certain business principles that you need to start implementing.

He also believes that a mentor needs to be flexible and adapt to the different personality of the mentees:

You got to adapt yourself for every business you go into, every entrepreneur. You have to look at the personality - because people are different, you have to have different approaches. Although we work to the same thing, you need to do it slightly different or your approach should be slightly different [in each case].

Mentor 2 has learnt that open relationships are important and that the mentee needs to be made aware of the benefits of mentoring to get “buy-in” from the mentees:

Lots of the bigger guys, it was sort of we going to do this, and then we didn’t totally get buy-in from them. Then when we moved out they just left those things and fell flat, we learnt that this person must be made completely aware of the benefits. Those are the ones who stuck to it, who are still probably around now.

He discussed the importance of close ties and working hand in hand, in teaching entrepreneurs, as essential to mentoring. He believes that providing gradual guidance to the mentee is important to increase the mentee's skills in managing their businesses.

4.4 Mentorship Practices and Activities

Mentors are scheduled to meet with the mentee weekly and to report monthly on the progress by the mentee to the Organisation. The mentors engage and advise the mentees through in-depth discussions and planning sessions. Mentors check on mentees weekly to ensure that they are on track in the current activities of the firm acting in a supervisory capacity.

Mentor 1 listed the following as his main activities with clients:

- Facilitate and oversight advisory role, (business management) with financial planning
- Developing frameworks, timelines, realities to entrepreneurs
- Facilitate learnerships within the factory, save cost, reduce wage bills
- Develop strategic planning and thinking by clients
- Assist with structured planning – for example “Played a role in the setting up of in-house training facility with the large business client, feeder into the factory”
- Guide and advise clients in growing their business
- Training and practical exercises in technical areas like garment costing

As Adeel indicated, mentoring guided improvements in his business management:

Mentor guided you in improving your techniques, almost in a supervisory capacity, overseeing, doing exercises with you, and through that showing that there could be certain improvements.

Table 4.2 Data Extracts – Mentor Activities as Relayed by the Mentees

Respondent	
Dave	<p>“Ya they did it (training) to my staff and also come and mentor supervisors, fairly limited”</p> <p>“Mentor 1 is a good teacher helped the staff in basic procedures and put systems in place”</p>
Clive	<p>“they engage with the staff, they will go to the machine operator and at the lowest level also, they will engage the guy who is sweeping the factory.”</p> <p>“Frank and open discussions”</p> <p>“we had a monthly review, in which we supplied mentor 1 with the data, monthly performances”</p>
Adeel	<p>“like sit with the paper, and make a breakdown, do this, do that. Don’t stress about the bargaining council, you phone them and give them a letter.”</p> <p>“he will come in today and ask what are you busy with, and we would talk. And he would guide me through this, like costing. I would do one already, and he would do one, and he would say Ok you not too far out,”</p> <p>“I would talk to him like I am talking to you now, and he would listen. So that’s how, just by listening to me and that was really mentoring me,”</p>
Gawa	<p>“they would go unto the factory floor to see how is the workload, and ask me now the styles that is on the line, what must go out, how far are you, will you meet delivery. From there we will sit and do the books and he will check up on the books and I will tell him this is the delivery dates and this is how far I am”</p>

The mentors also help with planning for and exploring of new opportunities as Clive explained: “We started to look at short to medium and long term planning, in terms of staff development, the direction of where the company would like to go, and the outcomes assigned to each.” The mentor is generally associated with supervision by the mentees; and oversight in the management of their business as indicated by their comments in Table 4.2.

Practical exercises including garment costing and budgeting. Mentors are also involved in training employees of the entrepreneur. The outcomes are not always successful as Mentor 2 reveals how mentees were not always persuaded: “We didn’t totally get buy in from them, and when we moved out, they just left those things and it fell flat. We learned then, this person must be made aware of the benefits to get this person to buy in completely.”

The mentors, their roles and approaches to mentor relationships and the mentor activities have now been described to provide a fuller understanding of who mentors are, what mentors do and how they do this. We next turn to the mentees; the following section will introduce and discuss who the mentees are and the experiences of being mentored.

4.5 The Mentees

Four entrepreneurs (mentees) participated in the study. The entrepreneurs are described individually to get a sense of their uniqueness and to understand their issues and experiences of formal mentoring, each as a stand-alone case (Yin 1981; Eisenhardt 1989). Their experiences of the mentoring with both positive and negative aspects are included.

Generally the mentees are informed upfront of the set objectives within the mentoring relationship. Gawa said: “They do work out a programme, like he first has to observe and monitor what is going on in your plant.” Similarly Clive answered: “Yes, they [mentors] obviously wanted to improve efficiency and they wanted to lower the repair rate that ties into efficiency. And they wanted to set systems in place.”

4.5.1 Entrepreneur Case 1 - Dave

Dave is married, with adult children, and describes his background as humble and impoverished and says his greatest motivation is his personal drive to succeed. He describes himself as “straight to the face and volatile at times.” Dave now owns two factories employing over five hundred employees. Manufacturing men’s, women’s and children’s clothing ranges, under label from the design houses. He supplies two of the largest retailers in SA. He started the business with 20 employees in 2007 as a necessity start-up after taking a retrenchment package from his former employer. The business is non-unionised and this is a philosophy he firmly believes in.

However, the business is fully compliant with the Clothing Industry Bargaining Council. A few of the challenges he experienced over the years include the personal strife in his marriage as a result of the stress and his incessant drive to succeed in his business. He explained how each year he sets targets to improve on the year before, and how few believe this is possible until he actually achieves them.

He has extensive experience in the clothing sector, having before worked for very large clothing firms in various capacities starting off as a work-study officer, then as a factory manager and industrial engineer. His education includes an incomplete B.Com degree, his work-study diploma and a production management diploma.

Dave has been a member of the Organisation for the past 5-6 years, and has been mentored by Mentor 1 and other mentors before that. He describes the current involvement of the Organisation as “non-existent”, meaning that recent contact and interaction by the Organisation with him during late 2014 and 2015 has been very poor.

When asked what the reasons were for having a mentor, Dave said he was invited to be a part of the mentoring programmes by the Organisation as they needed “to have the additional SMEs on their books.” He expected the mentoring would improve the business performance, but this did not happen: “I have no faith in the abilities of the mentors as they were not able to match [my] depth and knowledge in the industry”. As a result Dave believes he has not personally learnt from the mentoring relationship.

He is skeptical of mentors who are not able to implement the theory that they know: “I said, no this is not working. You can’t send this person; you can’t continually send people that don’t actually know what they are doing.”

Dave believes that mentors need to demonstrate expertise and ability to add value:

If you want to mentor me, you must first know what you are talking about and you can [then] actually add value to my life and to my business. But they have not displayed that knowledge. (Dave)

Although he concedes that his employees in his factory learnt from the mentor, mentorship has not been of significant help to his own learning. Dave believes that mentorship can work but needs commitment from the mentors: “you do need assistance and it can be quite successful, but you need dedication and commitment from the mentors themselves”. He notes that there were some good outcomes and Mentor 1 was: “a good teacher who helped the staff in basic procedures and put systems in place,”

The mentoring contact time that is allocated for (budgeting) is an issue as Dave believes the limited mentor-mentee contact time does not lead to good mentoring outcomes as he had this to say: “You can’t come and spend two or three hours or four hours, or whatever and expect your technique will progress, rubbish, can’t happen.”

Dave – Business Performance and Innovation

Business innovation is evident in producing new clothing styles and supplying new customers. Dave’s business growth over the years is tremendous, from just 20 employees to over 500, and his current turnover has increased exponentially since 2007.

Innovation is evident at the industry level as he is one of the first to establish his own training facility in which Mentor 1 played a role in setting up. Operating with a non-unionised labour force is unusual for the sector at this level and with his number of employees, in comparison to his competitors, and needs to be mentioned. Dave believes his training facility is the largest and most successful of its kind:

We are the only business that I know of that has got that number of trainees; we have our own training school. We have another factory on the other side, where we do our training ourselves. About 1/3 of our staff are trainees and we have a huge success rate. Whereas other businesses have an 80% failure rate, we got I [would] say about a 60% success rate.

Dave furthermore explained that he considered the shortage of skills in the industry as a constraint to his business growth, years earlier already, hence the training facility:

How did I deal with the lack of skills in this industry? In order to grow the business to this size without the skills available. Right, [be]cause I knew two to three years ago, that I will reach a point of no growth. And I planned for it, how do I counter it, if you can't acquire the skills from out there you have to develop the skills yourself; Exactly, so now I am spending my own money to actually acquire those skills

He considers himself the driving force behind the successful innovations in his firm: "there are so many things, and I have taken it upon myself to change a lot of things."

4.5.2 Entrepreneur Case 2 - Clive

Clive is part of a husband and wife team who own a factory employing between 45-50 employees. The business started 15 years ago in the informal sector with two employees, as a home based operation, supplying tracksuits and schoolwear to local schools and crèches. The wife is a qualified machinist and started the original business when she decided to stay home with a growing family. Clive joined the business full-time in 2007 and has a background in education; as a teacher and being promoted to management at the head-office of the education department. Clive's education includes post-graduate university qualifications.

The couple has been mentored by both Mentor 1 and Mentor 2 over the past 7-8 years. Prior to this they were mentored by a predecessor who retired when Mentor 1 took over. Clive believes that he has learnt through the mentoring and considers the growth in their business as directly influenced by the mentorship. He believes that the mentor had played a role in their success:

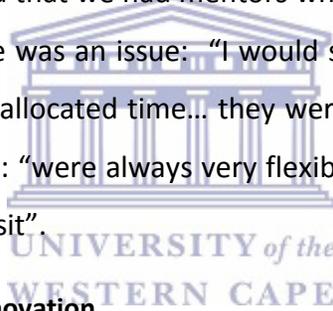
Instrumental I would say, he [mentor] was the cornerstone and foundation of where we are today. He was the one who taught us about recording the performances on a board, and the breaking down of the operations. He was a founder member of putting systems into place. We improved our systems, and started to quantify and monitor the performance of each employee.

Clive believes that the Organisation played an important part in their business: "I can honestly say if the Organisation had not given the support they had, a couple years ago, I don't think we

would have achieved as we have achieved”. Clive benefitted and learnt from his mentors in a personal capacity:

I would say discipline, and consistency. Let’s make an example, if the instruction is to the supervisor that you need to record every hour, then that must happen come hell or high water. We cannot accept that if I come there at 12 o’clock that 11 o’clock production is not there...even if the factory burnt down at 11h15, there was time for the 11’oclock write down. That is also a sense of discipline then, consistency is one of the things that we developed, personal consistency and personal discipline.

He had a good relationship with both mentors over the years: “I cannot under-emphasise the role that they played”, and: “In terms of the mentoring relationship, very good relationship...we [were] really fortunate and blessed that we had mentors who went beyond the scope and call of their duty.” Although limited time was an issue: “I would say the only negative that we would love to have them more than the allocated time... they were not always readily available as we need”. But he added that mentors: “were always very flexible, and we could call them at a time that they were not scheduled to visit”.



Clive - Business Performance and Innovation

Business innovations that are evident for Clive are new products, supplying new customers, new processes and systems that have been developed over the years. Having started with just a few clothing styles, the business now produces a wide variety of products across men’s, women’s and children’s clothing. Systematic improvements include the HR (recruitment and training) and production systems (systematic recording of production levels) that were implemented successfully and are attributed to learning from mentors.

Clive has experienced consistent growth in sales and employee numbers over the years. When asked about growth in the business since 2008: “We employed around 30 employees; this has grown to around 50. Turnover has grown remarkably, many times over.”

4.5.3 Entrepreneur Case 3 - Adeel

Adeel has been involved in various enterprises starting in his teens. Apart from working full time over the years, he has had several start-up enterprises: “[he] has always been business minded and at an early age was selling clothes at the flea-market in Elsie's River and selling juices and biscuits as a side-income, from around the age of 17 already”.

Adeel has secondary schooling and has been associated with the Organisation for over 5 years, attending various workshops with them in this time. His current business has been operating for 5 years after he closed the previous business which employed around 30 people. He mentions the stress levels in his previous business were too much:

Well, I had grown bigger than this [current business], but I closed, it was just becoming too stressful. The unions and bargaining council - something I hate about the business is the unions; they have their rights but I also have my rights. But I think I was not equipped to handle these issues and that was what brought me to basically just let me rather just get out, getting too much. (Adeel)

He stayed home for about a year, before starting up again. The current business has 15-20 employees. His business produces a variety of clothing styles, and more recently has also begun producing cushions. The production of cushions came about through a deal brokered by the Mentor. He now takes on work whenever he receives orders from various work-suppliers.

The mentoring has been on-going since 2012 and he was mentored by Mentor 1. The visits by the mentor were 2-3 times a month: “pop in for about an hour.” After he eventually complained that this was insufficient contact time, the contact time increased to 2-3 hours per visits, and on occasion the mentor would “spend a day.”

Adeel believes that he learnt from the mentors: “They helped sharpen me and helped me with costing which was a new system, the measuring system and that helped me also a lot. They helped me improve the costing of the garments a lot. I can take a garment, and give you a costing and feel more confident”.

Adeel also believes that he learnt from the mentor in areas of HR management that before was a weakness for him:

I had so many disputes with the Bargaining Council, and unions; [be]cause I may have done something on the spur of the moment, I dismissed you [be]cause of that you get punished, you must pay. And now what I do is I go procedural, and before I could never. I am using of their methods and the way he does things.

Adeel believes that as a direct influence of the mentor: “I am more skilled now and I got more in-depth knowledge of things I never knew. Work-study is very important, balancing the line. Yes they did help me.”

Adeel - Business Performance and Innovation

Business innovation for Adeel is evident in the production of new products (recently started producing cushions), services and the implementation of new systems as he says: “They helped me with costing which was a new system, the measuring system and that helped me also a lot”. He has expanded into a cutting room and extended his workshop: “So I asked my neighbor here if I could rent a piece from his floor for a cutting table, it was OK so I offered a cutting service.”

Adeel has experienced mixed fortunes over the years, with inconsistent growth and high levels of staff turnover, and is currently employing fewer employees than before. One aspect that he struggled with is consistency and does not always keep up with the new systems having this to say, indicating the inconsistency:

Like these flags behind you, the red and the black [performance indicators]. That is something I am not using anymore, but you need to use it. One is for performance and one is for quality.

4.5.4 Entrepreneur Case 4 - Gawa

Gawa started her CMT business 19 years ago as a necessity driven start-up as a result of retrenchments at the company she was working for before. Her business currently has 10 employees which is fewer than earlier years as the business has experienced periods of growth

and decline. She produces a variety of clothing styles for women and men depending on the orders received. Small orders are placed at times by the work suppliers and this is not a problem as she says: “I have 8 clients, some are small runs like 100, 90. It does not matter if you have 20 or 30, for me it is work.”

Gawa depends on orders from work-suppliers, although she does not have any contracts with the work-suppliers which make it difficult:

Went out to look for work, I had so many staff and eventually the industry started to go down so you needed to reduce. You see with us CMTs we do not have signed contracts with companies to get work from them all the time. We must go out to look for our work that is the problem with us.

Gawa has secondary schooling, is a qualified machinist and worked as a supervisor. She has been a member of the Organisation since around 2007, and says: “this has been off and on.” The Organisation would call her from time to time with an invitation to attend training workshops.

She was mentored by both Mentor 1 and Mentor 2, about 2-3 sessions a month that lasted for about an hour: “he came like every second week and spent an hour or so.” She also would call the mentor over the telephone for additional contact time when needed. The mentoring started at the invitation of the Organisation as Gawa says: “They phoned me to ask if it is possible for them to send someone around.”

Gawa has learnt from the mentoring, as she explains: “He taught me costing and how I need to handle certain things...because I did not understand costing. I never learnt costing. And how to handle the clients when they come in and don’t just take anything that they say.”

She added that the mentors made a difference in her business as she kept better records of the finances:

Yes I can [see a difference], I know exactly what I have spent for the week. This is what I spent on cotton for the week. So there is a big difference for me, I take note of a lot of things I did not do in my previous time, now I take note of where my mistake was. There I am trying to uplift a little. (Gawa)

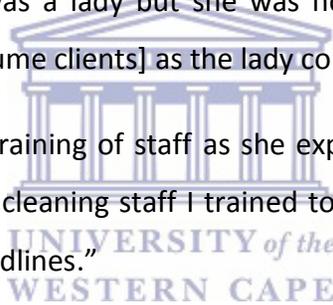
Gawa - Business Performance and Innovation

Business innovation for Gawa is evident in the new clothing lines that the business produces compared to before: “we did mostly t-shirts and shirt.” The firm has over the years started producing women’s and men’s wear for some of the leading retailers in SA, under the label of top designers: “You get some of these companies who are very good, like Barry Klein who I worked for, for 8 years. And they actually supplied us with high volumes of work.”

Although order quantities are currently smaller than before, this was not always the case. Gawa has experienced cycles of growth and decline over the years. She could not find someone to manage the business while pregnant and was obliged to stop the higher volume:

I fell pregnant and there was no-one to put into my place, to run my business the way it was supposed to. There was a lady but she was not doing a good job, and I stopped working for them [high volume clients] as the lady could not handle all the pressure.

Innovation is also evident in the training of staff as she explains: “And I am teaching others as well. I have 10 staff now, and my cleaning staff I trained to work on the machines. So they are learning. This helps us to meet deadlines.”



4.6 Comparison of Cases

A few similarities and differences between the cases will now be discussed. Dave has had the highest levels of growth and innovation, but believes that he has not personally learnt from mentoring. Clive, in comparison, has experienced modest but consistent growth and innovation under mentorship, and believes he learnt under guidance from the mentors. Adeel and Gawa, when compared, have had periods of growth and decline in their business, but with the least innovation over the years although both indicate they have learnt through mentorship.

Clive, Adeel and Gawa believe they have learnt from their mentors to do certain things differently in the management of their business. In particular they learnt in the areas of HR management, general budgeting and book-keeping, as well as garment costing and in areas of operational management. In contrast, Dave does not believe he learnt anything from the mentoring, although his staff learnt in his factory.

Clive, Adeel and Gawa all compare and consider the mentoring to being supervised. The mentors played a continuous oversight role (weekly visits) that assisted the mentee to manage their enterprises more effectively. The mentors assist with practical exercises and training to improve operational efficiencies and garment costing. Mentors also discuss and advise provision in other areas. Advice could be very technical in areas such as garment construction or management oriented in HR management and financial management.

Business innovation when defined as producing new products, the supply of new customers, providing new services or implementing new systems is evident across all cases, with the highest level of innovation by Dave.

Dave has innovation with new products, new systems and processes. An industry level innovation by Dave that stands out in terms of industry trends is his in-house training facility that is regarded as one of the largest and most successful in the area.

Clive, Adeel and Gawa display innovations in the new products they produce. Innovation is evident in the systems, and processes that they have learnt over the years; like the HR and production management systems. Some of these entrepreneurs have had mixed fortunes, yet they have learnt to supply new customers and to produce new clothing lines of men's, women's and children clothing ranges that they were previously not doing.

Operational improvements are evident when production systems are introduced that monitor and balance the production lines, in terms of quality and quantity. Similarly HR systems monitored staff performances to increase efficiency. Business performance improvements are evident in the increased turnover and employment of more staff. Although operational improvements and increased business performance are evident across all the cases, Adeel and Gawa feel that they have not been very successful. By their own account Adeel and Gawa have not been very consistent in (i) being mentored, and (ii) not keeping up with the implementation of new systems that mentors taught.

4.7 Mentees Perception of Formal Mentoring

Three of the mentees generally regard the mentor as playing a positive and supportive role in the management of the business. They could call on the mentor, to play a guiding role when they were faced with problems, including consulting by telephone when needed. The mentees do pick up the phone and call for advice and support when they having difficulties in the business. As indicated by Clive: “very supportive; I can’t say they were never there for me. If I phone now....[mentor] will always try to help me.”

Table 4.3 Data Extracts - Entrepreneur’s Perceptions of the Mentors

Respondent	
Clive	<p>“So I cannot underemphasize the role that they played” “In terms of the mentoring relationship, very good relationship”</p> <p>“we really fortunate and blessed that we had mentors, bothwent beyond the scope and call of their duty. If there is a problem and we were trying to get this under control....we could call even over a weekend,”</p> <p>“Their support is like gold, seriously. I would say the mentors....were great and you could learn a lot”</p>
Adeel	<p>“He is always that type of person that you want behind you.. He is very supportive; I would say I learnt a lot, just by talking”</p> <p>“very supportive; I can’t say they were never there for me. If I phone now.... will always try to help me”</p>
Gawa	<p>“yes they have been a great help because from what I didn’t know and I know these kind of things now....very helpful because I can pick up the phone and ask them what do you think, if I go this route, I want to do this”</p> <p>“They are very encouraging; I can phone them late at night”</p>

These entrepreneurs have an overall positive impression of the mentors because the mentors provided psychosocial support and encouragement in learning about the management of their businesses. This is evident by the comments made in table 4.3

However, these overall positive perceptions are not shared by Dave, who was running a much larger business with different needs:

You can go and mentor a person in a small company or a house CMT with a small level of education that is struggling to make a business; you can add value to that business. But when you take our business, I had to question what value can you add to my business? And your answer is very, very little, not really an asset. (Dave)

4.8 Case Summary

The formal mentorship programme in the case is funding dependent, and the donors set strategic targets such as job creation as outcomes of their funding. The Organisation applies for such funding, and writes proposals aligned to the strategic outcomes of the funder, the proposal includes formal mentorship as an intervention within industry specific projects.

In a top-down approach to formal mentorship, the objectives of formal mentoring are industry related and determined at a strategic level such as productivity and efficiency improvements. The strategic focus areas of the funder and the outcomes of the formal mentorship programme are aligned, and managed by the Organisation, through key performance areas (KPIs).

Tension exists in the administration and management of the formal mentorship programme including tensions over contact time, budget constraints, mentor-mentee professionalism and the controls by coordinators. Reports are required for the funders to see how the outcomes of the mentoring interventions match their funding objectives and aims are to reconcile whether their funding has the required outcomes, and to motivate why funding should continue.

Formal mentorship in the case is technically oriented and the mentors get involved in the operations of the mentees businesses, to improve productivity and achieve efficiency gains. Exercises in garment costing and budgeting take place.

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

Networking activities are held in conjunction with the Organisation that supports stakeholder engagements and new supplier relationships being developed. The Organisation plays a complementary and parallel role to the formal mentoring in the provision of additional training interventions.

The mentor and mentee activities include in-depth discussions and planning sessions. Mentors provide advice to the mentee and act in a supervisory role in overseeing how mentees manage their business week to week. Close working relationships develop and the expectation is for skills transfer as mentees are expected to learn, and assimilate the intended learning outcomes, such as garment costing.

Business innovation is evident, although limited, as only two entrepreneurs appear to be growing their businesses consistently. Despite this, the businesses studied all have grown in turnover, with higher number of employees, over the years. Not all experienced consistent growth as Adeel and Gawa experienced cycles of ups and downs.

Business innovations are evident in new products, new services, supplying new customers, new management systems and systems implementation such as production and HR management systems. Industry innovation is evident by Dave who manages to train up to a third of his workforce in an in-house training facility.

Learning is evident by the mentees. Their learning is credited to the involvement and influence of the mentors. Learning about garment costing and operational management is evident. Personal learning is also reported in instances of self-discipline and personal consistency that was developed under the guidance of the mentor.

The perceptions of the mentees are generally very positive about the mentors and the Organisation. Mentees generally applaud the mentors for their teaching and support. Mentors are considered instrumental in adding value, through the teaching of technical ability and business management. Mentors provide further support through advice and counseling through trouble spots the mentees may be experiencing. A psychosocial support role by the mentor is evident in those cases.

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

Not all mentee perceptions are positive with Dave in particular being negative towards the formal mentoring, as he believed that the depth and industry knowledge of the mentors was inadequate. The most common complaint by the mentees about formal mentoring was the limited contact time as they would have liked more time with the mentor.

Chapter 5 will integrate the findings with reference to the literature review in Chapter 2, bringing us back to the research questions that guide the study.



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the findings of the case study presented in the preceding chapter, with the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The overall discussion in this chapter is guided by the main research question:

How does formal mentorship influence entrepreneurial learning and business innovation within selected clothing sector SME's?

The discussion is further guided by the sub-set of investigative questions listed on page 5.

Thematic data analysis develops themes as the final product (Braun and Clarke 2006), or, as the “tool for presenting findings” according to Vaismoradi, Turenen and Bondas (2013). The chapter firstly focuses on themes concerning the mentoring programme within the context of sponsorship, to provide insights on strategic influence into operational aspects of the mentoring programme. Then, the themes concerning learning and business innovation by the entrepreneurs are discussed. The research participant responses are the empirical grounding of the discussion here. Tables are very useful to summarise case evidence as suggested by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007). Tables are used in this chapter particularly when data extracts, from different respondents, converge in similar meaning and enhance the strength of the knowledge claims. In summary the themes are the basis to revise the conceptual model (Fig 2.1), developed from the literature review, and this revised model (Fig 5.1) concludes the chapter.

5.2 Project Funded Formal Mentorship

The mentoring programme in the study is similar to formal mentoring programmes in South Australia and Ireland, and an entrepreneurial coaching programme in Canada. Similarities are evident in the agreed framework (3rd party management) that specifies procedures, controls and checks and the public funding for the programmes (Bisk 2002; Barret 2006; Audet & Couteret 2012). Table 5.1 below compares features found in this study to the Australian and Canadian studies (Barret 2006; Audet & Couteret 2012), and is the basis for the discussion that follows.

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

Table 5.1 Comparison of Formal mentoring in Australia, Canada and South Africa

<u>Mentoring features</u>	<u>Australian Case (Barret 2006)</u>	<u>Canadian Case (Audet and Couteret 2012)</u>	<u>SA Clothing Industry Case 2015</u>
Mentee selection and Interviewing.	Mentees are interviewed by the project manager and a diagnostic assessment by the mentor. Mentees attend two one day workshops with their mentor prior to mentoring to identify issues of the mentee – top three issues are selected.	Incubator manager (mentoring programme) visits the firm and diagnoses the problems.	The mentees are members of the Organisation and are evaluated solely by the mentor without involvement of the Organisation in the initial meeting. Mentors report this diagnosis to the Organisation.
Mentor skills and qualifications	Mentors are volunteers and generally have experience in previous mentoring projects. Mentors are coupled to another “buddy mentor” to turn to for mentor-mentor advice.	Coaches have extensive business experience, most have bachelor’s degree or MBA. Coaches generally have experience in the field of the entrepreneur.	Mentors are required to have extensive industry experience and technical skills.
Mentor mentee matching	Project manager appoints the mentor based on skills base and needs of the mentee.	Manager appoints a coach most suitable to work with the entrepreneur based on the earlier diagnosis.	Mentors are “technically placed” by the Organisation as best suited to help solve the operational problems of the mentee.
Action Plan	An action plan is developed based on the top three issues identified by the mentee. Mentor-mentee relationship focused on these issues.	Plan of action discussed with the mentor, guided by the incubator manager. Coach in full control once coaching starts.	Generic approach determined in the proposal agreement between funder and the Organisation. Mentor and mentee plan further during the relationship.
Contact Time	Contact time per mentee is limited and mostly group sessions (6.9 hours), one-on-one contact time (4.2 hours) and a further 2 hours in telephone, email and video conferencing. Total hours allocated are 13.	Contact time is one day per week. Coach submits weekly reports on mentoring. Quarterly meetings are held with both “coach” and mentee.	Contact time @ 80 hours per annum part of funding agreement. Mentors report weekly to the Organisation on progress by mentees.
Purpose of the mentoring / coaching	Purpose of the mentoring, based on the action plan developed – top three issues of the mentee.	Mentees are briefed upfront on the purpose of the coach. Mentors are forewarned not to do work of the entrepreneur.	Mentees are made aware upfront about the purpose and expected outcomes of the mentoring.

All the cases in Table 5.1 conform to the definition of formal mentoring by Armstrong *et al* (2002, p. 1111), referring to a deliberate process - whereby a third party matches mentor and mentee into a formal relationship. All three cases are public funded, and the mentoring/coaching is overseen through third party management that specifies procedures, controls and checks in the programme. The cases illustrate the similarities between the mentoring and coaching processes according to Audet and Couteret (2012, p. 517).

While the comparison (Table 5.1) and discussion thereof, highlight distinctive features of the SA clothing case and general commonalities are accepted, the *modus operandi* across the cases differs in key areas, such as mentee selection and interviewing procedures. These salient aspects will ostensibly influence the formal mentoring practises and their outcomes. There are different contexts to all the cases though and different purposes drive their programmes, and the caveat here is that the comparisons and its analysis are cautious and tentative.

Differences and similarities that are discussed next are evident in areas that include mentee selection, mentor-mentee matching, action plan, purpose of the mentoring and contact times.

5.2.1 Programme Funding Influence on Contact Time and the Quality of Mentoring

Programme funding is a strong theme that emerged early in the study. The Director was clear during the very first interview that without external funding the formal mentoring program is likely to come to an end. Subsequent interviews with a number of respondents supported this. Secondary data and reports also show the tedious and carefully administered process that the Organisation has to comply with to secure on-going funding. This is consistent with Bisk (2002) where the terms of mentoring is funding dependent, also Audet and Couteret (2012) and Barret (2006) where mentoring is financed through public funding.

During the current funding period (2015-2016) only R72 000, equal to 80 hours of actual mentoring time was allocated per beneficiary. This is less than two hours per week, and limited when compared to the public funded coaching programme in Canada where 1 day per week was the case (Audet and Couteret 2012). However, this is more than the allocation in Australian and in English cases (Barret 2006; Kent *et al* 2003).

Both St Jean and Audet (2009, p. 22) report that mentoring frequency and duration are likely to influence learning and Audet and Couteret (2012, p. 525) warn against reducing the frequency of scheduled meetings. The mentees interviewed were unanimous in their critique of limited contact time, (see Table 4.3) and this is consistent with Barret's (2006) finding that greater levels of contact time may be beneficial to the mentee. The limited contact time in this study may thus negatively influence the mentoring outcomes such as EL and business innovation. The expectation of the mentees for greater contact time may indicate their need for more direct interventions, like consultants or coaches, to finding solutions to their immediate business problems. While the Organisation and the mentors are focused on longer term mentoring, their client environment seems to demand coaching, through shorter term and higher density contact time to find solutions to pressing business problems (Luecke 2004). The mentees' demand for more contact time is comparable to findings in other cases such as Australia (Barret 2006) and Canada (Audet and Couteret 2012)

5.3 Programme Management - Tension around Mentor Remuneration

One of the salient issues raised in the study is how the managing of the mentoring contact times and mentor payment are a source of tension. Budget over-runs create conflict over weak controls, as pointed out by the Director: "[I] questioned how a 100 hour contract can be exceed by 64 hours". Budget over-runs exhaust already limited funding. This issue seems not to have been a worry in prior studies and is therefore not adequately addressed in prior literature.

Tension about mentor remuneration creates an element of mistrust and conflict with those managing the formal mentoring programme. The mentoring programme coordinator may have weak controls, or inappropriately awarded additional contact time, following complaints of the mentees about limited contact time. This aspect ties into the importance of a framework for formal mentoring (Barret 2006), and the role of the programme coordinator in formal mentoring (Audet & Couteret 2012). During interviews mentors mentioned the budget constraints and how their hours were monitored and insufficient at times, despite mentees requiring additional contact time.

What is not clear is how the mentoring programme coordinating team, as a whole can monitor and manage this aspect? As a response to budget over-runs the issue of mentor professionalism and the type of mentor relationships that are being conducted in the field are questioned: “some mentors want to become social mentors, and this becomes unprofessional (the Director).”

In relation to the research question, in terms of the funding contract and the management of the formal mentoring programme, mentors are required to not get involved in ‘non-essential’ mentoring, which may limit elements of non-technical mentoring (Bozeman & Feeney 2007).

5.3.1 Mentoring Payment Model

The Irish example of mentor remuneration that Bisk (2002) reports, only covers basic costs and the author argues that this “would not be a financial incentive” (Bisk 2002, p. 265). This study finds somewhat differently as mentors are paid R300.00/h., which may be considered similar to the higher coaching remuneration rates as reported by Garvey (2004).

Generally the issue of mentor compensation is not a salient point in prior research, perhaps because generally mentors are not paid, it is voluntary and modest per diem fees are received (Bisk 2002, Barret 2006). The amount of mentor payment could also be based on the value the mentees ascribe (Ayer 2011).

While the issue is not well discussed in prior research, the combination of free mentoring and paid mentoring in this study seems to be unique. In the case of a formal mentoring programme in Australia, mentees paid for their mentoring sessions while the mentors were mostly volunteers (Barrett 2006). In the Canadian case, coaches are contracted and mentees pay 15 percent of the actual cost (Audet and Couteret 2012).

In this case the burden of costs is solely the responsibility of the Organisation. Mentorship may be a more efficient training mechanism if some of the costs of mentoring are paid for by the mentee. This may lead to more effective use of the contact time, and better buy-in from the mentees for the mentoring programme as a serious training mechanism.

5.4 Mentoring Purpose - Top-down Mentoring Approach

The mentoring purposes and planned outcomes thereof found in the study are aligned to the strategic focus areas of the sponsor. The Organisation needs to write up the proposal in line with the sponsor's requirements, for it to be successful. This implies that the strategic interests of the sponsor play some role and influence in the actual mentoring programme. These are in areas such as increased operational efficiency, value chain alignment, increased competitiveness and generic business management. This is a top-down approach to mentoring as the mentoring outcomes are predetermined, prior to the selection and engagement of the mentees.

The top-down approach to mentoring evident in the study is similar to the Irish example (Bisk 2002), although the opposite in cases elsewhere (Barret 2006; Audet and Couteret 2012). Formal mentorship in Ireland (Bisk 2002) generally intended to lower the failure rate in new enterprises. In the Australian example the mentees identified their three top issues as the basis for the action plan to be addressed (Barret 2006). In the Canadian example the mentoring programme manager "visits the firm to diagnose their problems" and based on this upfront diagnosis the mentoring is planned (Audet and Couteret 2012, p. 520).

Outputs of this mentoring program are measured through the number of firms developed, the number of people developed, the number of jobs created and sustained changes in sales following mentoring interventions. The Organisation relies on the mentor to implement these top-down interventions, although not always with success.

Mentors report that in certain cases their interventions fell apart after they left:

Lots of the bigger guys, it was sort of we going to do this, and then we didn't totally get buy-in from them. Then when we moved out they just left those things and the [interventions] fell flat. (Mentor 2)

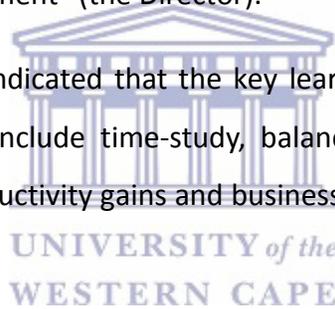
In relation to the research question, it may be inferred that EL, business innovation and improved business performance, as outcomes of formal mentoring, may be better supported when the entrepreneurs are given more leeway and freedom to decide on the outcomes to be targeted - in a bottom-up approach to formal mentoring.

The SA funders are focused on addressing high levels of turbulence in the SA clothing industry and dictate what their funding is meant to achieve. The Organisation is required to report on their progress is achieving the KPI's in line with funder criteria. This distinct context may explain why such a top-down approach is not wide-spread elsewhere (Audet and Couteret 2012; Barret 2006).

5.5 The Mentoring Role - Technical Mentoring vs. Generalist Mentoring

Mentors are required to be industry specialists as opposed to generalists. The Director indicated: "we place as we believe is technically needed". Furthermore, the technical skills of the mentor are emphasised: "mentors are highly technical and need to be skilled, experienced in the industry and have capabilities in line with the work-study, productivity, quality control, finance, marketing and marketing development" (the Director).

Both the mentors and mentees indicated that the key learning from mentoring is mostly of a technical nature. These lessons include time-study, balancing production lines, reducing the defect rate, garment costing, productivity gains and business management skills for financial and HR management.



The emphasis on industry and technical requirements in this case is in contrast to the Irish study where mentees required more business management advice and (Bisk 2002) concludes that "lack of sectorial experience [by mentor] is not a barrier" (p. 268) and industry specific knowledge by mentors does not make a big difference. The technical nature of the mentoring, in this case, is shaped by the Organisation's role in developing clothing sector SMEs, and the need to satisfy the funder's requirements. The formal mentoring programme in this case does not specifically include personal development, or psycho-social mentoring for developing self-confidence and self-efficacy as listed objectives.

The personal development of the mentee seems unimportant within this strongly technical mentoring environment even though EL is integral to the personal development of the entrepreneur, alongside business development (Cope and Watts 2000).

The findings of Waters *et al* (2002) in an Australian study, however, indicate a greater need for psychosocial support rather than career related from mentors. Similarly St-Jean and Audet (2009) who argue that effective learning is supported by a reassuring mentoring relationship. Despite the technical mentoring practice advocated by the Organisation, the study does find evidence of psycho-social (see table 4.3) support as do Waters *et al* (2002).

Psycho-social support is important for affective learning outcomes of self-confidence and entrepreneurial ability of the mentee (St-Jean and Audet 2009), and self-efficacy and learning through social relationships are important for EL according to Rae (2005).

The positive aspects of the technical mentoring role, is that technical skills support innovation (Freel 2000), as do managerial, marketing and financial skills. Similarly Astbro and Bernhardt (2005) find that business owners with higher levels of human capital better manage viable enterprises. However, the hands-on technical role by mentors found in the study is in contrast to other studies in the setting of formal mentoring (Bisk 2002; Barret 2006; Audet and Couteret 2012), where providing business management advice are the main mentor practices.

In terms of answering the research question evidence in the case suggests that EL and business innovation are supported, or at the least encouraged, through the technical and psycho-social mentoring role within formal mentoring. The mentors are supportive and aid the personal development and EL of the entrepreneurs, through the technical and managerial skills that they teach and through the psycho-social support they provide.

5.6 Extended Mentoring Time-frames

Various studies report on mentoring relationships ranging from 9 months (Barret 2006), to between 3-5 years (Kram 1983), and St Jean and Audet (2009) find the average mentoring relationship lasting 26.81 months (p. 7). Kent *et al* (2003) find that mentees in the retail sector had access to only 26 hours of mentoring and met their objectives within one year.

The literature suggests that extended mentoring time-frames are not a necessity for successful mentoring outcomes. Similarly, this study suggests that longer term mentoring over several years does not ensure successful learning. Instead, the counter argument may be made that mentees have become over-reliant on mentoring.

The prolonged terms of the mentorship in the study may be because mentees are registered members of the Organisation and have been included in successive cycles of the mentoring programme. This goes against the general expectation in the mentoring literature, that mentoring needs to enable learning by the mentee, but not *doing for* them (Sullivan 2000, Ayer 2011).

Extended mentorship should be free, without incurring any costs. This suggests that there ought to be some limits to the mentees from accessing on-going mentorship, year on year.

5.7 Summary of project funded mentorship

Formal mentoring found in the study may be summarised as follows;

- Formal mentoring involves the deliberate matching of the mentor and mentee (Armstrong *et al* 2002). Formal mentoring is sponsored, within a project proposal, for an agreed framework that specifies the procedure and controls and it is referred to as project funded mentorship.
- Budgetary constraints and insufficient contact time affect the quality of the mentoring relationship and all mentees agree that this may negatively influence learning outcomes.
- There are tensions over mentor remuneration controls, and mentors are required to not get involved in 'non-essential' mentoring. This restricts the scope of mentoring that normally develops over the mentoring period (Waters 2002; Bozeman & Feeney 2007; St Jean & Audet 2009).
- The combination of free formal mentoring services, where mentors are paid, is unusual as the cost burden is carried solely by the Organisation. This contributes to the tensions over remuneration controls.

- The top-down approach to formal mentoring in this study is aligned with the need for increased efficiency and KPIs as determined by the sponsor. However, EL and business innovation may be better supported if the entrepreneurs and mentors are given more leeway and freedom to decide on the outcomes to be targeted, using a bottom-up approach to formal mentoring.
- The mentees in this study have access to on-going mentoring - mentoring periods are longer than usual and the mentoring is free in contrast to Kent (2003), Barrett (2006), St Jean and Audet (2009), and Audet and Couteret (2012).
- There is little evidence to support that prolonged periods of mentoring are helpful in developing the mentees' EL and business innovation. In two of the sub-cases there is a reliance developed on the mentor linked to extended mentoring time-frames.
- Improved mentoring quality and better oversight are required to ensure that the mentees become independent in a shorter time and to prevent over-reliance on the mentor.

5.8 Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

Entrepreneurial learning (EL) takes place at lower and higher level learning (Cope 2003, 2010). EL is described as the personal growth of entrepreneurs and learning in their ability to modify their behaviours in how to recognise opportunity and grow their enterprise (Cope 2010, Rae 2005).

5.8.1 Learning about Business Management

Apart from Dave, the entrepreneurs interviewed referred to their learning about technical and operational facets, like lowering the garment defect rates and balancing the production line. Further learning are in areas of financial and HR management, in garment costing, budgeting and putting human resources monitoring and recruitment systems.

As Gawa said: "He was teaching me about costings", and Clive: "In terms of what I have learnt, are systems, and there needs to be constant monitoring and also consistency". The mentees learning about the management of the enterprise is consistent with Cope (2010) where entrepreneurs learn "how to run and control businesses more effectively", and consistent with experiential learning that lead to modified behaviours (Kolb 1984).

The mentor shares his industry knowledge and skills with the mentee that are demonstrated to the mentee in practice, by working together in the enterprise (St Jean & Audet 2009).

Adeel agreed that in summary “the mentor guided you in improving your techniques, almost in a supervisory capacity, overseeing, doing exercises with you, and through that showing that there could be certain improvements.”

Verbal exchange, practical exercises and close working ties between the mentor and mentee imparts skills based learning and cognitive skills to the mentee; this is congruent with prior studies by St Jean & Audet (2009), where the mentor also acts as a role model (p. 12) and transference of skills takes place as found by Sullivan (2000).

In answering the research question EL is supported when the mentor acts in a supervisory capacity and oversees the learning of the mentee in areas such as business management. Structured weekly supervision by the mentors include practical training in exercises such as garment costing and systems implementation like HR systems, that supports the entrepreneurs learning how to better manage their business.

However, the role of the mentor as supervisor is more consistent with the role of a coach, and less of a mentor, as the mentee learns from the coach within a “trial and error” learning mode, consistent with the findings of Audet and Couteret (2012). Many learning outcomes found in this study happens through consistent mentor supervision and doing together providing oversight and encouragement to the mentee.

The role of the mentors in the study corresponds to the career development role reported by Bozeman and Freeney (2007). This is in contrast to the role of the mentor as a facilitator of learning from critical incidents, in reflective learning mode (Cope and Watts 2000; Sullivan 2000). This study finds that learning industry specific skills is expected in the mentoring programme, in contrast to St Jean and Audet (2009) where mentors are generalists and learning outcome are “more oriented towards sense making than technique” (St Jean and Audet 2009).

The learning opportunity provided through the additional Saturday workshops, and networking sessions organised by the Organisation, supports EL where the entrepreneur learns through social ties and learning through action. The entrepreneur learns through sharing and interaction with community and industry networks (Rae 2005, p. 326). The networking sessions provide opportunity for EL, through the mode of recognising and acting on opportunity (Politis 2005).

In answering the research question EL is supported through additional networking and training sessions provided by the Organisation in their complementary role of providing additional services in conjunction with the formal mentoring programme. Furthermore, learning by the mentee is supported by (i) a career development role of the mentor, and (ii) a coaching role of the mentor, but not through the mentor facilitating any reflective learning by the mentee.

5.8.2 Learning about Themselves and Managing Others

Mentees learn about themselves as people as Clive has learnt personal habits such as personal consistency, and treating staff fairly, which he attributes to the influence of the mentor. Learning through negotiated relationship is consistent with entrepreneurial learning by Rae (2005), and learning how to manage relationships with others is consistent with higher level learning described by Cope (2010) in learning about the “nature and management of relationships.”

Cope (2003) describes higher level EL as the entrepreneur learning about themselves, as demonstrated by Clive: “We developed personal consistency and personal discipline,...we treat our staff fairly and compassionately.” The mentor acting in a supportive role, and teaching the mentee about inter-personal relationships is evident of the psychosocial role described by Kram (1983) and Bozeman & Feeney (2007), where the mentee develops through encouragement and support within and about relationships with others.

Formal mentorship builds self-confidence in the mentees, as Adeel and Gawa reveals when discussing pricing with potential work suppliers “being more confident when negotiating with customers” (Gawa). Adeel experienced a confidence boost he attributed to the mentors: “I can take a garment, and give you a costing and feel more confident” (Adeel).

EL that is evident in new behaviours and developing self-confidence builds on the work of Ayer (2011), when mentorship is valuable in the support of learning by entrepreneurs.

Cope (2010) defines higher level learning as learning about personal strengths and weaknesses. Affective learning outcomes are learning to develop greater self-confidence (St Jean and Audet 2009). In relation to the research question; the examples of EL described above are not very strong indicators of higher level learning. However, they hint at the types of learning that Cope (2010) describes as higher level, and effective learning by St Jean and Audet (2009).

5.8.3 Summary

Evidently three entrepreneurs studied are learning through incremental improvements to managing their businesses, consistent with lower level learning (as defined by Fiol and Lyles, 1985) and EL (Cope 2003). EL involves learning to improve the day to day running of the business with improved techniques as mentioned by Adeel “You are doing it fine but they have a better way for you”.

EL is also evident in learning about themselves and relationships with others, described as higher level EL outcomes (Cope 2003).

- Lower level EL is evident in this study when entrepreneurs learn to better manage and control their businesses through improved systems and better management practices.
- Entrepreneurs learn across technical areas like increasing business efficiency (costing skills) and productivity improvements in the daily operations of the firm.
- Entrepreneurs experience higher level learning when developing personal abilities and self-confidence in areas of negotiating with clients and work suppliers.
- Entrepreneurs build self-efficacy, consistent with higher level EL, through their engagements with the mentor and improved personal behaviour such as building relationships through HR management, also as a result of the interactions with their mentors.

5.9 Formal Mentoring and Business Innovation

Schumpeter (1934) defined entrepreneurship and innovation as new products, new customers and markets, new avenues for acquiring raw materials and supplies, and new manufacturing techniques.

This definition is expanded by Schramm, Arora, Chandy, Cooper, Jorgenson, Siegal and Menzer (2008), to include “design, intervention and/or implementation of new or altered products, services, processes, systems, organisational structures or business models” in the pursuit of value creation and increased profitability by the firm (Schram *et al* 2008, cited in Love and Roper 2015, p. 8). Furthermore, De Jong and Vermeulen (2006) argue business innovation is evident in the introductions of new products to the firm or completely new to the industry.

The entrepreneurs in the study have introduced business innovations over the years, although mostly in the production of new clothing styles and in supplying new customers. Operational innovation is evident in new management systems and improved HR and production systems. One industry level innovation that stands out is the staff training facility by Dave.

In relation to the research question the mentees (apart from Dave) are not learning to be truly innovative in terms of developing competitive advantages at industry level. However, formal mentorship may be associated with business innovations and increased turnover and production, consistent with Kent *et al* (2003). Increased sales and higher number of employees in the study (not consistent in all cases) is an indication of the effectiveness of the mentoring programme as positive, consistent with Barret (2006). However not all the cases studied were effective, and with Adeel and Gawa, their successes associated with mentoring were short lived.

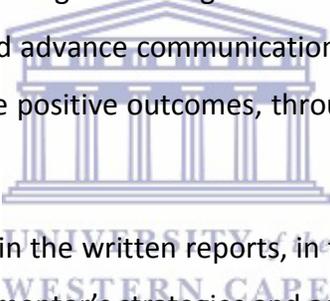
5.9.1 Mentorship as an Enabler of Innovation

According to Freel (2000) technical skills act as an enabler of innovation, and in this sense formal mentorship in the study enhances business innovation when technical skills are taught and transferred from the mentor to mentee. This may also support the production of new clothing lines and supply of new customers. The mentors assisted in improved HR practices, achieving higher rates of operational efficiency and the monitoring of staff production levels.

Developing staff training practices in the enterprise of the mentee was supported by the mentorship. This is consistent with findings of De Jong and Vermeulen (2006) that training and education of the workforce staff may be an enabler of innovation.

Freel (2000) reported marketing and business management skills as important enablers of innovation, and business owners who focus on opportunities increase innovation in the firm according to De Jong and Vermeulen (2006). Market development exercises and networking with new customers are observed in the study, where mentors assist the mentee in these activities. This supports business innovation and acts as a catalyst to the supply of new customers, and is consistent with innovation as defined by Schumpeter (1934).

According to De Jong and Vermeulen (2006, p. 593) documented formal records of “targets and milestones” are important in planning for change and innovation. Formal mentoring when accompanied by formal written and advance communications in set plans and objectives for the mentoring should therefore increase positive outcomes, through greater buy-in and commitment by the mentee as Clive explained:



Almost 90% of things were in the written records, in the beginning of the year you would get a plan for the year, the mentor’s strategies and activities for the year.... It affected me especially when there was an intervention, and scheduled time, and outcomes to be achieved, your KPI’s and performance outcomes. It affected me to be more disciplined so I know I need to achieve and reach those performance targets. And if we do not, then the mentor will come and put interventions strategies in place. So it was a way of keeping you accountable, all about accountability and responsibility.

This case of Clive demonstrates how formal written documentation of the mentoring process supported positive outcomes, consistent with findings by De Jong and Vermeulen (2006). It must be noted that Clive points too, and shows evidence of, a successful mentoring relationship that influenced their business successes.

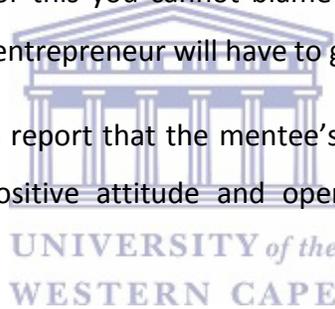
Conversely the most innovative entrepreneur in the sample, Dave by his own admission was least influenced through formal mentorship. However, this is not unusual as top flight entrepreneurs are known to have a will to succeed and problem solve on their own.

Successful entrepreneurs build innovative enterprises, often with little help acknowledged of any individual (Cox and Jennings 1995, as cited in Sullivan 2000, p. 168). It is therefore very difficult to draw any valid conclusions that formal mentorship has, or has not, played any role in his success.

Adeel and Gawa struggled through cycles of growth and decline, but still manage to achieve some business improvements, which stems from being mentored. By their account they have been inconsistent within the mentoring programme they described as “off and on”. Furthermore they are not consistently implementing the interventions. Entrepreneurs need to be committed to the mentoring process to achieve good results, as Clive explained:

The mentors can put things in place, but once the mentor walks out then I just go along with my old habits. And for this you cannot blame the mentor [no]..... It's a two way street. So, yes, you as the entrepreneur will have to go the extra mile.

Similarly Audet & Couteret (2012) report that the mentee's commitment to the mentoring is a major success factor and the positive attitude and openness of the mentee is critical to successful mentoring outcomes.



In relation to answering the research question, entrepreneurs have innovated over the years, and by their account have experienced an increase in their customer base and sales. The production of new clothing styles, supplying new customers, new management systems and operational improvements are evident. These outcomes may be associated with the formal mentoring, as the mentors set out to teach these outcomes, with some success - in particular with Clive, although with much less success by Adeel and Gawa.

5.9.2 Summary

The entrepreneurs learn 'know how', such as garment costing, improved management systems such as HR monitoring and the recording of production output, and staff training is encouraged.

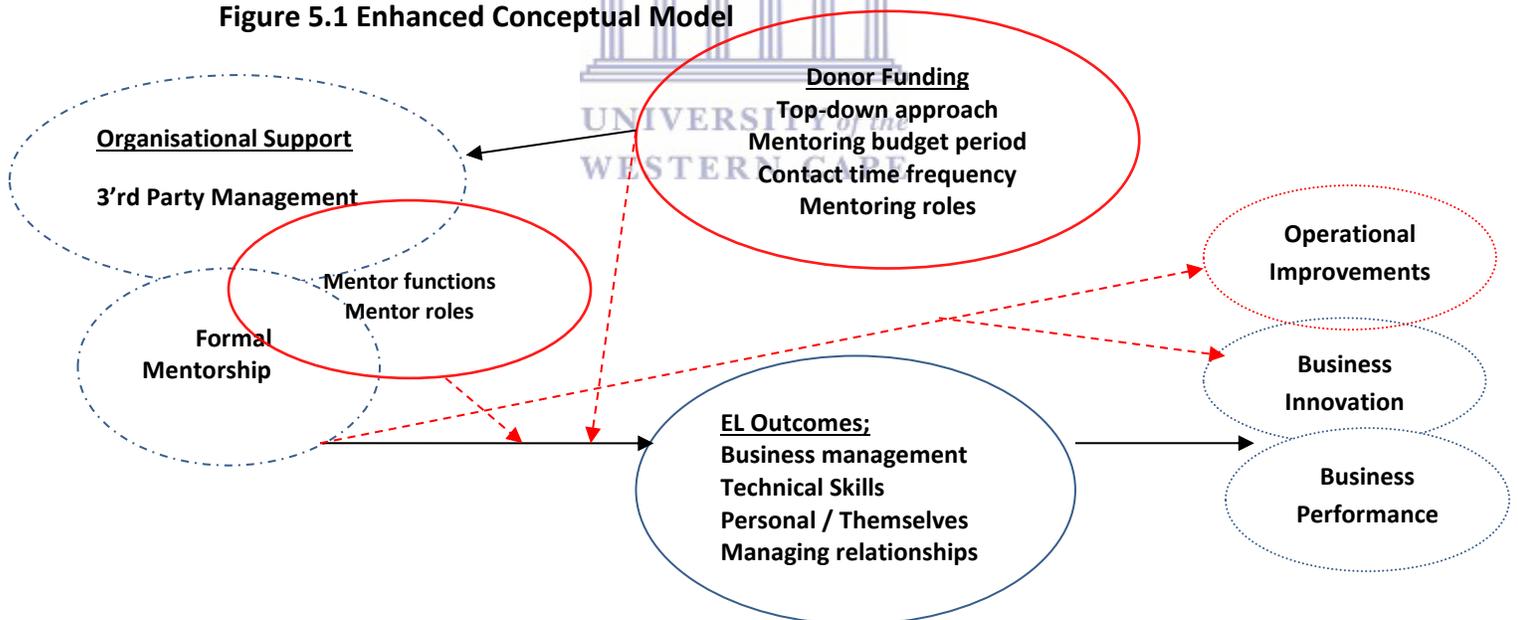
- Formal mentoring in this case may enable higher levels of innovation as mentees report that technical skills are taught and transferred to them and their employees (Freel 2000).

- Clive demonstrates how formal mentorship, when supported with documented planning and procedure, contributes to higher participation and commitment by the mentee to the formal mentoring process (Audet and Couteret 2012; De Jong and Vermeulen 2006).
- Self-made entrepreneurs like Dave, who are skilled in problem solving and are self-motivated achieve innovation independent of formal mentorship (Cox and Jennings (1995), as cited in Sullivan 2000).
- Entrepreneurs who lack commitment and lack consistency in the continued application of the skills imparted by mentors have limited success (Audet and Couteret 2012).

5.10 Revised Conceptual Model

Based on the empirical findings that have been discussed, I will now reflect on the conceptual model developed in Chapter 2. An enhanced conceptual model is shown in Figure 5.1 below, as suggested by Rae (2000, 2005) - followed by the clarification.

Figure 5.1 Enhanced Conceptual Model



The analysis shows how the funding agreement with the sponsor influences the implementation of formal mentorship. While the Organisation writes the funding proposal to secure on-going funding and manages the mentoring programme, the strategic interests of the funder are vital and they require monthly and quarterly reports to keep the funder informed. Without their funding the formal mentoring simply ends.

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

This results in a top-down approach to formal mentoring as the funder's strategic objectives influence the planned mentoring outcomes and mentoring operations of the mentoring time-frame and contact time, mentor skills and qualifications, mentor functions and their roles.

- The funding agreement budgets for a set Rand value for an annual mentoring period, and mentor remuneration rates therefor determine the frequency of the contact time.
- The contact time is deemed insufficient by the mentees.
- The industry specific outcomes of the funding agreement influence the mentor role and functions as being more technical.
- For the intended mentoring outcomes, the mentor skills and qualification are required to be industry specific.

However, the implementation and actual needs of the mentees themselves demand additional contact time, and in areas outside of just a more technical focus. Some mentees need psycho-social support, and pick up the telephone to call their mentor. Additional contact time leads to budget overruns, which creates conflict, in the coordination and management of the programme. Mentees themselves do not seem to understand why their time is limited, they do however complain about this.

The source of the conflict is not the needs of the mentee, as this [psycho-social support] is expected within a mentoring relationship; the literature is clear on this. The issue is that budget limitations that may lead to conflict in the management of the mentors, that raises concerns over mentor professionalism. This results in a limited mentoring role, focused on career development in the entrepreneurial context.

The mentor is physically present and plays an active role inside the operations of the mentees business; this raises the possibility that the mentors are directly responsible for operational improvements resulting from formal mentoring. Furthermore, the prolonged terms of mentoring in this case raises the possibility that the mentee is in fact relying on the mentor for continued business innovation, without truly learning to be innovative.

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

EL and business innovation are associated with formal mentorship, in particular new products, new customers, new systems and processes. EL is observed when entrepreneurs learn to better manage and control their businesses, and their increased technical skills such as garment costing and production line balancing.

Higher level EL is observed when entrepreneurs develop personal abilities like self-confidence and self-efficacy in areas such as negotiating with clients and better manage employee relations. Business performance improvements for increased sales and higher numbers of employees are associated with formal mentorship, although this is observed as inconsistent in the cases of Adeel and Gawa.



CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter addresses the implications of the research findings for practitioners of formal mentorship programmes, and recommends guidelines for future research. Practical recommendations are discussed for the third party management of formal mentorship. The discussion will partly reflect on the enhanced conceptual model in Fig 5.1, in summary of the most salient conclusions.

Recommendations for future research include research aimed at clarifying issues raised in this study. This explorative case study investigated the role and influence of formal mentorship, provided by and managed by a third party, on entrepreneurial learning and business innovation within selected SMEs in the clothing sector in Cape Town.

6.1 Formal mentoring 3rd Party Management

The Organisation is responsible for the oversight and providing structure to the formal mentoring programme; including the mentor-mentee matching, oversight of the contact time, reporting on the progress of the mentoring and the budgeting controls measures.

6.1.1 Formal Mentoring Management

The study finds the mentoring programme control measures are questionable when inadequate oversight leads to unplanned budget overspend that results in conflict over mentor remuneration and mentor professionalism is questioned as a result. The mentoring programme coordination, as a team, need to monitor and manage this aspect more closely to prevent any unplanned over-runs.

Where informal mentoring does not have this concern, formal mentoring does, as the schedule and costs are planned for (Armstrong 2002; Bisk 2002), and budgeting is a major concern according to the Director. The recommendation here is for developing a very strong oversight capability within the Organisation to ensure delivery is within the available resources and planning.

Mentees have different needs than only those stipulated within the funding agreement in the study, and may be in contrast to the set outcomes decided at strategic level. Additional contact time is argued to benefit the mentee (Barret 2006), and taking the mentees needs into account are important (Audet and Couteret 2012). The recommendation is for the Organisation to charge set rates for additional contact time to be paid by the mentee, as is done elsewhere (Barret 2006, Audet and Couteret 2012). This would provide additional income to the Organisation, or the mentors, to cover the costs of the additional mentoring time.

Formal mentoring may be considered more valuable when mentees understand the scarcity and cost thereof, and with better appreciation may apply themselves to learn and be consistent. It is recommended that strict communications in these regards are undertaken with mentees prior to the commencement of the formal mentoring. Communication should stress the importance of learning within set times, and pressure the mentees to apply themselves more productively. The study shows how entrepreneurs need to be committed to the mentoring process to achieve good results, consistent with Audet & Couteret (2012).

The mentoring time frames are generally extensive in total weekly contact time allowance and prolonged when compared to England and Australia (Kent *et al*, 2003; Barret, 2006). Studies conducted there suggest that positive mentoring outcomes are not dependent on extended periods of mentoring, as the study confirms that extended mentoring does not necessarily produce successful outcomes. The recommendation for practioners is for limits to be set for formal mentoring, to a period of 18-24 months. Longer time-frames are no guarantee for success. No 'after-care' programmes are evident in prior research, or this study, but an after-care mentoring support base through continued informal mentoring could be introduced.

Furthermore, the initial contact time is restricted to interaction between mentor and mentee, without programme orientation at the Organisation. A proper programme orientation could be introduced to ensure Organisation oversight right from the start in the mentee evaluation process. Mentees need to understand upfront [communicated at the Organisation] what their expected learning outcomes are, and that any extended mentoring needs strong motivation with the costs paid for by the mentee as suggested by Bisk (2002) and Barret (2006).

6.1.2 Top-down Approach to Formal Mentoring

The top-down approach to formal mentoring set at strategic level between the Organisation and the funder, albeit that this is aligned to industry needs, may not meet the needs of the mentee. A consequence is that mentors focus on technical issues which may be at the expense of providing adequate psycho-social support. Psycho-social support is deemed a necessary role by mentors to engender self-confidence and belief in the mentees (Kram 1983, Sullivan 2000, Water 2001). Despite this the mentees feel the mentors are supportive and go beyond their scope of duty. The mentoring programme could be revised at a strategic level to include greater levels of psycho-social support with adequate resources for the additional contact time.

6.1.3 Mentoring Practices

Mentoring practices found in the study are concentrated in weekly visits by the mentor, to the business of the entrepreneur, in which mentees see the mentor in a 'supervisory' capacity. The dyad, one-on-one, approach is more costly than group mentoring, e-mentoring or peer mentoring. There is no reason why group or peer mentoring should not be introduced as a support measure to the formal mentoring programme. Group mentoring may not require excessive funding and is argued to have additional benefits such as psycho-social support.

Technology needs to become a greater part of the mentoring mode, such as e-mentoring, through a medium like Skype, and could increase mentorship penetration at lower costs and reduce travelling time. The mentor could be based at the central office of the Organisation for greater access to administrative support, and with sufficient information systems support may reach mentees in real time, and speed. This recommendation goes in tandem with effective and efficient formal mentoring programme management, which is identified as a weakness in the study. Alternative modes of mentoring may also benefit the mentee in other ways as argued by Paek (2004), these include group mentoring with the following advantages.

- Business networking and opportunities
- Collective wisdom and entrepreneurial identity development
- Role modelling and positive feeling of inclusion

6.1.4 The Role of the Mentor

The technical role of the mentors found in the study encourages a one-sided approach and the opposite of many mentoring programmes, where mentors are more generalists (Deakins and Freel 1998; Barret 2006; Audet and Couteret 2012). Recommendations are for greater focuses on mentoring for general business management development, business innovation and personal development of the mentees.

The one-sided technical role of the mentor is identified as a weakness in the study. Further risks for the mentee are for mentor dependency and prolonged mentoring that does not guarantee their learning. Generalist mentoring activities are argued to be very important to developing entrepreneurs in general and in particular novice entrepreneurs (Bisk 2002; Deakins and Freel 1998; St-Jean & Audet 2009).

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research.

The findings of the study are limited to the case study in the Western Cape clothing sector. The study has fallen short of producing hypothesis or propositions. This research may be extended to do so, and the propositions or hypothesis may be tested in a follow-up study on a broader and larger scale.

Future research could establish the extent of these findings within a quantitative survey design and determine how widespread the findings may apply with regards to formal mentorship programmes nationally. A comparative case study may be conducted to investigate the role of the formal mentorship programme coordinator across various organisations that offer formal mentorship. This may be very useful to determine best practice, in coordinating of formal mentorship programmes. An area that does not receive adequate coverage in prior research, as is found in the current study is the mentoring phases as discussed by Kram (1983). Stage four involves redefinition, preceded by initiation, cultivation and separation (p. 621). Future research may investigate such phases and the benefits thereof in a longitudinal study.

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Appendix 1.

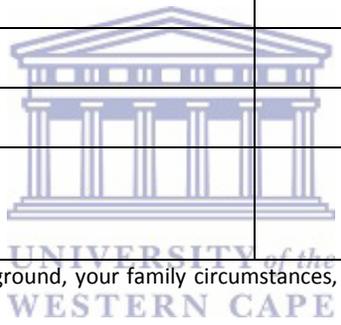
Semi-structured interview questionnaire guidelines used in interviews with Entrepreneurs 1-4.

Questionnaire adapted from UWC ACT Research Project 2011 (Prof. Philip Hirschsohn) and modified in alignment with research questions and theoretical framework model (Based on Perry 2001, cited in Ayer 2011.)

INTRODUCTION

Hello and thank you for taking part in this interview. During our chat, we will discuss your experiences as an entrepreneur affiliated with.....

<i>Gather information prior to the interview or at the beginning of the actual interview</i>	
What is your full name	
What is your birth date?	
Where you born? Please state town & province.	
If not born in Cape Town, when was move here?	
What is your marital status?	
How many children, grandchildren?	
What is your last grade of school attended?	
Do you have post-matric qualifications, list?	



We are going to begin with your family background, your family circumstances, growing up and whether you have a history of entrepreneurship in the family?

1. Do you think that your upbringing ultimately influenced your decision to become an entrepreneur?
2. Can you tell us about the economic conditions in your family and your community when you were growing upCan you tell us about your schooling and what influence it may have had on your ultimate decision to become an entrepreneur?
3. What about any further post-matric or other education and training?
4. Did you ever go back to further your studies (short-courses, college, university, etc)?
5. What prompted you to go back?
6. What influence did this have on what you have subsequently done in your life as an entrepreneur?
 - How necessary is it to have the combination of education, knowledge, training and experience in being an entrepreneur?
 - Do you think your education has been important for your career as an entrepreneur? What aspect of your education has been most useful to you as an entrepreneur?
7. Can you tell us about your working life and the jobs you had before you became an entrepreneur?
8. Were there any significant events you had in that job that had a long term impact on you later in life as an entrepreneur?
9. Is there anything else that you learned from that job, anything significant?
 - In retrospect, did your career have any major turning points? At what stage did you think that one day you might become an entrepreneur or start your own business?
 - Any stories, anecdotes or details from your work that you'd like to include in your life story?
10. What were the circumstances that led you to become an entrepreneur?
 What was your motivation or inspiration for becoming an entrepreneur? Tell us something about your vision for your business when you first started
 Did experiences in your personal life contribute to you deciding to become an entrepreneur?
 How did your past employment or business experience help you when you first started this business?
 What hurdles did you face when you started this business and did you tackle them during the business startup?

Formal Mentorship and Entrepreneurial Learning

What resources did you have when you started out? Did you get financial or other support from any organisations such as banks, family or friends?

To what extent has family support continued to assist you through your entrepreneurial journey?

11. We're interested to know how people like mentors, organisations may have contributed to your learning. (Based on Cox 1995; Unger et al 2011)

Since when and for how long have you been a member of?

How doessupport the mentoring process?

What do do to support your mentoring the client?

How do mentors get assigned toclients – mentor/mentee matching?

What resources are provided that assist you in delivering the mentoring service to the client?

Does monitor your mentorship activities?

What objectives are there in the mentoring relationship?

Are these objectives decided on together by you and?

What reports do you need to submit to?

12. Is there any role model or mentor or an advisor in the industry you are working with now? Please tell me about this person, how have they assisted you in general in your business?

13. Can you outline and explain the relationship; how often do you meet, and where? And why specifically do you meet, is this routine scheduled or under specific needs/objectives? (Based on Klasen & Clutterbuck 2002, Ayer 2011).

14. Do your external director, mentors or advisers have specialist knowledge or general management skills?

15. How have the mentors skills contribute to improving your business in specific area, such as; (Deliberate practice - Unger et al 2011)

How does the mentor or advisor engage you in exploring new strategies and opportunity development fo business?

How does the mentor or advisor engage you in networking and stakeholder interaction, like meeting other people in your industry?

How does the mentor or advisor engage you to attend workshops and training exercises?

How does the mentor or advisor engage you in consulting with others: staff, colleagues and experts in your industry?

What activities does the organisation deliberately engage you in to support the mentoring process?

What control or monitoring measures are in place to oversee mentoring process and procedures for you and your mentor?

What outcomes or objectives are evident in the organisation mentoring programme, what are you expected to achieve?

Do the mentor and organisation advisors only work with you or do they also help staff at lower levels and management learn? If yes, how?

Do you think you company would be where it is today if you didn't have a relationship with an external adviser or mentor?

Do you have a process in place in your business to ensure that these lessons and knowledge are captured? And that you and your employees learn from this experience as an on-going learning experience?

Can you describe any business activities that are done differently now, compared to before, when you did not have a mentor or organisational support, what is different now?

16. We would like you to tell us about some of the changes you have implemented to improve the way in which you operate your business

In how the business operates, have you assessed the impact of the changes and what have you learned from this?

Have you developed ways (or systems) to improve the efficiency of the business? (E.g. documents, forms, procedures)

When you detect problems or errors how do you go about addressing them?

Do you encourage employees to try different approaches to doing their job? When they fail, how do you respond?

CLOSURE

1. Is there anything else that you would like to share?
2. Overall, what has the interview experience been like for you?

FINAL COMMENTS

Thank you so much for sharing your story with us. We will be back in touch with you to provide a copy of the interview and to plan the next steps of the project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Provide contact details.