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The purpose and place of mentoring for women managers in organisations: An Australian perspective

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Abstract

Mentoring has been identified as an important career development activity for women managers. Over the last four decades, organisations world-wide have implemented formal mentoring programs for women and for members of minority groups in recognition of the personal and professional benefits mentoring provides, not only for persons who are mentored but also, for those who undertake the mentoring. This chapter reviews the literature on mentoring and the contribution it can make to the career development of women managers. It reviews several inter-related bodies of literature: women's representation in management positions worldwide; theories and frameworks of mentoring; empirical research exploring the impact of mentoring relationships on women managers' career development; current illustrations of formal programs offered to women managers in the public and private sectors; and some critical issues that continue to impact women managers in relation to mentoring relationships. The chapter concludes by making an argument for further research on gender and mentoring.

Keywords

Mentoring, Women managers, Mentoring relationships, Career development

Introduction

Over the last 40 years, there has been a proliferation of writing and research on mentoring. It has been identified as a key career development tool that helps an individual develop knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career (Woolnough and Davidson, 2007). Both public and private organisations have used mentoring programs as a means of attracting, retaining and developing employees (Tolar, 2012). Among employees who have participated in mentoring arrangements are women and men, leaders and novices, members of minority groups, youth at risk, and professionals such as surgeons, teachers, nurses, accountants, lawyers, and social workers.

Traditionally mentoring has been viewed as an informal and idiosyncratic type of process between persons—mentors and protégés (or mentees)—for the purpose of assisting the protégé develop certain types of learning needed for their development (Ehrich and Hansford, 1999). Traditional (as opposed to "formal") mentors primarily use their power, knowledge, and influence to support promising protégés. While, historically, this type of mentoring was akin to a patronage system, it continues to be used today.

It was during the early 1970s that this view of mentoring broadened, with organisations implementing formal mentoring policies and programs within their human resource development departments. This shift to formalised mentoring occurred as organisations sought to replicate the success of informal mentoring arrangements (Ehrich and Hansford, 1999; Woolnough and Davidson, 2007). Not surprisingly, formal mentoring programs have burgeoned and are now commonplace in many public and private sector organisations across the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. While these programs can and do differ in focus, nature and purpose, they continue to be used as a means of enabling individuals (either novices or leaders) to develop and enhance their particular skills or performance.

This chapter reviews the literature on mentoring and the contribution it can make to the career development of women managers. It is divided into five main parts. Firstly, it considers the position of women's under-representation in management worldwide and argues that mentoring programs continue to be used in organisations around the world as an affirmative action strategy to redress women's almost absence from senior levels of management. Secondly, it refers to two broad theoretical categorisations of mentoring that demonstrate how mentoring can be experienced in qualitatively different ways, depending on the theoretical categorisation used. Thirdly, there is a review of some seminal empirical research exploring the impact of mentoring relationships on women managers' career development. Fourthly, some current illustrations of formal programs offered to women managers in the public and private sectors are provided to show the nature and focus of programs that operate to support women's development. Finally, the chapter finishes with a discussion of a set of four critical issues that continue to impact women managers in relation to mentoring relationships.

1. Women's under-representation in management worldwide

Based on an analysis of 20 countries from Europe, North and Central America, Australasia, Asia, South America, and Africa, Davidson and Burke (2011, pp. 8-9) have identified several broad themes regarding the position of women in management worldwide. These themes include:

- percentages of women in managerial positions vary according to the specific country;
- increasingly women have moved into small business to become entrepreneurs in most countries to earn income;
- the proportion of women in management has increased but remains low at higher levels of the organisation;

- only a small number of countries have developed initiatives to support women's career advancement in the workplace (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia).

As an illustration of women's under-representation at senior management levels, in 2012, women in Australia comprised 34.9% of managers (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2012) yet only made up 8% of executive managerial positions (Catalyst, 2012). A similar pattern can be found in other countries with small proportions of women occupying executive managerial positions: 12.2% in the United Kingdom, 16.9% in Canada; and 13.5% in the United States (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency [EOWA], 2010). In relation to the percentages of women who sit on boards and chair boards, Table 1 shows some international comparisons:

Table 1 Comparison of the percentage of women holding board seats and as board chairs

Country	**Board Seats**	**Board Chairs**
Australia	8.5%	2.5%
Canada	10.3%	3.6%
New Zealand	7.3%	4.0%
United Kingdom	15%	1.00%
United States	16.1%	2.6%

Compiled from Catalyst (2012)

As can be seen from the figures in Table 1, women are poorly represented on boards and even more poorly represented as board chairs. While not included in Table 1, the highest proportion of women on boards is in Norway, with 40.1%, and the lowest is in Saudi Arabia, with 0.1% (Catalyst, 2012).

The authors of an Australian Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA, 2010, p. 6) report sum it up well when they say:

> "Women remain under-represented in the most senior corporate positions in ASX [The Australian Stock Exchange] 200 organisations. Five boards (2.5%) have a woman as a Chair (one more than in the 2008 Census), and six (different) companies have a female CEO (3%, the same as in 2006, two more than in 2008) ... at Board Director level there are over 10 men to every woman. At CEO level the picture is even more pronounced, with approximately 32 male CEOs for every female CEO within the ASX 200".

In contrast to the aforementioned figures, women are better represented in the not-for-profit sector in Australia, where more than 75% of boards have at least one woman director (figure as at 2004) (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2013, http://www.companydirectors.com.au/Director-Resource-Centre/governance-and-Director-Issues/Board-Diversity/Statistics). In the Australian public sector, over the last couple of decades, governments have invested in initiatives and programs to try to increase the percentage of women in senior management. For example, in June 2011, the Queensland Public Service Commission reported that 30% of senior executive positions were held by women (Public Service Commission n.d.). (http://www.psc.qld.gov.au/page/developing-people/professional-development/wise-images?terms-of-reference.pdf). In the Northern Territory, 43% of senior management positions in the public sector are held by women (Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment 2011a, http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/building_capability/leadership/women_in_leadership).

Two further statistics illustrate the representation of women in Australia. Women constitute 17.9% of Vice Chancellors (i.e., top position) in universities and 30.1% of federal parliamentarians (EOWA, 2010). Julia Guillard became Australia's first female Prime Minister in June, 2010, a position she held until June 2013. It is noteworthy that, despite Australia's early success in granting universal suffrage, it took more than 100 years for a woman to be elected Prime Minister.

The statistics presented above point to women's slow movement towards senior management positions. Writers (Davidson and Burke, 2011; Maxwell, 2009) in the field argue strongly for a reversal of women's poor representation in senior positions so that they can be afforded the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. Of interest here is the contribution that mentoring can make to women's career development. Early research (Byrne, 1989; Hill et al., 1989; Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1985) demonstrated that women had been socially excluded from informal mentoring relationships. For this reason, affirmative action strategies such formal mentoring programs were advocated for redressing this situation and helping women to break through the "glass ceiling".

In more recent times, research has been inconclusive regarding the issue of whether women continue to face difficulties when accessing informal mentors. For example, in their studies in the United States, Ragins and Cotton (1991) and Fox and Schumann (2001) found that women are as likely as men to have access to mentors, while a New Zealand study of public sector workers by Bhatta and Washington (2003) found that women were more likely than their male counterparts to have a mentor. Bhatta and Washington (2003) put forward two possible explanations here: (1) women may have more mentors because they need them; or (2) they have made more deliberate efforts to access mentors.

Noteworthy is that writers and researchers (Bhatta and Washington, 2003; Dworkin et al., 2012; Feeney, 2006; Tharanou, 2005) continue to argue that mentoring is a valuable and necessary career development activity for women. That there are so many formal mentoring programs available for women worldwide reinforces the view that mentoring continues to be viewed as a central strategy to support women's career mobility and growth. According to the EOWA (2010), in Australia at least, there has been an increase in the number of mentoring programs and talent identification programs available to women. Some illustrations of formal programs for women are discussed later in the chapter.

2. Theoretical categorisations of mentoring

The name, Mentor, was first mentioned in Homer's Epic "The Odyssey", where Mentor was a loyal and trusted friend of Odysseus, the King. In the story, he acted as a "father figure" to Odysseus's son, Telemachus, when Odysseus fought in the Trojan wars for a decade. In the last 40 years, the term *mentor* has been ubiquitous in the literature and its meaning has moved away from the original notion of a "father figure" who shares wisdom and provides advice to a younger person, to any person who provides career development, support and guidance to another person.

Many writers and researchers have noted that defining mentoring is problematic (Crow, 2012; Gibb, 1999; Jacobi, 1991). Not only is there no scientific definition or any consensus about its meaning, purpose or nature (Gibb, 1999; Jacobi, 1991) but, as Mertz (in Crow, 2012) argues, there is a lack of boundaries surrounding it. This lack of clarity has led to confusion about how mentoring differs from other supportive roles such as teaching, coaching, and sponsorship. Not surprisingly, there are several hundred definitions in existence.

Kram's (1985) seminal work on mentoring is well-cited in the expansive literature. Based on empirical research conducted in the 1980s on mentoring dyads, she found that mentoring is an interpersonal relationship where a more senior person supports a junior colleague by attending to two broad functions: career development and psycho-social support. Career development includes functions such as sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, visibility and challenging work assignments, while psycho-social support includes friendship, advice, feedback, and encouragement. Kram's (1985) model of mentoring fits mainly within a traditional model of mentoring where the mentor is deemed an expert who uses their power to promote the career development and knowledge of the protégé.

This particular type of mentoring has been described as "sponsoring" mentoring since its advocates emphasise the advice, guidance, and expertise provided by the mentor to the protégé (Clutterbuck, 2004a, 2007). A disadvantage associated with sponsoring mentoring is that, due to its elitism, not everyone who wishes to be mentored is chosen. For example, in her ethnographic research, Kanter (1977) used the notion of sponsoring to explain why women in large corporations were excluded from mentoring relationships with male managers. She coined the term, "homo-social reproduction" to explain the phenomenon of males choosing to sponsor other males (i.e., those in their own image), thus enabling them to access power rather than females (Kanter, 1977). In contrast to sponsoring mentoring, proponents of "developmental mentoring" view mentoring as a developmental type of activity (Clutterbuck, 2004a, 2007) where learning is central to the process. The stress is not so much on the power of the mentor to open doors for the protégé (as with sponsoring mentoring), but on the relational, power sharing interchange between a mentor and protégé where both parties are able to benefit. What often distinguishes the mentor from the protégé

is experience rather than hierarchy. Clutterbuck (2004a) says where developmental mentoring emphasises "empowerment and personal accountability… [sponsoring mentoring emphasises] the effective use of power and influence" (p. 19). In more recent times, writers in the field of mentoring have explored the notion of "relational mentoring" (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007). These writers view mentoring as a mutual and reciprocal activity that is based on power sharing. It can be seen, therefore, that, in some respects, relational mentoring is akin to developmental mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2007).

While mentoring can be understood in terms of these two broad categorisations—sponsoring and developmental, its diversity can also be construed in terms of the different types of theories that have been used to explain it and the different disciplines in which it is located. For example, three different theories that have been used to define mentoring include social exchange theory, adult developmental theory, and micropolitical theory. First, advocates of social exchange theory, coming from the discipline of organisational behaviour, maintain that individuals will develop relationships with others based on the belief that perceived benefits will outweigh the perceived costs (Gibb, 1999). When this theory is applied to mentoring, it can be suggested that both parties will participate if they see they can gain from it; mentoring is a transaction. Depending on the nature of the transaction, social exchange theory could be construed as either developmental or sponsoring. For example, if the exchange is based on sharing information and learning from one another, then social exchange theory could be viewed as developmental in nature. However, if the exchange is based on the mentor providing their power or access to resources for the protégé and in return the protégé is providing allegiance and loyalty to the mentor, then social exchange theory could fit within sponsoring mentoring.

Second, there are several adult developmental theories and common to each is the importance of growth and development for both the mentor and protégé or mentee. One example here is a model posited by Daloz (2012), who sees a mentor as a teacher who provides not only support, friendship, and advice, but also challenges the mentee so that transformation of understanding can take place. For Daloz, mentoring is a journey, with the mentor as a trusted guide who travels alongside the protégé. Learning is central to any understanding of mentoring.

The third theory that is discussed here is micropolitics, which is located within management and organisational theories. Proponents of micropolitical theory focus on power and the types of strategies that are used by individuals to influence other individuals to achieve particular goals (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Within micropolitical theory, power can be used or abused; it can empower or it can disempower; or it can coerce or it can facilitate or enable. While micropolitics has been used to understand leadership behaviour (Blase and Anderson, 1995), it has also been used to understand mentoring relationships, and as a means of viewing the dynamics and power plays that characterise interactions between mentors and mentees (Ehrich and Millwater, 2011). While Clutterbuck (2004a) does not use the word micropolitics, he refers to power and how it is used or abused in mentoring relationships. He asks questions such as: who should control the power?; and who should set the goals? Clutterbuck's (2004a) position is that he supports a more developmental approach to mentoring where mentors and mentees share power, and both stand to benefit by and learn from the relationship. Clutterbuck's understanding contrasts with a view of mentoring that considers mentors as being directive and using their power to exert control. From the discussion of the two broad categorisations of mentoring and of the three theories that have been applied to mentoring, it is evident mentoring can be conceptualised in different ways.

To date there are few theories that explain women managers' experience of mentoring or the mentoring process. Some notable exceptions include early theories put forward to explicate why women were often unsuccessful in being selected for informal mentoring relationships. As discussed earlier, Kanter's (1977) theory of sponsorship explains why women in large corporations tended to be excluded from mentoring relationships with male managers. Similarly, studies have applied attribution theory to explain why women as well as others from minority groups who possess certain attributes (i.e., socio-economic status, race, ethnicity) are selected for mentoring and others are not (Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent, 2001). It is likely that, in the future, further empirical research and theoretical models will be advanced to explain how gender as well as other factors such as race and ethnicity influence mentoring initiation, relationships and the mentoring process (Young, Cady and Foxon, 2006).

3. Empirical research exploring the impact of mentoring on women manager's career development

Early research in the field of mentoring provided strong support for the argument that mentoring is essential for women's career development (Burke and McKeen, 1990; Dodgson, 1986; Missirian, 1982; Ragins, 1999; Ragins et al., 1998). For instance, both Collins's (1983) in-depth study of women managers and Dodgson's (1986) study of Canadian women educational administrators found that mentoring can have positive implications for women's career and progression. In a study by Ragins et al. (1998), 91% of the women CEOs they interviewed claimed they had a mentor and 81% indicated that mentors were critical people.

More recent writing in the field (Feeney, 2006; Maxwell, 2009; Ramaswami et al., 2010; Tharanou, 2005; Tolar, 2012) has echoed this position. For instance, in a study of public servants in the United States, Feeney (2006) found that access to a mentor increased

the career outcomes for public managers of both genders. Similarly, mentoring was perceived by both mentors and mentees who participated in a United Kingdom based program for high performing women as enhancing the women's career development (Maxwell, 2009).

Tharanou (2005) explored whether mentoring helped women's career advancement more than men's advancement, and whether career support and psycho-social support affected women's and men's career advancement. Based on a survey of 3,220 Australians from lower to middle levels within the public sector, and financial and business services sector, Tharanou found that mentor career support increased women protégés' advancement in terms of promotion more so than for men. This finding is consistent with previous research that has pointed to the importance of career related assistance (such as sponsorship, challenging assignments, and more coaching) for women. Yet, when mentoring was viewed as psycho-social support only, it was found not to help women's advancement more than it does for males. In other words, while psycho-social support may help women deal with well-being issues, it does not help them climb the managerial hierarchy.

A survey of 491 graduates from a mid-western university in the United States found that in male-gendered industries characterised by competition, female managers and professionals benefited by a senior male mentor in terms of compensation and career progress. In this context, senior male mentors provided female managers and professionals with sponsorship and legitimacy (Ramaswami et al., 2010). Ramaswami et al. (2010) argue that their findings provide significant implications for women in male-dominated industries and point to the necessity for them to have access to powerful senior male mentors. A key research finding from both Tharanou and Ramaswami et al. is that the particular type of the mentoring undertaken (i.e. career or psycho-social support) will shape the type of outcomes that are achieved from the mentoring relationship.

4. Illustrations of current programs for women

Like formal programs, informal mentoring arrangements can be developmental in focus or promote the career development of protégés as in sponsoring mentoring. Yet a point of distinction between the two arrangements is that informal mentoring relationships tend to evolve, involve choice of partner, and are more fluid in orientation, while formal mentoring programs are part of an organisation's policies and programs. Not surprisingly, formal programs tend to have pre-determined goals and objectives, are structured according to a timeframe, and do not always provide any choice for participants regarding with their partner or participation in the program (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). Unlike informal arrangements, many formal programs provide training and other levels of support for participants to ensure their success (Giscombe, 2007; Wanberg et al., 2003 in Giscombe, 2007). Moreover, there tends to be great diversity in the types of formal programs offered. For example, some formal mentoring programs are developmental in focus since their overarching aim is to develop women's competencies and skills, while other programs are designed to fast-track women's career development. These latter programs have a strong sponsoring dimension. Formal programs are known to differ in terms of their structure, with some being very structured and others providing some flexibility and choice regarding the partner with whom to work. These latter types of programs have been described as "semi-formal" (Clutterbuck, 2004b) or "professional" (Ehrich and Hansford, 1999).

Today, mentoring programs are used widely in Australia (Ehrich and Hansford, 2008). A variety of programs for executives, junior employees, and members of particular target groups, such as women, have been implemented not only by various government departments in Australia (Hutt, 2002) but also private enterprise. After a cursory glance of some of the mentoring programs available to women in Australia, it seems that such

programs fall into one of two broad categories: (i) programs provided by professional associations that tend to be not-for-profit that allow their members to participate in mentoring programs; and (ii) government departments that provide especially targeted programs for women working within those departments. Very few of the programs currently on offer cater especially for women in senior levels of management and, for this reason, the discussion that follows, refers to programs that are available to women at different levels.

Programs provided by professional associations

Three current examples of programs that are provided by professional associations in Australia are: *The Business Enterprise Centre Southern Sydney*; *The Women's Network Australia*, and the *Australian Institute of Company Directors*. *The Business Enterprise Centre Southern Sydney* provides a program called, "The women in business mentor program" that helps up-and-coming women business owners grow their business by linking them with experienced business mentors. In addition to 20 hours of one-on-one mentoring with an experienced mentor, this six-month program also provides business skills workshops, business forums and networking events to help women improve their business skills (Business Enterprise Centre Southern Sydney, http://www.becsmallbiz.com.au/mentoring/women-in-business.html). This program has been in operation for over fifteen years. Although to date no evaluative data are available about the effectiveness of the program, the website states that "results from past programs show a significance increase in business income, business employment levels and networking opportunities" (Business Enterprise Centre Southern Sydney, http://becsmallbiz.com.au/mentoring/women-in-business.html)

An example of a women-helping-women organisation is *Women's Network Australia* which is a membership based organisation that provides a range of benefits and services for

women interested in improving their career or business skills. One of the fee-paying services is that women can elect to be mentored by the founder and managing director of the organisation (Women's Network Australia, http://www.womensnetwork.com.au/page.cfm?pageCode=mentoring).

The third example, provided by the *Australian Institute for Company Directors*, targets senior women managers in Australia.

The *Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)* is an internationally-recognized, member based not-for-profit organisation for directors in Australia. Its principal activities include professional development such as mentoring programs for its members. Among its members are ASX listed companies, private companies, government bodies, and not for profit organisations. One of the mentoring programs it offers is the Chairmen's Mentoring Program. This Program entails leading chairpersons and other experienced directors of ASX companies mentoring talented aspiring female directors on boards. The goals of the program include:

> "Develop connections with influential business leaders;
> Gain knowledge and skills that will assist the mentees in achieving director appointments … Increase their understandings of governance issues in listed companies … Gain valuable insight, advice and guidance on the process of selecting and appointing new directors …" (AICD, 2011, Q & A, p. 1)
> http://www.companydirectors.com.au/Director-Resource-Centre/Governance-and-Director-Issues/Board-Diversity/Mentoring-Programs/Frequently-Asked-Questions

Women who are interested in becoming part of the year-long program, must be members of the AICD, be prepared to meet their mentor regularly, and commit to the program. Women complete an application form and CV, and a selection committee makes a decision as to who can participate in the program. Matching is undertaken by the selection committee.

This program began in 2010 with the aim of increasing the number of women directors in ASX 200 companies. According to the AICD (2013), the number of female directors grew from 8.3% in 2010 to 15.4% in 2013. Women comprised 28% of all new appointments to ASX 200 boards in 2011. As at 31 March, 2013, 15.6% of ASX 200 board members are female — representing increases over 2010, 2011, and 2012 (AICD, 2013, (http://www.companydirectors.com.au/Director-Resource-Centre/Governance-and-Director-Issues/Board-Diversity/Statistics). These statistics suggest that this specially targeted mentoring program has contributed to an increase in women appointed to boards and to directorships of ASX 200 boards.

Government Departments that provide programs for women staff

For decades, government departments in Australia have provided formal mentoring programs for women at all levels of the organisation including women who are graduate recruits, new women managers, and women in non-traditional areas of employment. The focus of these programs tends to vary from those that are developmental in nature (Bhatta and Washington, 2003), to those that seek to develop specific job related skills, to those with a strong affirmative action focus (Ehrich, Hansford & Ehrich, 2011). Two contrasting examples of currently available programs that have been especially targeted for women are discussed here. The first is a self-paced program for women in the Royal Australian Navy called, “My

mentor" (Robinson, 2010, http://www.australianwomenonline.com/australian-navy-launches-mentoring-program-for-women) and the second is a program offered by the *Office of Commissioner for Public Employment in the Northern Territory* that develops women's leadership abilities.

"My mentor" is a 12 week program that consists of DVDs and work book based activities designed to assist women in the navy develop core personal and professional skills, peer mentoring and networking. It draws upon interviews with and insights from Australian leading business women. As a self-paced program, participants work through the materials and complete weekly activities. The program was designed by Emberin, a private company that prepares resources for private and public organisations in the pursuit of leadership and gender diversity (My mentor program, www.emberin.com). Unlike so many formal mentoring programs, "My mentor" does not involve participants working with mentors; rather they learn about mentoring through self-directed learning. *The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment in the Northern Territory (Australia)* is a central public sector agency that is responsible for providing an employment framework for developing and managing the Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) workforce and coordinates training and development. An example of a program available to women is the Discovery Women as Leaders Program. Like other leadership development programs, it has a mentoring component and other components (i.e., peer coaching, group action learning project, face-to-face facilitation, guest speaker seminar series) to support women's development. Mentoring is provided to each of the women participants and these mentors come from the Agency or a business unit. While the program is targeted at women in managerial positions such as frontline managers and supervisors, its major aim is to "help women develop greater confidence (including confidence in valuing their own backgrounds and cultures), learn leadership skills and build valuable support and business networks" so they can work

effectively in the Northern Territory Public Sector (Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, 2011b, http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/building_capability/leadership/women_in_leadership/development_programs/discovery). Unfortunately, no data are available regarding the efficacy of this particular leadership program for women. It is noteworthy, however, that in 2011, women in the NTPS held 43% of senior management positions and this percentage has grown steadily over the last decade. For example, women held 26% of senior positions in 2002 (Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment, 2011c, http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/building_capability/equity_and_diversity). It is possible that the leadership discovery program as well as other programs that have targeted women leaders may have well contributed to the increased number of women in these positions.

5. Critical issues that impact on women managers in mentoring relationships

Writers in the field have referred to a variety of issues that are critical when thinking about formal and informal mentoring arrangements for women. Previous work by one of the authors of this chapter identified a number of key issues that are significant for women. These include the necessity for women to be aware of the nature and focus of different types of mentoring arrangements; the potential risks associated with cross sex mentoring relationships; and the use or misuse of power in mentoring relationships (Ehrich, 2008, 2009). In the discussion that follows, these themes are built on and presented as competing sets of issues.

Developmental Vs sponsorship mentoring

It was discussed earlier in this chapter that mentoring can be experienced very differently depending on the type of mentoring that is being used. Two broad theoretical categorisations of mentoring—developmental and sponsoring mentoring—were identified and discussed. A key feature distinguishing the two forms of mentoring is the use of power. The former is more egalitarian in focus and recognises that mentoring is an empowering experience for both parties, is developmental, and mutually rewarding, while the latter tends to be about hierarchy and the ability of the mentor to use their power to open doors for the mentee. Sponsorship mentoring resonates with a number of the roles that mentors are said to play according to Kram (1985) and these include protection, visibility, and exposure. It is argued here that both types of mentoring are central for women.

Promoted by Clutterbuck (2004a) and Elmes and Smith (2006), the developmental approach is one where effective mentors allow protégés to define the parameters of the relationship and where mentors are required to exercise self-awareness and humility. This approach to mentoring resonates with the work of feminist authors (DeMarco, 1993; Devos, 2004; Schramm, 2000) who argue for mentoring relationships to be less hierarchical and directive and more empowering for those who are mentored. For example, Schramm (2000, p. 10) argues that mentoring relationships with feminist values

> "focus on the primacy of interpersonal relationships; empowerment and personal development of members; building of self-esteem; the promotion of enhanced knowledge, skills and political awareness; personal autonomy; and the politics of gender..."

Some writers go as far as arguing for the importance of "peer mentoring" relationships for women as opposed to one-on-one relationships because the former are developmental, egalitarian, and involve a community of participants. Comprising of peers

who are of similar status and have shared interests, peer mentoring provides mutual support, learning, and friendship (Hermsen et al., 2011; Mitchell in Ncube and Wasburn, 2010). Hermsen et al. (2011) maintain that peer mentoring works particularly well for women in the faculty who may feel isolated yet desirous of establishing relationships with similarly minded others to enable connectedness. Another advantage of peer mentoring is that it may be more readily available than sponsoring mentoring.

It seems the issue of sponsorship mentoring is paradoxical. On the one hand, when it is extended to women it is viewed as perpetuating an organisation "as a patriarchal system, that both the mentor and the mentee collude in unwitting ways to reproduce the ideology of the profession and the hierarchy of gender" (Olson and Ashton-Jones, 1992, p.122). Yet, on the other hand, it can and does offer an avenue for women to enter into more powerful positions and is more likely to enhance their career development as supported by the research (see for example, Chao, Waltz, and Gardner, 1992; Ragins and Cotton, 1999; Ramaswami et al., 2010). As discussed earlier in the chapter, in certain male dominated industries and workplaces, female managers and professionals can benefit by a senior male mentor who plays a sponsoring type role (Ramaswami et al., 2010). In this whole argument, a vital message for women protégés in sponsorship relationships is to not become clones of their mentor and not to accept uncritically the practices and norms they observe (Hansman, 2002).

Our position is that women would benefit greatly by access to multiple mentoring arrangements (i.e. developmental and sponsorship mentoring), and receive different types of support from many people and many directions. This arrangement is known as "multiple mentoring" and the rationale underpinning it is that it is unlikely that any one mentor will be able to meet both the career (i.e., sponsorship) and psycho-social needs (i.e. developmental) (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2002; Kram and Isabella, 1985) of a mentee. Many writers (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2002; Kram and Isabella, 1985; Mayer et al., 2008) have argued that

multiple mentoring is an approach that is particularly advantageous for women. For example, de Janasz and Sullivan argue that for women in academic roles in higher education institutions, multiple mentoring is critical as it would allow them to have different aspects of their career needs (i.e. teaching, research, publication) met by different individuals. We concur with the aforementioned writers, as we believe that multiple mentoring arrangements are likely to be advantageous for women working in a variety of organisational contexts such as the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

Formal Vs informal

According to Clutterbuck (2005), empirical research is contradictory regarding the question of whether informal mentoring is superior to formal mentoring. Some of the arguments for formal mentoring programs include social inclusion, since formal mentoring provides mentors for persons who may find it difficult to access informal mentors; formal mentoring benefits the organisation as well as the individual; formal mentoring promotes staff retention; and formal mentoring enhances performance in the workplace. Some of the arguments for informal mentoring include that there is no time limit in the relationships; informal mentors volunteer to work with protégés and are more personally committed to mentees than formal mentors; informal mentors are focused on the long-term needs of protégés; and mentors can exercise their power to promote the protégé's visibility and exposure (Clutterbuck, 2005). On reflection of the merits and demerits of formal and informal mentoring, Clutterbuck (2004a, pp. 28-29) says:

> "Getting the best from a mentoring scheme, then, involves building in the best aspects of both formal and informal approaches. A formal structure is essential because it provides meaning and direction for relationships and support where necessary. But

individual relationships will flourish best when allowed to operate as informally as possible."

Since the research is inconclusive about which type of mentoring arrangement works most effectively, we would argue that women would benefit by access to informal mentors and also by participating in formal programs, especially those that have an informal approach as outlined by Clutterbuck (2004a). Both types of arrangements have advantages and if conducted effectively are likely to contribute to women's learning, growth and career development.

Diversity Vs same-group mentoring

When examining diversity in mentoring relationships, consideration is given to mentors and protégés/mentees who differ on a number of key characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and socio-economic class (Ragins, 1997 in Ragins, 2007, p. 282). The discussion that follows is concerned with gender rather than any of the other features of diversity. Much of the early research on cross-sex or cross-gender mentoring referred to the combination of male mentor matched with female mentee involving heterosexual unions (Ehrich, 2008). A well-debated issue has been whether women are better off being mentored by a male or a female. Clutterbuck (2004a) summarised some of the arguments for and against same versus different mentoring dyads and arguments for same-sex dyads. Arguments for same-sex dyads include that they can often bring greater understanding and that same-sex mentors can act as role models. Arguments for cross-gender dyads include: that there may not be enough women to act as mentors for other women; a male mentor may bring a different perspective; a male mentor may be better connected and have access to a range of different people; and male mentors may be more likely to have access to power to exert influence on the mentee's behalf.

Research (Burke et al., 1990; Clawson and Kram, 1984; Feeney, 2006; Tharanou, 2005) to date appears mixed regarding the question of whether same gender dyads have advantages over cross-gender dyads for women. Some studies have found that a mentor's gender is pertinent in relation to protégés' outcomes (Ragins, 2007). For example, women who are mentored by male mentors have been found to earn more money than those who were mentored by female mentors (Dreher and Cox, 1996 in Ragins, 2007; Ragins and Cotton, 1999). For example, in a quantitative study of 352 female and 257 male protégés, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found that female proteges who had a history of being mentored by male mentors not only were promoted more but also earned significantly more than female proteges who had been mentored by female mentors. A study by Feeney (2006) found that same-gender mentorships compared to cross-gender mentorships did not provide career advantages to women in public organisations. A key finding of Feeney's study (2006) was that access to a mentor (of either gender) increases women's career outcomes. Yet, in a study of male and female Australian public servants, Tharanou (2005) found that the support of women mentors translated into promotion for women they mentored to a greater extent than if they had been mentored by a male.

While there is research to suggest that cross-gender relationships can be productive and rewarding (Johnson and Huwe, 2003), writers in the field of cross-gender mentor dyads have drawn attention to the difficulties that can emerge from these relationships (Clawson and Kram, 1984; Hansman, 1998; Kram, 1985; Schramm, 2000). For example, based on their research of male mentors and female mentees in sponsorship type mentoring arrangements, Clawson and Kram (1984) identified three main sexual risks. These risks included when the relationship becomes sexual; when others in the organisation suspect the relationship is sexual (even if it is not); and when both parties play stereotypical roles (i.e. male as "all knowing" and powerful; female as dependent and compliant). The problem with this type of

stereotypical behaviour is that it does not allow the mentoring relationship to develop independence in the female mentee. If the relationship is cross-gender then both parties need to define the boundaries in their relationship and maintain professional behaviour at all times (Clawson and Kram, 1984; Morgan and Davidson, 2008).

An argument often posed for eliminating potential cross-gender problems from occurring in mentoring dyads is for female mentors to work with female mentees (Schwiebert et al., 1999), since sexual risk is considered not likely to be an issue within same-gender relationships. Yet it is possible that sexual risks could emerge when either or both parties are lesbian or bisexual. As Morgan and Davidson (2008) maintain, the area of gay or lesbian and bisexual mentoring relationships is one that requires further research. A key implication of this discussion is that, in some situations, it will be advantageous to have a partner who is the same gender and in other situations it will be advantageous to have a partner who is of a different gender (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2012). A great deal depends on the needs of the individuals and the expectations held by both parties.

Face-to-face mentoring Vs e-mentoring

Many writers (Hermsen et al., 2011; Kram and Isabella, 1985; Mayer et al., 2008; Ncube and Wasburn, 2010) have argued for mentoring approaches that transcend the traditional face to face arrangement and provide different structures and models for women. Of interest to this discussion is e-mentoring, which uses electronic communication as a key mode through which mentors and protégés/mentees connect and communicate (Fagenson-Eland and Yan Lu, 2004; Whiting and de Janasz, 2004).

Up until recent decades, face-to-face mentoring was the dominant approach to mentoring. Today, electronic communication and e-business are pervasive in organisational life. It is not surprising, then, that web-based technology is increasingly being used to assist

with mentoring and mentoring programs (Fletcher, 2012). E-mentoring relies on computer mediated communication (CMC) such as e-mail and other electronic communication technologies to enable the mentoring to take place (Single and Single, 2005). Ensher and Murphy (2007, p. 300) define e-mentoring as "a mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a protégé which provides new learning as well as career and emotional support, primarily through email as well as other electronic means".

Ensher and colleagues (in Ensher and Murphy, 2007, pp. 300-301) explain that there are three types of e-mentoring relationships, each of which is distinguished by the degree to which CMC is used. The first type, CMC only, refers to relationships in which ALL communication is electronic and this is usually via email. The second type, CMC primary, refers to relationships which are primarily mediated through CMC, but there are some face to face meetings and phone calls. Finally, CMC supplemented is where the relationship is undertaken primarily via face-to-face and some interactions are mediated by CMC.

In recent times, e-mentoring or e-mentoring programs have begun to receive prominence in the field of mentoring (Headlam et al., 2005; Ensher et al., 2003 in Woolnough and Davidson, 2007) for the benefits they provide in terms of eliminating geographical distances and providing greater flexibility in scheduling (Single and Single, 2005). While sharing some features with a conventional face to face mentoring relationship such as psycho-social support and the sharing of information, e-mentoring arrangements have also been identified as "boundaryless, egalitarian, and qualitatively different from traditional face to face mentoring" (Bierema and Merriam, 2002, p. 214). Other advantages include greater access to mentors since geography and time are not barriers; a record of interactions; and reduced costs in administering the program (Ensher et al., 2003 in Esnher and Murphy, 2007).

Some of the disadvantages that have been associated with e-mentoring include: the likelihood of misinterpretation or miscommunication due to asynchronous communication; a longer time needed to develop trust and rapport in the relationship; computer or internet malfunctions; issues of confidentiality; and different degrees of competence in writing (Ensher et al., 2003 in Ensher and Murphy, 2007). It appears that the success of any type of e-mentoring program will also depend on mentors and protégés being confident when working in this type of context and if proficient in using web-based technology (Fletcher, 2012).

Because e-mentoring is a relatively new area of research it is difficult to critically evaluate its contribution or success (Yaw in Fletcher, 2012, p.77). Not surprisingly, there is little research that has been carried out exploring e-mentoring relationships or e-mentoring programs for women. Of the limited research in this area, two studies pertaining to women are now discussed.

Petridou (2009) discusses an e-mentoring program designed for new women business owners and entrepreneurs located in rural areas throughout Greece. The program facilitated a number of face-to-face meetings and computer mediated communications (i.e. 35 e-contacts) between each new business owner and her mentor, an experienced woman entrepreneur. Overall the responses from both mentors and mentees pointed to a quality relationship because of the mentors' and mentees' characteristics, the frequency of contact, and e-services available. That the parties achieved their personal goals and expressed a desire to continue the e-mentoring relationship after its conclusion indicated its positive impact. (inter-organizational mentoring example again. So is the one in the following paragraph.)

Another study on e-mentoring found that it also had many advantages for supporting women's career and management potential. Headlam-Wells et al. (2005) reported on a European Union funded program that involved 122 participants. The program was designed

so that the majority of interactions would be online but complemented by telephone and face to face meetings. Support was provided via e-activities that enabled participants to access another level of support through resources and web links plus participate in group mentoring discussions. Based on questionnaires, the researchers found that e-mentoring had many advantages for the participants including: improved ICT skills; feelings of isolation being overcome; and increased networking opportunities. On the downside, some participants left the program due to personal circumstances and some participants found the site too difficult to navigate suggesting that their IT skills were not proficient enough to enable them to maximise the online communication. Without the ability to use technology competently, it is likely that e-mentoring will create barriers for those without these skills. Overall, though, the majority of participants indicated that e-mentoring that takes a blended approach (i.e. incorporates face to face and email) does contribute to women's development. A key finding of the research was that "technology is not the central factor in e-mentoring; it is the quality of the mentoring and the mentoring relationships that are most important" (Headlam-Wells et al., 2005, p. 456). Given that over a billion people in the world access the internet (Hof in Ensher and Murphy, 2007) it seems likely that e-mentoring arrangements will continue to grow.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the research on mentoring and its contribution to women managers' career advancement. The different types of mentoring configurations covered in this chapter included formal and informal mentoring, developmental and sponsoring mentoring, and one-on-one and peer or group mentoring. It was concluded that women can benefit from different types of mentoring arrangements. Through mentoring, women can

obtain both career benefits (e.g., promotion and salary increases) and psycho-social support (e.g., friendship and encouragement).

It is important to note that, while the research and wide writing in the field point to mentoring as a key strategy for advancing women's development, it is not a panacea. It is one of a number of strategies that have a prominent place in supporting and encouraging women in their respective professional and personal endeavours. Mentoring can be a powerful learning relationship but it can be problematic at the same time. Although not discussed in this chapter, mentoring can yield a variety of challenges. Garvey (2010) identifies these as practical or logistical issues (such as lack of time for mentoring); relationship issues (such as incompatibility between partners, dependency of one partner on the other, and the risk of intimacy as in cross-gender relationships) and organisational issues (such as a lack of understanding about the mentoring program, and uncommitted or unwilling participants). Researchers have confirmed that these issues can pose significant challenges for the success of any mentoring arrangements (Hansford, Tennent and Ehrich, 2002; 2003). For example, Hansford et al. (2002) undertook a structured review of 151 research-based papers that explored mentoring in a variety of organizational contexts. From their analysis of these papers, they found that the aforementioned issues raised by Garvey were evident in the research studies. Hansford et al. (2002) identified a lack of time to mentor as the most frequently cited difficulty mentors had with mentoring. Both mentors and mentees referred to the difficulties that emerged if there was no compatibility with their partners. Where mentoring programs existed, a lack of training and understanding about the program, as well as unwilling participants (both mentors and mentees), were identified as problematic for the success of the relationship. Hansford et al. (2002) identified different types of relationship issues. Some of these issues included a lack of trust and cooperation between the parties, mentors who exploited or blocked mentees' careers, and mentees who were ungrateful or

who had unrealistic expectations. Relationship issues such as these can create a less than optimal arrangement for both parties (Hansford et al., 2002). Therefore, although there are a variety of challenges that confront mentors and mentees, it is clear that the different types of mentoring provide many benefits for women managers. It is important to note that these types of mentoring can vary greatly depending on the purpose, focus, and type of relationship that is formed. This point in itself is a key one for women who may find themselves either mentoring others or being mentored, as mentoring can be experienced differently and not every mentoring encounter will necessarily be successful.

While there has been a proliferation of writing and research on mentoring over the previous decade, gender and mentoring is still seen as an area of research where considerable work is needed (McKeen and Bujaki, 2007). Missing from much of the research is longitudinal work that can trace the impact of mentoring programs or mentors on the career development of women managers. Longitudinal studies would add richness to current work in this area. Another important area of research that is needed is an examination of the impact of e-mentoring on the career outcomes and growth of women managers. A further area for research is that on women managers published in languages other than English. As Hansford et al. (2002) concluded, the majority of the studies in their sample came from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and other English speaking nations. Research that provided a comparative analysis of the outcomes of mentoring across different countries and cultures might yield some fascinating results. We concur with McKeen and Bujaki (2007) that ongoing research is vital as it should strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the antecedents and outcomes of mentoring for women as well as for men. This awareness is likely to lead to better mentoring programs that benefit not only the mentor and mentee but also benefit the organisation.

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