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Mentoring and its Effects on the Progression of Female Solicitors' Careers

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Sheffield Hallam University

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of Law and Criminology

Mentoring and its Effects on the Progression of Female Solicitors' Careers

Edyta J. Madej-Walls

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

October 2019

Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the thesis is 70,072.

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Abstract

Mentoring can be conceptualised differently according to the contributor, but at the core of the mentoring practice is a focus on learning, power sharing, inclusivity, participatory actions and democratic engagement.¹

Increasingly, younger people desire a better work / life balance. They want to be empowered, to thrive and be more in charge of their career-building. As a result, this younger generation requires to be kept motivated in their career and also to have access to guides who can help them achieve such a balance. For many years, men have benefited from informal mentoring in male dominated fields while women experienced difficulty in finding mentors in masculine organization culture. It can be argued that this is the place for career mentoring programmes. Mentoring is a directive form of help, especially benefiting early career individuals on their journey to the most senior levels. It is meant to reduce the chances for, in the context of this research, law firms losing valuable individuals and, as a by-product of advancing the career aspirations of this group, to enable them to prosper in an increasingly competitive environment.

Furthermore, mentoring aims to help develop better professional practice, collaboration between different generations of law firm leaders and cultural intelligence. Indirect benefits of effective mentoring programmes can include a reduction in staff turnover and the associated costs in recruiting replacements; and motivating and/or replacing underperforming individuals who are not acting to their full capacity. The mentoring programme may offer a solution to such problems or perhaps could be used to anticipate them, create solutions and thus establish better functioning law firms. Together with the mentors who have relevant experience and knowledge, they are able to proffer guidance,

¹ Anthena Vongalis-Macrow, *Career Moves: Mentoring for Women Advancing Their Career and Leadership in Academia*, (Springer Science & Business Media 2014) XV Preface.

advice and recommendations to mentees. The focus then stays on real and practical development, helping individuals to develop their careers to more senior levels with the support of the mentor.

This empirical, qualitative study is based on female lawyers' experiences of mentoring at various stages of their legal careers. Particular focus is put on female lawyers and their career progressions to more senior levels of the profession with the support of either/or formal or informal mentoring programmes. The participants to this study were practising lawyers at different phases of their legal careers. Hence, the participants' perceptions offer a range of views and evidence which help when drawing conclusions from the contrasting perspectives of their shared experiences.

The varied mentoring practices evidenced in this research incorporate formal mentoring programmes established to run for a designated period of time; informal mentoring programmes operating with no such fixed duration; and formal mentoring programmes which progress to an informal type, and then continue indefinitely. The findings demonstrate diverse support such as positive developments of broader networking, professional and personal growth of mentees' confidence and individual career progression. In addition to the above, significant enthusiasm was reported for the development of a multi-mentor form of support to further improve female lawyers' career progressions. However, an ultimate conclusion is the finding of a general lack of consistency in mentoring support amongst the participating lawyers' employers which continues to limit the effectiveness of mentoring in law firms.

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First, I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr James Marson and Jill Dickinson for their dedication and unwavering support throughout my doctoral research journey. Your continuous help, flexible availability and strong encouragement has certainly kept me above the sinking levels of this doctoral experience. Without the investment of your knowledge and expertise, the completion of this study would have had a bleak prognosis. So, thank you for all you did for me during the last four years, I am hopeful to share our experiences forever.

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To my loving daughter, Ella - thank you for putting up with mummy having her head in books, journal articles and the laptop for your entire life! I have done this for me as well as for you, to have a better life than I have had growing up and to show you that anything in life is possible, absolutely anything! When I first arrived in the UK, somewhat twenty-five years ago, I couldn't speak the language, I couldn't understand locals and had to work twice as hard to learn the language before continuing with my career desires. It wasn't easy but it was possible! Everything in life is possible if you really, really want it, so please follow your mummy's strong will and do always your best! I love you forever!

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the past four years. Thank you for doing my shopping and always being available at the end of the phone line, any time of the day or night. The only wish I have is for you to be able to read and understand my completed thesis, so I promise to make myself available, and translate this PhD into Polish, allowing you to read and understand the content and hopefully enjoy it as much as I did writing it. You are simply the Best Mum in the world!

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Preface

A belief² that women are equal to men and therefore entitled to equal rights and opportunities was espoused during the French Revolution in 1789.³ In the subsequent years, women started systematically to question sexual inequality and to take steps towards bringing about change.⁴

Prior to 1900 a woman's place, in many Western cultures at least, was in the home.⁵ A patriarchal system held that women belonged to their men folk, before marriage this was their father and latterly their husband.⁶ Wealthy females were the only ones who could experience a greater degree of independence. However, even from the eighteenth century, feminism has been a developing movement and its effects could be observed in many aspects of female life such as education, family life, professional work, politics and so on.

1876 was a particularly important year in relation to the emancipation of women and saw the first application of a woman to be admitted as a solicitor in England. Her application was rejected with no further action taken. There were very few women engaged in the profession, and of those, employment as legal assistants to solicitors was the furthest they rose in their career. In 1912, the Legal Profession (Admission of Women) Bill was introduced into Parliament to enable women to become solicitors. It failed to get sufficient support to become legislation. A further two Bills followed in 1914 and in 1917, the Wolmer's Bill and the Barristers' and Solicitors' Bill. Similarly, both failed to attract sufficient support to become Acts.

² Eric D. Widmer and Gilbert Ritschard, 'The De-Standardization of the Life Course: Are Men and Women Equal?' (2009) 14(1-2) *Advances in Life Course Research* 28-39.

³ Period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France and its colonies which overthrew the monarchy and established a republic.

⁴ Susan A. Mann, 'Slavery, Sharecropping, and Sexual Inequality' (1989) 14(4) *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 774-798.

⁵ Holly J. McCammon, Lyndi Hewitt and Sandy Smith, "'No Weapon Save Argument': Strategic Frame Amplification in the U.S. Woman Suffrage Movements' (2004) 45(3) *The Sociological Quarterly* 529-556.

⁶ Carole Shammas, 'Re-Assessing the Married Women's Property Acts' (1994) 6(1) *Journal of Women's History* 9-30.

Subsequently, the Court of Appeal in *Bebb v Law Society*⁷ rejected an appeal, deciding that the female claimant was not ‘a person’ within the terms of the Solicitors Act 1843. This case demonstrated the antagonism women had to suffer in acquiring fairness of volition and unwillingness of the legal profession to admit women. A significant year in the history of women in the legal profession brought the first woman, Dorothy Bonjaree, a law student who graduated in the UK, in 1917.⁸ Then, the formal barriers excluding women from the legal profession were formally removed by virtue of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919.⁹ The main driving factor for the implementation of the 1919 Act was to eliminate legal inequalities based upon sex. Despite the 1919 Act removing the barriers for women to enter the legal profession, it actually failed to actively give women rights and therefore its impact was rather limited. Furthermore, women were prohibited from entering foreign and diplomatic services, for example, and judges were permitted to appoint all-male juries. Nonetheless, the 1919 Act was a significant step forwards and a significant landmark towards further developments and progressions for women in law.

The developments surrounding the 1919 Act certainly helped women to enter the legal profession, overturning as it did the common law decision which had declared women unfit to take up public office.¹⁰ Subsequently, Carol Morrison¹¹ and three other women, Maud Crofts,¹² Mary Elizabeth Pickup¹³ and Mary Elaine Sykes¹⁴ became the first women in England to qualify as solicitors and enter the legal profession. Throughout decades thereafter, further laws were implemented to help and

⁷ *Bebb v Law Society* [1914] Ch. 286.

⁸ Ulrike Schultz and Gisela Shaw, *Women in the World's Legal Professions* (Hart Publishing 2003) 144.

⁹ The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 is an equal opportunities legislation enabling women to join the professions including become lawyers and magistrates and sit on juries for the first time in the lifetime. Section 1 states: ‘A person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or for admission to any incorporated society (whether incorporated by Royal Charter or otherwise), [and a person shall not be exempted by sex or marriage from the liability to serve as a juror]...’.

¹⁰ Ulrike Schultz and Gisela Shaw, *Women in the World's Legal Profession* (Hart Publishing 2003) 139-158.

¹¹ The first woman to be admitted as a solicitor in England.

¹² A British suffragist, an author and solicitor who graduated from Girton College, Cambridge with First Class Honours. Maud was refused a degree because she was a woman.

¹³ A British solicitor who earned a BA degree from University of Wales and became a partner in 1923.

¹⁴ A British solicitor and the only woman on the Huddersfield Town Council who became the first woman to be elected as Mayoress of Huddersfield.

support women in their ongoing development, including the Equal Pay Act 1970,¹⁵ the Sex Discrimination Act 1975,¹⁶ the Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005¹⁷ and the Equality Act 2010 (a consolidating one).¹⁸

In particular, since 1969 the law of Equal Pay was for many middle-class women their first opportunity to summon awareness of equal rights in the workplace. Feminism is underpinned by notions of equality, remaining distinctive and retaining gender identity. Over a century ago from having merely housekeeping responsibilities, the image of the female has developed significantly. With many rights still unavailable to women, female civilisation commenced claiming legal rights and entitlements which for centuries were simply denied and were unavailable. Into the twenty first century women continued to prove that despite having increasing duties and a, perceived at least, lesser physical strength compared with men, they are still able to be successful mothers, housewives and career women.

Since the 1919 Act the first 100 years mark significant achievements for women in the legal profession. These remarkable ongoing developments continue to assist women in law fulfilling their ambitions and potential for future progressions. Driven and aspiring women lawyers are continuing to make their mark in the profession while remembering the struggles during the last century. Elizabeth Cruickshank, a female lawyer, stated that women lawyers have come a long way from the

¹⁵ The Equal Pay Act 1970 prohibited any less favourable treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment.

¹⁶ The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 protected men and women from discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status. The Act concerned employment, training, education, harassment, the provision of goods and services, and the disposal of promises.

¹⁷ The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 SI 2005/2467, amending the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970, became law on 1 October 2005. The Regulations introduced amendments to sex discrimination and equal pay legislation designed to fulfil the UK's obligations under the Equal Treatment Amendment Directive (No. 2002/73).

¹⁸ The Equality Act 2010 is an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom providing information and guidance including age discrimination and public sector Equality Duty.

time that flexible working could on the whole be summed up as career followed by marriage and no career at all.¹⁹

Therefore, my thesis focuses on the advancement of female lawyers' careers, particularly with the support of mentoring programmes provided at various stages of their legal careers, and the beneficial impact this has on their career progression. The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression. This thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge by presenting empirically based evidence of the effects of mentoring programmes, and its constituent support and assistance, to those participating law firms as well as their female lawyers' experiences.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Cruickshank, *Women in the Law* (The Law Society 2003) 1.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The concept of mentoring was initiated in Greek mythology. Homer's *Odyssey* is widely recognised as the original source of the concept of mentoring.²⁰ A figure in Homer's *Odyssey*, Mentor, was a wise and faithful advisor entrusted to protect Odysseus's son, Telemachus, while Odysseus sailed to Troy to fight in the war.²¹ The original mentoring prototype symbolises the images of both male and female, where Mentor was a man and Athena, the female of goddess of wisdom, assumed his form in order to guide, teach and protect young Telemachus.²²

In essence, mentoring recognises the interrelation where a senior person helps a more junior person by providing guidance and support with a view to completing a task. In other words, mentoring is a method of practice used to achieve personal aims set by individuals with aligned interests. More specifically, this confidential one-to-one relationship includes an individual who uses a more experienced person as a 'sounding board' for guidance. This protected and non-judgemental relationship facilitates a wide range of learning, experimentation and development. Ideally, this relationship is built on mutual regard, trust and respect.²³ This guided form of support helps juniors to enhance their skills and progress their careers to more senior levels. The process of interaction with a senior colleague allows that person's experience and relevant skills to be transferred to help the junior's growth and development.

²⁰ George Chapman and Richard Hooper, *The Odysseys of Homer* (Gyan Books Pvt. Ltd 2016).

²¹ Belle R. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Sage Publishing Ltd 2007) 3.

²² Belle R. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Sage Publishing Ltd 2007) 4.

²³ Business Wales, Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government *Coaching Guide* (Public Service Management Wales, Welsh Government 2013) <<https://businesswales.gov.wales/mentoring/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

1.2 *Structure of the thesis*

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression. In the first substantive chapter (Chapter 2, Literature Review), I identify the prevailing literature gaps surrounding the effectiveness of mentoring support provided to female lawyers and their subsequent career progressions to senior levels in the profession. The chapter begins by providing an overview of mentoring followed by the identification of the key forms of mentoring available to individuals in organisations. This includes both informal and formal schemes and organisations' concerted moves towards the formal advancement of such initiatives, and their rationale.²⁴

Chapter 2 further offers the broad definition and remit of mentoring schemes, as well as a critique of mentoring schemes from an international perspective, outlining the effects of cultural and organisational norms on its development and implementation. The chapter continues discussing mentoring schemes being addressed from a sectoral perspective including education,²⁵ business,²⁶ and the legal sector (law firms). The particular sectoral focus on education and business has been taken to highlight successful and ongoing mentoring practices in both sectors. First, it recognises that mentoring in education has become progressively paramount as a mode of professional development²⁷ and an investment in the younger generation.²⁸ From the education policy aspect,

²⁴ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁵ Andrew J. Hobson, Patricia Castanheira and Kerry Doyle, 'Mentoring and Coaching Across the Professions' (2016) Research and Enterprise, University of Brighton <<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/groups/education/research-projects/mentoring-and-coaching-across-the-professions.aspx>> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁶ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁷ Susan Brondyk and Linda Searby, 'Best Practices in Mentoring: Complexities and Possibilities' (2013) 2(3) International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education 189-203.

²⁸ Sarah J. Fletcher and Carol A. Mullen, *Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Sage Publications Ltd 2012).

mandatory mentoring is an oxymoron singling a hidden curriculum where teachers are required to mentor and make documented gains.²⁹ Mentoring in education forms a part of the job and as Kirkham³⁰ (Section 2.7) revealed, mentoring is an important element in the process of job acclimatisation. Further, mentoring provides an additional source of support from the early stages of newly qualified teachers which helps with settling into the new job and assists with future career progression from an early start. Further, findings of D'Abate³¹ (Section 2.7) confirm that high level of mentoring support is regularly being shared between faculty and peer mentors, resulting in better practice and support of their students. This aspect of cross-departmental mentoring, also known as multi-mentor support, is discussed later in my research (Section 4.4). Mentoring in education has been used in practice for many years and Odell's research³² (Section 2.7) further confirms that teachers who undertake a mentoring support during their careers are still in the profession and teaching. Mentoring remains an important element of teachers' career progression and their ongoing on-job support, including emotional support. It is evident from the findings of my research that mentoring provides a source of emotional support (Section 4.6) which consequently helps dealing with issues more constructively and confidently (Section 4.8). From the review of literature, mentoring support in education proves to be an important stage during teachers' career progression, whether is being implemented during an early or a later stage of their careers. This resonates with the findings of my research, as discussed in Chapter 4. In addition, the research of Sorcinelli and Yun³³ (Section 2.7) reveals that mentoring is a vital contribution to a successful academic career, particularly for women, which is also replicated in mentoring within the legal field.

²⁹ Carol A. Mullen *Mentoring: An Overview* (Sage Publications Ltd 2005).

³⁰ David Kirkham, *The Nature and Conditions of Good Mentoring Practice* (Kogan Page Limited 1992).

³¹ Caroline D'Abate, 'Defining Mentoring in the First Year Experience: One Institution's Approach to Clarifying the Meaning of Mentoring First Year Students' (2009) 21(1) *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* 65-91.

³² Sandra J. Odell and Douglas P. Ferraro, 'Teacher Mentoring and Teacher Retention' (1992) 43(3) *Journal of Teacher Education* 200-204.

³³ Mary D. Sorcinelli and Jung Yun, 'From Mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy' (2007) 39(6) *Journal Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 58-61.

Chapter 2 continues with offering a discussion relating to mentoring in the business sector. Here the practice of mentoring is seen as a development tool³⁴ that helps the individual within the organisation.³⁵ Mentoring allows individuals to develop within the organisational framework, especially with understanding the company's values and a realisation that the organisation helps them feel they are making a worthwhile contribution.³⁶ While mentees gain skills and specific knowledge from their senior peers, they also develop a deeper understanding and a sharper focus of the organisation's culture which helps with their career progression.³⁷ Mentoring in business enterprises is found to be a common practice, unlike in law firms.³⁸ Thomson and others³⁹ revealed that successful business women, who work together with mentors of the highest possible standards, provide a substantial influence to act as powerful patrons and supporters. This study finds the same ideology where female lawyers' mentees progress to become mentors for the junior female lawyers (Section 4.11). Having female mentors in the legal practice helps the junior female lawyers strive for success and encourages the further career progression (Section 4.11). Further similarities are identified between mentoring in business and mentoring in law firms including employees' satisfaction (Section 4.7). Clutterbuck⁴⁰ states that mentoring is one of the fastest growing aspects of people development in business and with the successful programme of mentoring and further mentee's progression and satisfaction, the retention levels are likely to remain reasonably stable reflecting the success of the organisation. Further findings of Ragins⁴¹ (Section 2.2) reveal that mentoring relationships help break down the barriers in promoting the advancement of women. By

³⁴ Gordon F. Shea, *Mentoring, A Guide to the Basics* (Kogan Page 1992).

³⁵ Georges Desvaux, Sandrine Devillard-Hoellinger and Mary C. Meaney, 'A Business Case for Women' (2008) *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

³⁶ Geof Alred, Bob Garvey and Richard Smith, *The Mentoring Pocketbook* (Management Pocketbooks Limited and Stylus Publishing 1998).

³⁷ Rajahs Ghosh and Thomas G. Reio Jr, 'Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Mentors: A Meta-Analysis' (2013) 83(1) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 106-116.

³⁸ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

³⁹ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom: The Roadmap* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

⁴⁰ David Clutterbuck, 'Mentoring and Tutoring Partnership in Learning' (1994) 2(1) *Business Mentoring in Revolution* 19-22.

⁴¹ Belle R. Ragins, 'Barriers to Mentoring: The Female Manager's Dilemma' (1989) 42(1) *Human Relations* 1-22.

understanding an organisation's culture, women are then able to align their goals to the organisation's goals which allows them to move to a more influential, senior position. Another crucial aspect within business profession is productivity which finds similarities in the legal sector. Mentoring programmes provide cost-effective staff development where a mentor offers substantial help within their responsibilities which increases motivation, productivity and performance of the mentee. Moreover, Kahle-Piasecki's⁴² (Section 2.6.1) findings confirm that mentoring programmes in organisations can be helpful in improving and transferring knowledge, and lead to greater job satisfaction and retention on employees, resulting in higher business productivity. With the worker satisfaction in mind, the following three key points of a successful mentoring programme include first, a thorough understanding of the organisational needs and requirements for a mentoring programme. Second, the appropriate type of mentoring programme available based on the organisational commitment and availability. Third, adaptation of appropriate measures to monitor the mentoring programme and communication abilities within the team.⁴³ This view of the successful mentoring programme seems to be largely from the employers' point of view, including the organisational needs for a mentoring programme, the appropriate type of mentoring programme based on organisational commitment and appropriate measures to monitor such programme. Mentoring however, should be primarily about the employees themselves. Adaptations to fit organisational culture into mentoring may alter the dynamics and consequently is seen as performance management. Further aspect includes gender blindness which equates with doing things the way they have always been done whereby masculine advantage is maintained and reproduced. In organisations where culture is masculine women may need more effort to adopt to organizational culture whereas men are seen to have the appropriate competence, knowledge and skill. With gendered organizational realities like glass ceiling and gender

⁴² Lisa Kahle-Piasecki, 'Making a Mentoring Relationship Work: What is Required for Organizational Success' (2011) 12(1) *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 46-56.

⁴³ Bonnie C McKenzie, *Friends in High Places: The Executive Woman's Guide* (Business and Professional Publishing 1995).

achievement gap evolved from decades of women's inability to progress professionally because of perceptions that women are unequipped and lack access to influential networks.⁴⁴

What is evident from the review of the literature is the broad acceptance of the benefits that mentoring schemes provide to organisations and those individuals involved.⁴⁵ Mentoring is used as a developmental mechanism to improve forever changing environment.⁴⁶ Such schemes are well-established and developed in the education and business sectors, yet are largely missing or are only a relatively recent phenomenon in law firms.⁴⁷ Further, the result of my review of the literature demonstrate that while some research into law firms and mentoring practices has taken place, there is a paucity of such research in the UK and of those that have been undertaken, none of which I am aware have investigated the perceptions of female mentees on the impact of mentoring programmes.

Chapter 2 also highlights the gender impact of mentoring schemes. It is broadly reported that men succeed within mentoring schemes, but less conclusive findings are available in relation to female staff.⁴⁸ The chapter concludes by identifying the relative lack of available empirically based research identifying the implications for women in the legal sector of mentoring schemes (Section 2.9). This gap in the literature is addressed through the empirical findings presented in this thesis, underpinned by a feminist philosophy.⁴⁹

Chapter 3 provides details of the method and methodology adopted in this study which is based on empirical research with qualitative methods (including questionnaires, interviews and snowball

⁴⁴ Anita G. Welch, Jocelyn Bolin and Daniel Reardon *Mid-Career Faculty Trends, Barriers and Possibilities* (Brill Sense Leiden Boston 2019) 68-69.

⁴⁵ Cliff Olsson, Andrew Cruickshank and Dave Collins, 'Making Mentoring Work: The Need for Rewiring Epistemology' (2016) 69(1) Taylor & Francis Online Journal 50-64.

⁴⁶ Lesley Petersen, Suja Premchandran and Garry Clayton, 'Mentoring as a Mechanism for Organisational Development in a Globally Changing Environment' (2017) *Teaching and Learning with Technology* 137-147.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

⁴⁸ Norma T. Mertz, *Why Women Aren't Mentored* (ERIC Clearinghouse 1987).

⁴⁹ Herta Nagl-Docekal, *Feminist Philosophy* (1st ed Routledge 2018).

sampling) chosen to achieve the research objective. With all female based participants, it was perhaps inevitable that I investigate the use and effectiveness of mentoring for females engaged in the legal sector adopting a feminist theoretical position. A qualitative method provides the participants' views and experiences in much greater detail of their mentoring support received during the legal career progressions. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a snowball sampling method underpinned the data collection and helped the participants with their reflections. In support of the methods selected for this study, I refer to previously carried out research into mentoring in education by Leung⁵⁰ who also used qualitative method of research including questionnaires and interviews as research instruments to collect necessary data. I further refer to Patton's⁵¹ approach who also supported using qualitative methods of research as they provide a true reflection of a conducted examination of effectiveness, empirical data collection and thoughtful analysis which was necessary for my research. Other methods, including a case study, were considered, however, based on the chosen research question being mentoring and its effects on the progression of female solicitors' careers, the chosen methods (Sections 3.4 and 3.5) provide the necessary and principal reflections of the experiences of the female lawyer participants.

Through a deep and thorough data analysis, key findings are produced in Chapter 4. These include, first, a lack of consistency in the mentoring support available across the participating law firms and in the legal field. There is limited evidence in order to draw conclusions as to whether formal or informal mentoring-type schemes are likely to provide better support for the mentees. However, the ongoing factor following either type of mentoring programme is that each provides long term support and helps found a greater relationship between mentees and mentors. Second, mentoring enables and helps female lawyers' career progression (Section 4.9) which corroborates the previous research evidenced across various professions. Female lawyers have only recently outperformed their male

⁵⁰ Mee L. Leung, 'Characteristics of Effective Mentoring in Higher Education: Perspective of Students and Mentors' (University of Leicester 2001) <<https://ira.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/30975/1/U601129.pdf>> accessed 21 October 2019.

⁵¹ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd edn, Thousand Oaks Sage Publications 1990).

counterparts and currently form a majority in legal practice. However, they still struggle to rise to the senior levels of the profession. Mentoring provides the necessary support to continue to progress through the ranks and the evidence gained from this research shows that female lawyers strive for progression from the junior levels of the profession. Third, it has been further found that through mentoring the participants gain confidence (Section 4.8) which supports them in their day-to-day responsibilities, including maintaining a focus on their clients and in their decision making. Opportunities of further and wider circles of networking (Section 4.10) adds to the findings of my research which offers support in transferring knowledge leading to a greater job satisfaction and assisting female lawyers in gaining wider connections with more colleagues from different departments and offices. Having wider networks, motivation growth (Section 4.12) also plays an important role found during this research. Moreover, some participants felt that mentoring was inspirational and led them to emulate successful female figures within the firm and to get involved in self-development opportunities. Seeing other female lawyers progressing helps with the vision of success for the participants which was a positive aspect of mentoring.

As explained above, mentoring provides wider opportunities of networks which the participants discussed and with the multi-mentor model (Section 4.4) their progression could further develop. The participants responded that the multi-mentor model offers a significant opportunity to share knowledge, leading to a greater job satisfaction, career progression and consequently, an increase in retention levels at participating organisations. The multi-mentor model is potentially more difficult to put into practice depending on the size of a law firm and particularly with the availability of mentors. Smaller law firms may not potentially be able to offer this type of multi-mentor support whereas the larger law firms may be able to offer the multi-mentor support across the departments and even across offices. Some of the participants felt that the multi-mentor model would offer a wonderful network position, especially for the more junior lawyers with yet so much to learn.

Chapter 5 is where I offer a discussion of the findings of this study, including the implications and effectiveness of mentoring support in the participating law firms and is supported by earlier findings that mentoring aids career advancement by providing opportunities and motivation to succeed. With the female participants' empirical feedback being their own perception, mentoring support provides a positive aspect of development, progression and career satisfaction. Furthermore, the multi-mentor model is found to be an overlooked factor in the female lawyers' career progression and although absent in the participants' current experiences, the multi-mentor model can potentially be a vital instrument in their career progression. Having the support from a number of diverse mentors offers a variety of advice and assistance during one's career progression. The multi-mentor model also presents greater networking connections where mentors share a wider range of experiences to allow mentees' further growth and development. Networking plays a significant role in building and strengthening mentees' confidence that is an essential factor during lawyers' career development.

The final Chapter 6 draws the thesis together outlining the main findings of this research including, limitations and effectiveness of the mentoring support received by the participants and what effect it had on their career progression and development. Then, future research proposals are put forward followed by practical suggestions for law firms offering mentoring support, followed by the highlights of my reflective diary.

1.3 Research gap

This study supports the growing theme of mentoring in law firms and thus, my research was conducted in the UK with empirical data gathered directly from practising female lawyers at various law firms. The empirical evidence focused solely on the participants' perceptions, their career progressions and further developments within the legal field. The data reflects various outcomes of the participants' perceptions on their mentoring experiences during different stages of their careers

including junior, qualified and senior levels of the legal profession. With the empirical evidence of the participants' perceptions of this study, the original value is added to the current knowledge and therefore, it is not anecdotal. Moreover, during the last fifty years we have seen a significant growth of diversity change in the legal sector and 2018 brought around a change, seeing women solicitors outnumbering their male counterparts in practice.⁵² The legal field remains a demanding profession and despite this fascinating growing change, men overall continue to dominate the upper levels of the legal profession.⁵³ Therefore, this study helps to complete the gap in the empirical research outlining the participants' perceptions of their experiences of mentoring support received and level of effectiveness this has had on their legal careers.

This is a demanding profession requiring strong individuals with passion and a willingness to succeed. Having to pick up a new set of skills to become a successful lawyer can be daunting and isolating. It is fair to note that a younger generation of lawyers have different expectations of a work life balance to their older peers.⁵⁴ A long working hours culture is no longer accepted by many of the younger generation who are keen on changing the business of legal practice. The available research further confirms that women often develop maternal guilt following the juggling of family life and a working career.⁵⁵ It is a significantly difficult task to perform at a high standard both at home and work. To combat these findings, the Law Society provided recommendations which included the adoption by employers of flexible working practices and mentoring support for women lawyers to help to develop their careers. This is why my study helps to complete the gap in the empirical research, looking at

⁵² The Law Society, Annual Statistics Report 2017 (18 June 2018) <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/research-trends/annual-statistics-report-2017/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁵³ Judith K. Pringle, Candice Harris, Katherine Ravenswood, Lynne Giddings, Irene Ryan and Sabina Jaeger, 'Women's Career Progression in Law Firms: Views from the Top, Views from Below' (2017) 24(4) *Gender, Work and Organization* 435-449.

⁵⁴ Stephanie Garber, 'Spanning the Ages' (2015) *Lawyers Weekly* <<https://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/features/16531-spanning-the-ages>> accessed 21 October 2019.

⁵⁵ Erika L. Kirby, Sarah E. Riforgiate, Isolde K. Anderson, Mary P. Lahman and Alison M. Lietzenmayer, 'Good Working Mothers as Jugglers: A Critical Look at Two Work-Family Balance Films' (2016) *Journal of Family Communication* 76-93.

female lawyers' experiences and their career progression with the support of mentoring during various stages of their legal career development.

It is still much of an unknown area as to how many law firms across the UK actually offer mentoring support to their employees, either this being in the form of a formal or an informal support. It is evident that some law firms run pilot schemes⁵⁶ based on informal mentoring but often this is being left with no further follow up or actual ability to measure its success and outcome. To ensure that a mentoring scheme stays on track, it is important to evaluate the mentoring scheme and the individual mentor-mentee relationship.⁵⁷

Hence, this study provides a deeper understanding of mentoring support available and specific perceptions of the participants who offered extensive depth of their mentoring experiences that potentially support further developments of mentoring in law firms. The participants' perceptions provide a significant factor of qualitative data to help and support female lawyers' progression during their legal careers. Following the ongoing support,⁵⁸ the Law Society is currently providing a new cross-law firm mentoring scheme to boost female career progression.⁵⁹ This is likely to attract mentors from all various backgrounds which will offer alternative career support, especially in situations where there is a shortage of mentors in other law firms. The alternative and diverse mentoring support is likely to provide a wider range of experiences from various aspects of the profession. Also, this opportunity provides a chance to view and experience alternative values available for mentees

⁵⁶ Hilary Sommerlad, Lisa Webley, Liz Duff, Daniel Muzio and Jennifer Tomlinson, 'Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales: A Qualitative Study of Barriers and Individual Choices' (2013) 66(2) University of Westminster Law Press 245-269.

⁵⁷ Eugene Clark, 'Mentoring: A Case Example and Guidelines for its effective Use' (1995) 14(2) Youth Studies Australia 37-42.

⁵⁸ Julie Ashdown, The Law Society, 'Breaking Down Barriers: Mentoring Programme (13 October 2015) <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/blog/breaking-down-barriers-mentoring-programme/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁵⁹ The Law Society, 'Mentoring Boosts Career Progression' <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/mentoring-boosts-career-progression/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

across the legal sector. The cross-law firm mentoring scheme highlights some potential issues, for example where a number of mentors is significantly low or their availability is limited then this may reduce mentoring opportunities in law firms and as a result no further prospect of developments may be possible.

Nonetheless, the experience status of women lawyers within the English legal profession has been well documented in the past. However, very little is known empirically about women lawyers' experiences of mentoring support and its' impact on female career progressions. A thorough review of the available literature illustrates significant gap within the empirical evidence of mentoring programmes in law firms. Therefore, this thesis addresses the gap and provides the participants' perceptions of their experiences of mentoring support received including levels of effectiveness that mentoring has had on their career progression (Chapter 4).

Furthermore, this qualitative study comprises the lived experiences of twenty-two female lawyers who experienced mentoring support at various levels of their career progression and the importance of the empirical data conclusions from lawyers in both parts of the UK, south and north. The mentoring support received during the female lawyers' career progression included both formal and informal structures. Further, data analysis provided valuable knowledge of the mentoring support in law firms across the UK which adds additional value to mentoring schemes for the future and further career development of female lawyers.

In addition, drawing conclusions from my own personal experiences as a former female lawyer of a large national law firm where many of in-house female-lawyers' colleagues, including myself, experienced lack of mentoring opportunities which resulted in limited opportunities for further progressions. Due to lack of mentoring support further inconsistencies were linked to the progression

factor of the new recruits, majority of whom were female, and remained in their paralegal status indefinitely. Second, lack of female lawyers in the senior positions were certainly significant leaving male colleagues in more senior positions of the practice. Final difference between male and female colleagues were lack of support for female lawyers' career progressions following a decision to have family and consequently, time away from practice to bring a child. The opportunities for further career progressions remained the same for male counterparts of the practice increasing their seniority and pay.⁶⁰ Similarities have been identified from my personal experiences, particularly in situation such as this with lack of opportunities of mentoring and advancement to career progression.

1.4 Research question

In the context of the empirical research, I wish to discover the views and experiences of female lawyers from various law firms across the UK, to seek an answer to the research question below, bearing in mind the overarching desire to explore the effectiveness of mentoring support in law firms available to female lawyers participants.

How effective is mentoring support in female lawyers' career progression?

In order to examine the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression through the participants' experiences of mentoring support received during various stages of the legal careers, I produced five questions for the participants. These questions allowed me to exploit the impact and effectiveness of the mentoring support received by the female lawyers' participants and their career developments. The research questions that underpin this thesis are as follows:

⁶⁰ The Law Society, 'Advocating for Change: Transforming the Future of the Legal Profession Through Greater Gender Equality' (2019) International Women in Law <<https://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/download?ac=36000>> accessed 21 October 2019.

1. When and why did you commence the mentoring programme at this law firm?
2. From the career development point of view is the mentoring programme helping your career progression?
3. What is your desired outcome of the mentoring experience?
4. Do you feel that the mentoring programme has helped you to advance your legal career or achieve your desires?
5. Have you moved to a senior position following the completion of the mentoring programme?

Having taken the step to research the area of mentoring in law firms and receive feedback from the participants, I feel that mentoring in law firms remains under-researched with some difficulties getting through directly to willing participant, female lawyers, many of whom may feel reluctant to participate in this type of research. I would hope that my research findings will support the participating law firms and potentially attract a wider interest within the legal profession as mentoring is becoming more popular way of training and development of employees across various fields of profession. I hope that this study can assist law firms with a wider mentoring vision and support for the future of employees' development. I feel that the crucial time has come to gain, compile and reveal the mentoring schemes' experiences to help and make my findings available to many other law firms across the UK, to use in support of their employees' development and in particular, to strengthen female progression to the most senior levels.

1.5 Research aims and questions

This thesis examines the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression through the participants' experiences of mentoring support

received during various stages of their legal careers. The research questions that underpin this thesis are as follows (Table A):

TABLE A

Aim	Research question(s)
Expand theoretical understanding of why female lawyers became mentees of the mentoring programme at their practising firm.	1. When and why did you commence the mentoring programme at this law firm?
Are the mentees finding the mentoring programmes beneficial and potentially leading to further career progression?	2. From the career development point of view is the mentoring programme helping your career progression?
Clarify all inspirations and desired outcomes of the mentoring programme that were considered by each mentee.	3. What is your desired outcome of the mentoring experience?
Expand theoretical understanding of each mentee's perception of the mentoring support and what effect does the mentoring programme have on their career progression.	4. Do you feel that the mentoring programme has helped you to advance your legal career or achieve your desires?
Clarify the impact of the mentoring support for each mentee and has the programme assisted their career advancement.	5. Have you moved to a senior position following the completion of the mentoring programme?

1.6 Original contribution to knowledge

Through the literature review, I demonstrate gaps in the existing body of literature - specifically of mentoring in legal practice in the UK and the perceptions of female lawyers of the effectiveness of mentoring schemes. This thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge by presenting empirically based evidence of the effects of mentoring programmes and its constituent support and assistance, to those participating law firms as well as their female lawyers' experiences.

Following the initial introduction to mentoring and progression of females' careers in the legal sector, Chapter 2 provides a review of the available literature to explore and identify significant gaps in research and evidence-based findings of female lawyers' career progression and level of impact of mentoring support received.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression. In essence, this study is looking at female lawyers' experiences of mentoring support received during various stages of their legal careers and what impact the mentoring support had on their legal career developments. There remains a gap in the existing body of literature of mentoring in the area of law and legal practice (Section 2.9). Thus, this thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge by presenting empirically based evidence of the effects of mentoring programmes, and its constituent support and assistance, to those participating law firms as well as their female lawyers' further career progressions.

Mentoring has been an area of focus for organisations for many years.⁶¹ Traditionally, mentoring involved an experienced person (the mentor) to assist a junior person (mentee) in the context of adult learning and development. Mentoring uses transformational theory⁶² through critical reflection in a non-judgmental manner and addresses the andragogical principle that experience is the richest source for adult learning.⁶³ It is well known that organisations have taken the development of their staff as a serious concern and have adopted many local, national and international initiatives for their betterment.⁶⁴ Mentoring is to be led by a mentee and not by an organization. This may be fixed on the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals, it may be to improve retention rates, to increase

⁶¹ Martin Gerstein, 'Mentoring: An Age Old Practice in a Knowledge-Based Society' (1985) 64(2) *Journal of Counselling and Development* 156-157.

⁶² Transformational theory focuses on transforming others to support each other and the organisation as a whole. The followers of the transformational theory feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the principal and are more willing to work harder than originally expected. This theory was introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978.

⁶³ Carolyn M. Klinge, 'A Conceptual Framework for Mentoring in a Learning Organisation' (2015) 26(4) *Sage Journals* 160-166.

⁶⁴ Irene Mains and Samantha Maclean, 'Developing Across Boundaries - Mentor and Mentee Perceptions and Experiences of Cross-Organisational Mentoring' (2017) 49(4) *Industrial and Commercial Training* 189-198.

productivity, and/or reduce absenteeism.⁶⁵ However, a significant development, which may incorporate each of these themes, is on staff development and facilitating career progression.⁶⁶ Despite the increased attention to career development in recent years⁶⁷ it can be argued that one of the strongest results of career dedication and development is to have a mentor.⁶⁸ Mentoring allows mentors to advance their mentees' careers through sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure and challenging assignments.⁶⁹ Furthermore, mentors can enhance their mentees' psychosocial development through role modelling, counselling, psychological support and friendship.⁷⁰ These aspects of mentoring should provide mentees with a positive attitude to career development and further progression. Previous research has demonstrated that restriction to career progression is one of the main reasons given by staff for leaving an organisation⁷¹ and therefore, mentoring has been a subject of increasing attention by management to benefit the workforce.⁷²

It is evident that mentoring has been discussed for over two millennia (having its name established by Homer in *The Odyssey*) and started informally through relationships between individuals.⁷³ A trusted, experienced source would be able to guide and offer advice to a junior. This research is specifically focused towards mentoring opportunities for women in law. The discussion offered in this chapter begins with an overview of mentoring followed by addressing key forms of mentoring available to individuals in organisations through informal and formal versions, before addressing

⁶⁵ The practice of regularly staying away from work without good reason.

⁶⁶ Olivier Serrat, 'Coaching and Mentoring' (2017) Knowledge Solutions 897-902.

⁶⁷ Daniel C. Feldman, *Managing Careers in Organizations*. (Scott Foresman 1988).

⁶⁸ Stephen M. Colarelli and Ronald C. Bishop, 'Career Commitment: Functions, Correlates and Management' (1990) 15(2) *Group and Organization Studies* 158-176.

⁶⁹ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring in the Workplace Career Development in Organizations* (San-Francisco Jossey-Bass 1986) 160-201.

⁷⁰ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring in the Workplace Career Development in Organizations* (San-Francisco Jossey-Bass 1986) 160-201.

⁷¹ Charles R. McConnell, 'Addressing Employee Turnover and Retention: Keeping Your Valued Performers' (2011) 30(3) *The Health Care Manager* 271-283.

⁷² Golnaz Sadri and Hoa Tran, 'Managing Your Diverse Workforce Through Improved Communication' (2002) 21(3) *Journal of Management Development* 227-237.

⁷³ Allen Awaya, Hunter McEwan, Deborah Heyler, Sandy Linsky, Donna Lum and Pamela Wakukawa, 'Mentoring as a Journey' (2003) 19(1) *Teaching and Teacher Education Journal* 45-56.

organisations' concerted moves to the formal advancement of such initiatives and their rationale.⁷⁴ Having established the broad definition and remit of mentoring schemes, the chapter offers a critique of mentoring schemes from an international perspective, outlining the effects of cultural and organisational norms on its development and implementation. Mentoring schemes are then addressed from a sectoral perspective. Here, education,⁷⁵ business,⁷⁶ and the legal sector (law firms) are considered to identify the prevalence and understanding of mentoring schemes available. With the more recent third and fourth wave of feminist activities taken place, further review of women in law in the past three decades is undertaken to reflect female lawyers' progressions.

What is evident from the review of the literature is the broad acceptance of the benefits that mentoring schemes provide to organisations and those individuals involved.⁷⁷ This theme is spread across the globe and being seen in many countries across the world. Mentoring is used as a developmental mechanism to improve forever changing environment.⁷⁸ Such schemes are well-established and developed in the education and business sectors yet, are largely missing or are only a relatively recent phenomenon in law firms (Section 2.9).⁷⁹

The chapter continues by examining the gender impact of mentoring schemes on women's position in organisations. It is broadly reported that men succeed within mentoring schemes, but less

⁷⁴ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁷⁵ Andrew J. Hobson, Patricia Castanheira and Kerry Doyle, 'Mentoring and Coaching Across the Professions' (2016) Research and Enterprise, University of Brighton <<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/groups/education/research-projects/mentoring-and-coaching-across-the-professions.aspx>> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁷⁶ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁷⁷ Cliff Olsson, Andrew Cruickshank and Dave Collins, 'Making Mentoring Work: The Need for Rewiring Epistemology' (2016) 69(1) Taylor & Francis Online Journal 50-64.

⁷⁸ Lesley Petersen, Suja Premchandran and Garry Clayton, 'Mentoring as a Mechanism for Organisational Development in a Globally Changing Environment' (2017) Teaching and Learning with Technology 137-147.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) Urban Law Journal 217-231.

conclusive findings are available in relation to female staff.⁸⁰ The chapter concludes by identifying the relative paucity of available empirically based research identifying the implications for women in the legal sector of mentoring schemes. This gap in the literature is addressed through the empirical findings presented in this thesis, underpinned by a feminist philosophy.

2.2 *Mentoring*

The mentoring terminology varies between researchers. During the 1970s, two fundamental studies in the area of mentoring took place which both revealed that access to a mentor was advantageous to a mentee's career outcome. The initial study was conducted in 1977 by Kanter⁸¹ followed by further study undertaken by Levinson et al⁸² in 1978. Their findings revealed that by providing mentoring, the mentor gains benefits, such as rejuvenation of their career and developing further capabilities. In addition, Kanter added that mentors can help women in particular to overcome barriers to advancement in organisations. She further provided that being mentored not only yielded the most desirable jobs for mentees, but also it enabled them access to the power structures within the organisations.⁸³ In light of these findings, my study considers whether mentoring helps particularly women in law firms to advance their careers and progress to the highest levels possible of their profession.

Furthermore, in 1983 Kram⁸⁴ reconfirmed earlier findings of Levinson et al that the mentor relationship can significantly enhance development in early adulthood also in the mid-career stage of the more experienced individual. In 1985, Kram⁸⁵ further revealed that mentoring can also offer an

⁸⁰ Norma T. Mertz, *Why Women Aren't Mentored* (ERIC Clearinghouse 1987).

⁸¹ Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Basic Books 1977).

⁸² Daniel J. Levinson, Charlotte N. Darrow, Edward B. Klein, Maria H. Levinson and Braxton McKee, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books 1978).

⁸³ Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Basic Books 1977).

⁸⁴ Kathy E Kram, 'Phases of the Mentor Relationship' (1983) 26(4) *Academy of Management Journal* 608-625.

⁸⁵ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work* (Glenview IL Basic Books 1985).

array of potential benefits for a female mentor, such as organisational recognition, a loyal base of support, career rejuvenation, and improved job performance. With mentoring being seen as an important aspect in career development, relentless research continued.

During late 1980s, Ragins⁸⁶ and Noe⁸⁷ found that although mentoring relationships are important for all members of an organisation, they may be particularly important for women.⁸⁸ Both researchers felt that mentoring was providing positive and vibrant social aspect within organisation and helped to encourage interaction within female circles. In addition, Wright and Wright⁸⁹ agreed with the findings of earlier mentioned researchers and that mentoring shown to benefit the mentees. They further added that mentoring has also been associated with an increased sense of confidence, self-esteem and job satisfaction. The same findings have been further confirmed by Fagenson⁹⁰ in 1989 and that these organisational benefits also occur from greater satisfaction and commitment experienced by mentees and mentors involved. Kanter also agreed that mentors can help women overcome barriers to advancement in organisations. In addition to the above, female mentors provide a beneficial support for women as they can serve as role models.⁹¹ Increasing efforts have been invested in projects for women in the past which lead to better focus on bringing women into position of leadership and authority.⁹² In support of this, a report published in the McKinsey Quarterly⁹³ found

⁸⁶ Belle R. Ragins, 'Barriers to Mentoring: The Female Manager's Dilemma' (1989) 42(1) *Human Relations* 1-22.

⁸⁷ Raymond A. Noe, 'An Investigation of the Determinants of Successful Assigned Mentoring Relationships' (1988) 41(3) *Personnel Psychology* 457-479.

⁸⁸ Some of the reasons why mentoring is particularly important for women include career advancement in an organisation, development of women interpersonal and organisational barriers as well as maintaining effective networking relationships.

⁸⁹ Cheryl A. Wright and Scott D. Wright, 'The Role of Mentors in the Career Development of Young Professionals' (1987) 36(2) *Family Relations* 204-208.

⁹⁰ Ellen A. Fagenson, 'The Mentor Advantage: Perceived Career / Job Experiences of Protégés Versus Non-Protégés' (1989) 10(4) *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 309-320.

⁹¹ Belle R. Ragins and Terri A. Scandura, 'Gender Differences in Expected Outcomes of Mentoring Relationships' (1994) 37(4) *The Academy of Management Journal* 957-971.

⁹² Eileen C. Shapiro, Florence P. Haseltine and Mary P. Rowe, 'Moving Up: Role Models, Mentors and the Patron System' (1978) 19(3) *Sloan Management Review* 51-58.

⁹³ Georges Desvaux, Sandrine Devillard-Hoellinger and Mary C. Meaney, 'A Business Case for Women' (2008) *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

that companies who employ several senior level females tend to perform better financially.⁹⁴ This can be further argued that women bring a unique aspect to an organisation and having the seniority it can offer a better balance in areas of a higher male orientation.

Moreover, during the second half of 1990s, mentoring rose to prominence in the UK and mentoring schemes grew substantially in number particularly with the arrival of the Labour government in 1997.⁹⁵ Mentoring continued to be based on a model with the aim of helping young people who were socially disadvantaged and marginalised.

Furthermore, Dreher and Ash⁹⁶ carried out research into linkages between global measures of mentoring experiences and gender in managerial and professional positions. Their research was taken across business sector and in particular involving business school graduates in the USA. They revealed that mentoring is differentially associated with career outcomes for both men and women. Their study disclosed that participants experiencing extensive mentoring relationships reported receiving more promotions, had higher incomes, and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals experiencing less extensive mentoring relationships. In light of these findings, I feel that the empirical evidence found in this study provides further knowledge for the gap in literature of mentoring in law firms.

The subsequent decade brought further definitions of mentoring and its practice. For example, in 1995, Megginson and Clutterbuck⁹⁷ referred to mentoring as an offline help from one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking. An offline help is

⁹⁴ Having more senior female executives, companies are offered a broader pool of talent, especially at an era of talent shortages. The McKinsey report revealed that the higher number of female senior executives lead to stronger financial performance.

⁹⁵ Tim Newburn and Michael Shiner, 'Young People, Mentoring and Social Inclusion' (2006) 6(1) Youth Justice 23-41.

⁹⁶ George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, (1990). 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) Journal of Applied Psychology 539-546.

⁹⁷ David Megginson and David Clutterbuck, *Mentoring in Action: A Practical Guide for Managers* (London Kogan Page 1995).

considered to be an unofficial support, more in line of being informal in nature. This view remains distanced from reality and increases problematic factors for organisations desiring to establish mentoring programmes, in particular formal mentoring programmes discussed later in Section 2.4. I feel that this study adds further knowledge to the existing body of literature particularly measuring the effects of mentoring support available to women in law firms.

Moreover, the perspective provided by Kram⁹⁸ who looked at mentoring at work and in particular relationships in organisations and the developments during the three stages of the careers, early, middle and late, outlined the primary purpose of mentoring by having a realistic view of the process including potential benefits and limitations. Further, Kram revealed various forms of developmental relationships that can exist in work settings as a support during mentoring. She further explained in her later article⁹⁹ that the mentor relationship can significantly enhance development in early adulthood as well as in the middle stage career development of the more experienced individual. These earlier stages of career developments are obvious progression stages offering greater opportunities to both, less and more, experienced individuals. Within the empirical evidence provided by the participants of this study, further knowledge of potential opportunities to aid career progression has been learnt filling further the literature gap in this area of law.

Moreover, mentoring is also recognised as a set of role activities, including coaching, support and sponsorship¹⁰⁰ which can be used in any organisation and at any stage of employees' developments. Scandura¹⁰¹ further revealed that mentoring enhances the compensation, promotions and pay satisfaction of the employees who receive it. These findings agree with McKinsey's report which

⁹⁸ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (University Press of America 1988).

⁹⁹ Kathy E. Kram, 'Phases of the Mentor Relationship' (2017) 26(4) *Academy of Management Journal* 608-625.

¹⁰⁰ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work* (Glenview IL Basic Books 1985).

¹⁰¹ Terri A. Scandura, 'Mentorship and Career Mobility: An Empirical Investigation' (1992) 13(2) *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 169-174.

revealed that the higher number of female senior executives in an organisation, the stronger financial performance. Therefore, mentoring relationships are a critical career development tool for employees in any organisation. Mentoring provides the advanced experience and knowledge through a direct relationship between a mentor and a mentee.

Further, Levinson¹⁰² suggested that finding a mentor is one of the four main tasks young individual faces in the course of their development during young adulthood. Levinson explained some of the functions that mentors perform including, the mentor may act as a teacher to enhance the young adult's skills and intellectual development. Further, the mentor may be a sponsor who may use his influence to promote the young person's entry and advancement. Additionally, the mentor may be a host and will guide the mentee by welcoming them into a new occupational and social world and acquainting them with its values, customs, resources, and characters. Through the mentor's own virtues, achievements, and way of life, the mentor may be an exemplar that the mentee can admire and emulate and, provide counsel as well as moral support in times of stress.

In addition, similar findings of Dreher and Ash¹⁰³ concluded that individuals experiencing extensive mentoring relationships reported receiving more promotions, had higher incomes and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals experiencing less extensive mentoring relationships. It is therefore, evident from the earlier research that mentorships improve opportunities for career advancement leading to greater increase in pay and further job satisfaction. Section **2.2.1** provides a critical reflection on mentoring relationships in the New Millennium.

¹⁰² Daniel J. Levinson, 'Growing Up With A Dream' (1978) 1(1) *Psychology Today* 20-31.

¹⁰³ George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

2.2.1 *Mentoring in the new Millennia*

Year 2000 brought additional views of mentoring starting with Darwin¹⁰⁴ who provided a critical reflection on mentoring from contrasting theoretical perspectives, including functionalist and critical conceptions of mentoring. From the functionalist perspective, mentoring is associated with recycling of power within workplace relationships.¹⁰⁵ Darwin demonstrated in her article that taken for granted practices need to be brought to the surface for mentoring to be regarded as a useful learning tool in today's work settings.¹⁰⁶ Mentoring generates a network of support and a greater sense of connectedness to the organisation.¹⁰⁷ In the light of the increased mentees' commitment, retention levels therefore, reduce and job satisfaction increases.¹⁰⁸

In addition to the above, O'Neill¹⁰⁹ revealed that mentoring relationships are important because they have the potential to offer both organisations and their members a wealth of benefits. Mentees can benefit from mentoring with career recognition and success, as well as increased compensation and career satisfaction. These findings are in accordance with the findings of previously stated researchers all agreeing that mentoring offers career satisfaction and success.

Furthermore, Bierema and Hill¹¹⁰ found that virtual mentoring can be even less costly, easier to manage and unconstrained by geography or time. The authors find an alternative to the traditional

¹⁰⁴ Ann Darwin, 'Critical Reflections on Mentoring in Work Settings' (2000) 50(3) *Adult Education Quarterly* 197-211.

¹⁰⁵ The functionalist perspective consists of firstly, mentees seeking more powerful individuals within organisations while mentors provide their mentees with a preview of what it means to have power, and therefore removing some of the mystery.

¹⁰⁶ Ann Darwin, 'Critical Reflections on Mentoring in Work Settings' (2000) 50(3) *Adult Education Quarterly* 197-211.

¹⁰⁷ Dawn Wallace, Ron Abel and Becky Ropers-Huilman, 'Clearing a Path for Success: Deconstructing Borders Through Undergraduate Mentoring' (2000) 24(1) *Review of Higher Education* 87-102.

¹⁰⁸ Belle R. Ragins and John L. Cotton, 'Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships' (1999) 84(4) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 529-550.

¹⁰⁹ Regina M. O'Neill, 'An Examination of Organisational Predictors of Mentoring Functions' (2005) 17(4) *Journal of Managerial Issues* 439-460.

¹¹⁰ Laura L. Bierema and Janette R. Hill, 'Virtual Mentoring and HRD' (2005) 7(4) *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 556-568.

mentoring approach however, mention some implications including using virtual mentoring as a life-long educational tool. There might be some opportunities arising here to consider what benefits and limitations are presented by different types of mentoring and time scale of the support offered. However, virtual mentoring presents some disadvantages including awkwardness in communication, lack of trust and difficulties with honesty in expressing views and opinions. Further limitations are linked to the geographical aspect of the process which can be expected by its obvious nature including different mentees and mentors having diverse potentials and expectations.

In 2006, Brockbank and McGill reconfirmed the definition of mentoring stating that mentoring has one clear purpose, the learning and development of an individual, a process that involves change, in this case social change.¹¹¹

At the beginning of this decade, further researchers including Cook and others¹¹² focused their study on mentoring as a low-cost method of intervention and disclosed that mentoring provides benefits to its participants through the facilitation of mentoring relationships. Further, Ramalho¹¹³ corroborated the earlier findings of Cook and others reconfirming that mentoring is an effective low-cost method of making the most of the in-house experience and developing the potential of the workplace.

More recent findings¹¹⁴ reconfirmed that by providing mentoring with individual skill development, strengthening organisational systems and utilising professional support, further staff promotions are inevitable results. Ortega¹¹⁵ echoed the above by confirming further that the value of tailored

¹¹¹ Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning Through Mentoring & Coaching* (Kogan Page Limited 2006).

¹¹² David A. Cook, Rebecca S. Bahn and Ronald Menaker, 'Speed Mentoring: An Innovative Method to Facilitate Mentoring Relationships' (2010) 32(8) *Journal Medical Teacher* 692-694.

¹¹³ Jordana Ramalho, 'Mentoring in the Workplace' (2014) 46(4) *Industrial and Commercial Training* 177-181.

¹¹⁴ Nina Nichols, Kathryn McFarlane, Priscilla Gibson, Fiona Millard, Andrew Packer and Malcolm McDonald, 'Skills, Systems and Supports: An Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (Apunipima) Approach to Building Health Promotion Evaluation Capacity of Staff' (2017) 29(1) *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 18-22.

¹¹⁵ Kristen E Ortega, 'Perspectives From a First-Generation College Student: Reflections on the Value of Mentoring Relationships' (2018) 19(4) *Journal Indexing and Metrics* 492-494.

mentoring offers additional opportunities and benefits to mentees and organisations. Some of the advantages included the availability of a greater number of potential mentors, overall cost of mentoring and its effectiveness. These positive findings are real reflections of mentoring in practice offering both mentees and organisations advantages and further prospects of development. In addition, others benefiting from the experiences of a mentor also results in the mentor experiencing a sense of personal validation.¹¹⁶

In addition to the volume of benefits for the mentee, mentoring also brings benefits to mentors and organisations itself. Mentors may receive a sense of fulfilment in assisting and supporting mentees with the knowledge they possess, including the development of a close relationship¹¹⁷ and even a sense of being recognised professionally, and a sense of being needed.¹¹⁸ In terms of benefits to the organisation, these include productivity, retention, employee satisfaction, motivation, succession planning, work performance and even organisational communication.¹¹⁹ For example, organisational communication occurs as a result of mentors and mentees sharing knowledge and information within the organisation improving this aspect in particular.

Broad ranging definitions of mentoring put forward by various researchers, proposes challenges in finding universal agreement in identifying the fundamental characteristics of mentoring in current times. Nonetheless, mentoring commonly involves mutual learning¹²⁰ with support for learning new

¹¹⁶ Tammy D. Allen, 'Mentoring Others: A Dispositional and Motivational Approach' (2003) 62(1) *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 134–154.

¹¹⁷ Tammy D. Allen, 'Mentoring Others: A Dispositional and Motivational Approach' (2003) 62(1) *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 134–154.

¹¹⁸ John Carruthers, *The Principles and Practice of Mentoring; The Return of the Mentor: Strategies for Workplace Learning* (The Falmer Press 1993).

¹¹⁹ Ariane B. Antal, 'Odysseus' Legacy to Management Development: Mentoring' (1993) 11(4) *European Management Journal* 448-454.

¹²⁰ David Clutterbuck, 'Establishing and Maintaining Mentoring Relationships: An Overview of Mentor and Mentee Competencies' (2005) 3(3) *SA Journal of Human Resources Management* 2-9.

skills including an increased likelihood of professional success, less time spent in the wrong position,¹²¹ more status and even obtaining a role model.

Having initially established the meaning of mentoring and its benefits over the last two Millennia, the previous research showed that overall mentoring provided a beneficial tool in the career progression. In addition, mentoring helped with building new skills which benefit in higher pay, career success and satisfaction. However, there is a very little empirical evidence showing the effects of mentoring in law firms and in particular how effective the mentoring support is for female lawyers. Therefore, my study fulfills the gap in the available literature and further literature review is essential to reflect on various forms of mentoring. With a view of adult learning and development and further career progression, mentoring provides opportunities of career advancement in a formal or an informal arrangement. The latter allows mentee an opportunity to choose their own mentor through personal relationship or social network and is discussed next in more detail in Section 2.3.

2.3 *Informal mentoring*

The informal type of mentoring may be considered more of a dynamic and spontaneous type whereas the formal mentoring is likely to provide more structured environment. With very little structure, informal mentoring is likely to be based upon interaction and chemistry between two people which often even develop into a long-term friendship. Hence, it may be that individuals who like and trust the other individual would select that person as their mentor. Douglas¹²² supports and further explains that the key difference between formal and informal mentoring relationships is that informal mentoring relationships develop spontaneously, whereas formal mentoring relationships develop with

¹²¹ Margo Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Programme* (Jossey-Bass 1991).

¹²² Christina A. Douglas, *Formal Mentoring Programs in Organizations: An Annotated Bibliography* (Center for Creative Leadership 1997).

organisational assistance or intervention, usually in the form of voluntary assignment or matching of mentors and mentees. A second distinction is that formal relationships are usually for much shorter duration than informal relationships. Occasionally, mentoring programmes may commence on a formal basis and as it continues or reaches the completion stage, it then becomes an informal mentoring lasting indefinitely.

Kram's research findings focused on an informal mentoring. She further explained that mentoring entails of a supportive relationship between a more experienced individual, mentor, and a less experienced colleague, mentee. With the mentor's career and personal guidance, the mentee continues their development further.¹²³ Since 1985, many organisations recognised the important benefits of mentoring and have attempted to replicate informal mentoring relationships to support the developments of their employees' career progression.¹²⁴

Similarly, Scandura¹²⁵ revealed that the informal type of mentoring relationships are more seen as spontaneous types and further suggested that by moving away from spontaneous to formal mentoring, the goal is greatly to expand mentor, mentee and organisational benefits of mentoring throughout the organisation. Moreover, the informal type of mentoring is likely to exclude the organisational involvement and there may not be any specific standards for the selection of mentors and mentees when creating informal mentoring relationships. This style of informal mentoring is likely to be made available to the most obvious candidates and the competence of the mentors may be difficult to be measured. The informal mentoring may also consist of irregular and unplanned meetings due to its voluntarily nature.¹²⁶ The term of 'the most obvious candidate' may be defined as seeing potential in

¹²³ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organisational Life* (Glenview Scott Foresman 1985).

¹²⁴ Ronald J. Burke and Carol A. McKeen, 'Developing Formal Mentoring Programmes in Organisations' (1989) 53(3) *Business Quarterly* 76-79.

¹²⁵ Terri A. Scandura, 'Perspective on Mentoring, Leadership and Organisation Development Journal' (1996) 17(3) *Development Journal* 50-56.

¹²⁶ Suzanne Janssen, Mark van Vuuren and Menno D.T. de Jong, 'Informal Mentoring at Work: A Review and Suggestions for Future Research' (2016) 18(4) *International Journal of Management Reviews* 498-517.

someone. Depending on the organisation this may be based on merit as being particularly good at something or certain formal or informal criteria.

Traditionally, mentors are significant individuals who use their knowledge, power and status to assist mentees to develop their careers. Traditional mentorship¹²⁷ is the oldest form of mentoring and has been a common source of patronage in the arts and sciences throughout history. Furthermore, the traditional form of mentoring is seen by Byrne¹²⁸ as an informal type of mentoring which provides an alternative option to career progression. In contrast to the traditional mentoring where the selection process is dependent on the personal choice of the individual mentor, there is a professional mentoring recognised where the process focusses on promoting and encouraging individuals by top leadership as part of mainstream staff development.¹²⁹

In our society, the role model type is often found at an early age and may commence with young people who would look up to their parents and their developmental perceptions on career developments. Often in practice, the role model type represents positive impact on effective work, inclusion, diversity and support in career development. Bolton¹³⁰ confirmed this theory and further explained that these early experiences play significant part in the formation of the behaviour of an individual which affects their perceptions throughout life. Bolton further disclosed that the influence of role models on career development has been the subject of considerable research and it is generally agreed that the presence or absence of appropriate models influences the development of the individual.

¹²⁷ Elizabeth Byrne, 'Mentorship in Human Resource and Career Development: A Policy Approach' (1991) Unpublished Paper.

¹²⁸ Zinta S. Byrne, Bryan J. Dik and Dan S. Chiaburu, 'Alternatives to Traditional Mentoring in Fostering Career Success' (2008) 72(3) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 429-442.

¹²⁹ Elizabeth Byrne, 'Mentorship in Human Resource and Career Development: A Policy Approach' (1991) Unpublished Paper.

¹³⁰ Elizabeth B. Bolton, 'Conceptual Analysis of the Mentor Relationship in the Career Development of Women' (1980) 30(4) *Adult Education* 195-207.

As female progression has remained challenging with thoughts of having a family and children, the traditional precedent is now proving difficult to break. Nonetheless, with the informal mentoring, men are more likely to help one another and continue their professionalism in the legal field. In support of this, Dreher and Ash¹³¹ found that common developmental experiences including mentoring and membership in the same social networks facilitate a stronger bond between male mentees and mentors. The intensity and quality of the mentoring relationships are greater for male mentees, resulting in a greater progression. This is supported by Hawkes¹³² who revealed that men have benefited from informal mentoring in male dominated fields for a long time while Sambunjak¹³³ found that women have reported difficulty in finding mentors in this way and in these environments.

Further, where there is a female and male pair for the purposes of mentoring support, their close contact may develop a risk to form a closer relationship between the two which also poses a risk to their further career development.¹³⁴ As seen in a study of 2010¹³⁵ from the Centre for Talent Innovation (formerly the Centre for Work-Life Policy) which revealed that nearly two-thirds of men in senior positions pulled back from one-on-one contact with junior female employees because of fear of being suspected of having an affair. Meanwhile, half of junior women reported being nervous about one-on-one contact with senior men for the same reason. The issue of mixed mentoring relationships may result in reduced future progression of any organisation. Clutterbuck's research suggested that strategies such as open dialogue, suspending judgment, and identifying common interests and values can also help.¹³⁶

¹³¹ George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

¹³² Sarah L. Hawkes, 'Supporting Women's Mentoring in Higher Education: A Literature Review' (2010) London King's College London.

¹³³ Dario Sambunjak, Sharon E. Straus and Ana Marusic, 'Mentoring in Academic Medicine: A Systematic Review' (2006) 296(9) *American Medical Association* 1103-1115.

¹³⁴ Donald D. Bowen, 'Were Men Meant to Mentor Women?' (1985) 39(2) *Training and Development Journal* 31-34.

¹³⁵ Kate Ashford, *Why Men Don't Mentor Younger Women - and How We can Change That* (The Muse 2019) <<https://www.themuse.com/advice/why-men-dont-mentor-younger-womenand-how-we-can-change-that>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹³⁶ David Clutterbuck, *Understanding Diversity Mentoring* (2012)

Informal mentoring has been identified as a valuable and beneficial tool that brings longer term advantages to the organisation while assisting in the transfer knowledge, organisational learning and cross-department communication providing an informal network.¹³⁷ Informal networks are regularly seen across organisations where employees share and provide support to each other through an informal approach.

Ragins and Cotton¹³⁸ looked further at the effects of the type of mentoring relationships and the gender composition of the relationships on mentoring. Mentees of informal mentors viewed their mentors as more effective and received greater compensation than mentees of formal mentors. One reason for the greater effectiveness of an informal relationships might be the flexible nature of the relationship between the participants. Learning the necessary skills may be taken gradually with special friendships and trust built first on a more solid foundations which helps with future learning and development.

In support of the above, further research taken by Chao, Walz and Gardner¹³⁹ supported the earlier findings revealing that mentees in informal mentorships reported more career related support and higher salaries than mentees in formal mentorships. Even more importantly, mentees in informal mentorships also reported more favourable outcome than non-mentored individuals. This study was based on comparison of individuals in informal and formal mentorships along two mentoring

<<https://www.davidclutterbuckpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/Diversity-book-sample-chapter.pdf>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹³⁷ Val Singh, Divindra Bains and Susan Vinnicombe, 'Informal Mentoring as an Organisational Resource' (2002) 35(4) Long Range Planning 389-405.

¹³⁸ Belle R. Ragins and Jeremiah P. Cotton, 'Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships' (1999) 84(4) Journal of Applied Psychology 529-550.

¹³⁹ Georgia T. Chao, Patm Walz and Philip D. Gardner, 'Formal and Informal Mentorships: A Comparison on Mentoring Functions and Contrast with Non-Mentored Counterparts' (1992) 45(3) Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology, Personnel Psychology 619-636.

dimensions: psychosocial and career-related functions. All groups of individuals were also compared on three outcome measures: organisational socialisation, job satisfaction and salary.

Overall, an informal mentoring programme is likely to be an indirect and limited support with unspecified goals and outcomes and offered for a long period of time. The choice of mentors and mentees is likely to be based on self-selection with no expert training given. Depending on organisational needs and requirements, informal mentoring may be preferred type to be used or alternatively, a formal mentoring may be used.

Furthermore, buddy system rolls into a mentoring system through an informal practice of buddy or mentor support. There is however, an obvious difference between the two, as the buddy system¹⁴⁰ is normally initiated by organisations to help new employees adjust to jobs during their first few months of employment whereas mentoring is a more complex relationship and focuses on both short and long term professional development goals which would normally be instructed by a mentee. Buddies are most often peers in the same department, who assist new employees for short period of time and require no specialised training as a buddy. As stated earlier, mentoring is a more complex relationship and focuses on both short and long-term professional development goals. Though, a mentor may be an employee's peer, most often a mentor is a person at least one level higher in the organisation who is not within the mentee's direct supervisory line of management.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, O'Hagan found that peer mentoring relationships raise a question of being an 'unequal' opportunity.¹⁴² This is likely to be when mentoring is offered on an informal basis and available to only some individuals and not

¹⁴⁰ John Cooper and Judy Wight, 'Implementing a Buddy System in the Workplace' (2014) Paper Presented at PMI® Global Congress 2014—North America, Phoenix, AZ Project Management Institute <<https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/implementing-buddy-system-workplace-9376>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹⁴¹ Management Mentors, 'Business Mentoring Matters; Are Buddy Systems and Mentoring Programs the Same' 26 May 2010 <<https://www.management-mentors.com/about/corporate-mentoring-matters-blog/bid/33253/are-buddy-systems-and-mentoring-programs-the-same>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹⁴² Mary O'Hagan, 'Peer Support in Mental Health and Addictions' (2011) A Background Paper Prepared for Kites Trust, New Zealand <<http://sharc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Peer-Support-Overview-OHagan.pdf>> accessed 26 September 2019.

all perhaps. In some circumstances, mentoring opportunities may be available only to a certain group of employees, based on various aspects including their potentials, availability, gender and so on. This sort of arrangements and practice may have not been seen regularly however, it has been undeniably heard of before. In addition, peer mentoring may also outweigh the core advantages of the support which is viewed as the role model aspect and provides mentees with trusted advice from someone of similar life experiences and understanding the challenges mentees face.

In order to distinguish between both types of mentoring, formal and informal types, Section 2.4 provides a broader understanding of the formal mentoring type and its structure.

2.4 Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring programmes have become increasingly popular in the past decade as an intervention to support organisational change efforts.¹⁴³ In contrast to informal mentoring relationships which have been discussed earlier, formal mentoring is being presented usually in the form of matching process of mentors and mentees. Further, formal mentoring proposes a more systematic policy issue and a standard part of management practice. With its structured setting, formal mentoring brings people together on the basis of compatibility and is based on a specific business objective and, is often measured. Depending on an organisation, some mentors may promote the programme following a specific training received prior to the commencement of the scheme. Douglas¹⁴⁴ added that formal mentoring programmes are those that are assigned, maintained and monitored by the organisation. Further, there are three types of formal mentoring known as traditional one-on-one, distance and group mentoring. The three types of mentoring offer variety of support to

¹⁴³ Catalyst inc, *Mentoring: A Guide to Corporate Programs and Practices* (Catalyst 1993).

¹⁴⁴ Christina A. Douglas, *Formal Mentoring Programs in Organizations: An Annotated Bibliography* (Centre for Creative Leadership 1997).

mentees as well as benefits of each type of scheme. For example, with the traditional one-on-one mentoring both parties, mentee and mentor, are matched either through a programme or on their own. The own matching characteristic can be compared with the informal matching process. One-on-one mentoring is considered as a familiar model of mentoring hence some people feel comfortable with it. The support of one-on-one mentoring encourages parties to develop a personal relationship with critical individual support. This type of mentoring offers support from the mentor as well as from the programme organiser which may be the manager of the organisation. The disadvantage of this type of mentoring offers limited availability from the mentor which may be restricted with other responsibilities. Nonetheless, the traditional form of one-on-one mentoring provides the parties with structure, selecting timeframe prior to the commencement of the programme and measuring the progress which may be set by the initial arrangements.

Further type of formal mentoring is known as distance mentoring where both parties are based in different locations, this may be at different departments or even offices. Distance mentoring can also be referred as virtual mentoring. Colky and Young¹⁴⁵ state that mentoring can take on a whole new perspective when people have a common goal but are in different physical locations. They agreed that this type of mentoring can be substantial and provide increased access to mentors as well as no limitations on space, time and location with lowered costs involved. Knouse¹⁴⁶ further revealed that mentoring is an increasingly important function of career success and that many special groups, including minorities and women, have difficulty finding a mentor. Therefore, one solution is virtual mentoring - selecting and interacting with mentors on the internet. Some of us may feel that this type of mentoring has reduced opportunities for face-to-face communication which may be an important aspect to mentoring in their view. Also, internet communication may be misunderstood due to the

¹⁴⁵ Deborah Lavin Colky and William H. Young, 'Mentoring in the Virtual Organization: Keys to Building Successful Schools and Businesses' (2007) 14(4) *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 433-447.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen B. Knouse, 'Virtual Mentors: Mentoring on the Internet' (2011) 38(4) *Journal of Employment Counselling* 162-169.

tone and attitude of message between the parties. Other aspects of distance mentoring that may be considered by the parties is trustworthiness, self-motivation and technological skills to achieve their desired outcome. Nonetheless, flexibility and mentors' availability of this type of mentoring offers greater opportunities and support for mentees.

The third type of formal mentoring is known as group mentoring which brings in diverse knowledge, expertise and support to mentees. Clutterbuck¹⁴⁷ stated that group mentoring is a relatively recent innovation and is typically used in situations, where the demand for mentors outstrips the supply. Clutterbuck further revealed that the group mentoring may include between two to ten people maximum giving opportunity to discuss topics of interest collectively that may raise discussions developing further networks within the organisation and further afield. Some mentees may feel that one-on-one mentoring is further required and this may be a one-off opportunity, or develop into a standard traditional one-on-one mentoring relationship as discussed earlier in this subchapter. The group mentoring may be more suitable to mentees who are dealing with complex issues and the support may be required from a panel of mentors who would offer a range of support from various perspectives.

Moreover, it has been noted by Allen and others¹⁴⁸ that the formal mentoring programmes continue to gain popularity within organisations despite limited empirical evidence and research regarding how these programmes should be designed to achieve maximum effectiveness. Similarly, Ragins and Kram¹⁴⁹ also disclosed that research on formal mentoring is limited which reduces the opportunities to outline what constitutes a successful mentoring programme. Ragins and Kram¹⁵⁰ further explained

¹⁴⁷ David Clutterbuck, *Mentoring and Diversity* (1st edn, Routledge 2002) 33.

¹⁴⁸ Tammy D. Allen, Lilliana T. Eby and Elizabeth Lentz, 'Mentorship Behaviors and Mentorship Quality Associated with Formal Mentoring Programs: Closing the Gap Between Research and Practice' (2006) 91(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 567-578.

¹⁴⁹ Belle R. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research and Practice* (Sage Publications Ltd 2007).

¹⁵⁰ Belle R. Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research and Practice* (Sage Publications Ltd 2007).

that the formal mentoring programmes may be developed to address a variety of organisational needs. This is likely to be based on the individual organisation and their particular needs which may vary from other organisations even in the same field. Nonetheless, this is a reasonable approach as each organisation should be in a position to consider their own particular needs and focus on creating their own mentoring programme that suits their organisation and focuses on their specific requirements.

Generally during the formal mentoring selection, mentors and mentees are carefully selected and reasonably well-matched in that they understand the mentoring process and their aims. Nonetheless, there is no specific evidence relating to the most appropriate mentoring selection process that one can follow. It is more about individual law firms and their specific requirements and needs before the selection of employees is considered. One of the most significant importance of mentoring is to ensure that the progress is being monitored. This is likely to provide measured outcome and help with further intervention if necessary, to support the process. In order to successfully deliver a mentoring programme and achieve significant benefits, potential mentors should undergo relevant training prior to the commencement of the programme. The training and its approach vary upon individual firms and their specific needs for development. For example, in some cases the mentors will undergo internal training, others may offer an external training or perhaps provide this online. This may include people management, development and progression, communication and even confidentiality. The training may be in a form of a one of session or lasting indefinitely or even on a hop on and off basis if necessary. The benefits of the mentors training are to increase their confidence through making effective use of previous experiences and knowledge. Further benefits of the training will also provide networking opportunities with new mentors-to-be and existing mentoring groups of people who are likely to be the support for future encouraging independence. Networking is a theme outlined by the participants of this study as a benefit of mentoring which is discussed further in Section 2.10.

An overall characteristic surrounding the formal mentoring includes, direct organisational benefits with an established goals and measurable outcomes. Further, the formal mentoring support is likely to be offered to all employees who qualify with strategic pairing with mentors and mentees and set for a specified period of time, for example nine or twelve months. With a view to advance personal and professional development, organisations establish formal mentoring programmes however, difficulties remain in delivering these results. If the mentoring relationships are found to have similar personalities, the mentees receive more career and psychosocial support. Further findings¹⁵¹ revealed that career support is linked to mentor and mentee similarity in the personality trait openness to experience and that psychosocial support for mentees is linked to mentor and mentee similarity in openness to experience and conscientiousness. Further outcome showed that matching mentors with mentees on two specific personality traits, openness to experience and conscientiousness, enhances the outcomes of mentoring relationships for mentees.

Various theories of advantages and disadvantages of formal mentoring programmes have been established.¹⁵² For example, Eby and Lockwood reconfirmed that the formal type of mentoring brings in benefits together with some challenges. The most commonly reported benefits for mentees include learning, coaching, career planning and psychosocial support. Others include improved career satisfaction, retention improvement, further promotions and increase in wage reward. However, there are also some challenges of the formal mentoring programmes including mentor neglect, unmet expectations and structural separation from the mentor. As a result of the above advantages and disadvantages, the following suggestions identified by Eby and Lockwood include, clearer communications of programme objectives, better matching of mentees and mentors, targeted

¹⁵¹ Christine Menges, 'Toward Improving the Effectiveness of Formal Mentoring Programs: Matching by Personality Matters' (2015) 41(1) *Group & Organizational Management* 98-129.

¹⁵² Lilliana T. Eby and Amanda L. Lockwood, 'Proteges' and Mentors' Reactions to Participating in Formal Mentoring Programs: A Qualitative Investigation' (2005) 67(3) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 441-458.

participation in the programme and better programme monitoring. Furthermore, Ragins and Cotton¹⁵³ revealed statistical evidence of the one third of the nation's major organisations who have commenced formal mentoring programmes and confirmed that this number is growing.

In an attempt to capture the following benefits of mentoring including more promotions,¹⁵⁴ higher incomes,¹⁵⁵ reduced turnover intentions,¹⁵⁶ greater career satisfaction and easier socialisation¹⁵⁷ many organisations are creating formal mentoring programmes to assist women in their career developments and progression. With women experiencing gender-based barriers generally, they value individualised feedback, mentoring and coaching more than men.¹⁵⁸ The formal type of mentoring provides an effective support adding benefits such as specialised training and resources to enhance their career progression.

One of the great aspects of the formal type of mentoring is that the process is in a structured form which is being monitored and measured. The formal mentoring programmes require more of an initial organisation than the informal mentoring programmes including, the administrative set up of the process through either Human Resources (HR) intervention or senior members. Furthermore, it is inevitable to have a presence of active participants of the scheme, including mentees and mentors, who form the mentoring relationships. In addition, the formal type of mentoring programmes propose

¹⁵³ Belle R. Ragins and Jeremiah P. Cotton, 'Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships' (1999) 84(4) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 529-550.

¹⁵⁴ George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

¹⁵⁵ Georgia T. Chao, Patm Walz and Philip D. Gardner, 'Formal and Informal Mentorships: A Comparison on Mentoring Functions and Contrast with Non-Mentored Counterparts' (1992) 45(3) *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology, Personnel Psychology* 619-636.

¹⁵⁶ Ralph E. Viator and Terri A. Scandura, 'A Study of Mentor-Protege Relationships in Large Public Accounting Firms' (1991) 5(3) *Accounting Horizons* 20-30.

¹⁵⁷ Cheri Ostroff and Steve W. Kozlowski, 'The Role of Mentoring in the Information Gathering Process of Newcomers During Early Organizational Socialization' (1993) 42(2) *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 170-183.

¹⁵⁸ Gayle Cude and Karen Winfrey, 'The Hidden Barrier: Gender Bias: Fact or Fiction' (2007) 11(3) *Nursing for Women's Health Journal* 254-265.

fair and equal opportunities across the firm which are then equally available to all employees and followed up by rigorous and continuous measuring of the running and the effectiveness of the process.

Clutterbuck¹⁵⁹ confirmed that the organisation of mentoring programmes is a complex role and requires appropriate networks and competence. It is understandable that some amount of time and commitment must be expected. This again is considered with a balanced approach which he explained that if the participants meet less than once a quarter than they have not got a relationship, it is just an acquaintance. He further revealed that if the participants meet much more than once a month then the mentor is probably doing the line manager's job. Further, Clutterbuck explained that ideally, mentoring meetings should last between sixty to ninety minutes with an extra half an hour for contingencies.¹⁶⁰ This proposed timescale may well be unachievable due to various obstacles. For example, from the legal practise point of view, the extra time would have to be compromised with billable hours that lawyers include for their clients' work, client care as per Solicitors' Code of Conduct and high targets. The purpose of a mentoring programme is to focus on people and their development within an organisation. By having this close relationship between the two people, mentor and mentee, who will strive for excellence in the delivery of an organisation's objectives.¹⁶¹ It is vital that the relationship contains a high degree of trust and mutual regard and that the mentor helps the mentee become what they aspire to be and realise their potentials.

Moreover, also to be expected is the mentee's responsibility to keep a log of their mentoring support including career planning, research activities, progress and even telephone conversations and discussions. By way of measuring the success of the experience both, the mentor and the mentee,

¹⁵⁹ David Clutterbuck, 'Organising Mentoring Programmes: How to be a Great Programme Coordinator, Development and Learning in Organisations' (2003) 20(3) *An International Journal* 16-17.

¹⁶⁰ David Clutterbuck, *Everyone Needs a Mentor* (5th edn, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2014).

¹⁶¹ William A. Gray and Marilynne M. Gray, *Mentoring: Aid to Excellence in Career Development, Business and the Professions* (Mentoring Institute 1986) <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED308278.pdf>> accessed 21 October 2019.

would also be expected to provide a written experience evaluation which would normally help to improve the programme when offering further mentoring support to other employees in the future.

Despite of some substantial benefits of the formal mentoring programmes, the creation and implementation of these initiatives are not without challenges.¹⁶² In fact, over a decade ago, Kram¹⁶³ cautioned that aside from the practical difficulties inherent in creating an effective formal mentoring system, the premises on which this kind of structural intervention is based are of questionable validity. It is the mentee who would identify their needs, which then are supported by a mentor who would listen, observe, communicate, create opportunities and, most of all, provide relevant feedback offering respect, trust, constructive criticism and options.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the greatest advantage of the mentoring support is that the mentoring journey is always being driven by a mentee who will outline their goals and expectations, including skills and desires they wish to gain from the mentoring support which will increase their engagement with the scheme and consequently, improve their confidence, motivation and career progression.¹⁶⁵

With all this in mind, the formal mentoring programmes create great opportunities but have to be carefully considered by organisations who wish to implement them due to the above outlined aspects. Formal mentoring programmes are likely to provide more structured environment which will have to be compromised by the participants' availability and willingness to take part. Ehrich and others¹⁶⁶ concluded that the key issue when establishing mentoring programmes is to consider to maximise the experience of mentoring for all employees equally. In order to provide mentoring available to all

¹⁶² Terri A. Scandura, 'Dysfunctional Mentoring Relationships and Outcomes' (1998) 24(3) *Journal of Management* 449-467.

¹⁶³ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (Scott Foresman Glenview 1985).

¹⁶⁴ James G. Clawson and Kathy E. Kram, 'Managing Cross-Gender Mentoring' (1984) 27(3) *Business Horizons* 22-32.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Armstrong, *Strategic Human Resource Management: A Guide to Action* (Kogan Page 2008).

¹⁶⁶ Lisa C. Enrich, Brian C. Hansford and Lee Tennent, 'Formal Mentoring Programs in Education and Other Professions: A Review of the Literature' (2004) 40(4) *Educational Administration Quarterly* 518-540.

employees equally, some level of organisation and planning would have to be administered. This is likely to bring some level of competence and complexity.

In Section 2.5, I will consider aspect of mentoring from an international perspective and particularly, mentorship in America, Australia, Europe and the far East. I believe that different countries represent different cultures of mentoring practices which we can share and learn from. This is a brief overview of some approaches available, as I am simply unable to provide an outline of all countries during this study and do it justice. Therefore, a snap-shot overview will outline some different international contexts of mentoring support available.

2.5 *Mentoring: An international perspective*

As we already know, the term ‘mentor’ was initiated in the Greek Homer’s *Odyssey* between the eighth and ninth centuries however, the first use of the word ‘mentoring’ appears to have been initiated in America during the late eighteenth century.¹⁶⁷ The initial publication on mentoring by Ann Murry¹⁶⁸ in 1778 provided instruction for young men followed by decades of further developments in the area of mentoring including a periodical in 1830 which was specifically designed for youth followed by a monthly magazine in 1839 published by John S. Taylor. However, it was not until 1910 that mentoring became totally actualised with the founding of the Big Brothers organisation.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, with mentoring being largely a 20th-century development in America,¹⁷⁰ mentoring remains one of the most popular social interventions in American society.¹⁷¹ It has been

¹⁶⁷ Beverly J. Irby and Jennifer Boswell, ‘Historical Print context of the Term, “Mentoring” (2016) 24(1) *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in learning Journal* 1-7.

¹⁶⁸ An English children’s educational writer and poet who became well-known through her most famous book *Mentoria* talking about mentoring published in 1778.

¹⁶⁹ The organisation is now known as Big Brother Big Sister organisation being one of the oldest and largest youth mentoring organisations in the United States.

¹⁷⁰ David L. DuBois and Michael J Karcher, *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (Sage Publications Ltd 2005) 15.

¹⁷¹ Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, ‘Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth (2008) 17(4) *Sage Journal* 254-258.

highlighted that mentorship programmes support youths as well as the young American workforce.¹⁷² The findings revealed that by understanding the social issues the mentorship intervention has potential to support American youths and motivate them to move forward with their educational futures. Following its further discussions and practices, in the late nineteen seventies and early nineteen eighties, mentoring practise became more widespread. By this time, mentoring practices escalated across Europe and Australia which I will discuss later in this section.

From around 1990s, formal mentoring programmes in America became important management tools and continued to be used regularly by organisations.¹⁷³ One of the main advantages of the formal mentoring is that mentorship is extended to individuals and minorities who would not have been considered previously within the organisation. This is generally the case across various countries including the UK in support of the minorities including women. Although women may be a minority among the workforce in male dominated sectors, ie STEM or military, they are not considered a ‘minority’ as such since they form 50% of the population in many countries including UK. In some sectors where women are minority, they may likely be doing part time work instead.

Further, Monserrat and others¹⁷⁴ undertaken a study for the purpose to compare women’s mentoring experiences across nine countries within the Americas, and to explore linkages between personal characteristics, mentoring practices, and functions and consequences of being a mentee. The outcome revealed that most of the women mentees have more than one mentor which can be linked to the findings of my research where my participants showed substantial interest in having a multi-mentor

¹⁷² Justin Preston, ‘New Research Reviews Mentoring Programs Supporting Native American Youth’ (2018) *The Chronical of Evidence-Based Mentoring* <<https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/new-research-reviews-mentoring-program-supporting-native-american-youth/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

¹⁷³ L. Cameron and P. Jesser, ‘Mentors an Aid to Management’ (1990) *The Weekend Australian* 38.

¹⁷⁴ Silvia I. Monserrat, Jo A. Duffy, Miguel R. Olivas-Lujan, John M. Miller, Ann Gregory, Suzy Fox, Terri R. Lituchy and Neusa M. B. F. Santos, ‘Mentoring Experiences of Successful Women Across the Americas’ (2009) 24(6) *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 455-476.

model available during their mentoring support. I will discuss this specific aspect of multi-mentor support in Section 2.7.1.

Clutterbuck¹⁷⁵ provided additional view when cited an earlier author, Ralf M. Stodgill, who viewed the mentor as an ambiguous authority figure. Mentoring has also been used as a managing tool in large private-sector organisations to support their junior staff.¹⁷⁶ Clutterbuck¹⁷⁷ further added that even at this early stage of development in mentoring, there is recognition that the most successful mentoring relationships, developed into friendships. Moreover, during early 2000, the American Bar Association's Women in the Profession Commission focused on the progress of women in the legal profession and revealed that number of women entering the legal profession, including law students, newly qualified lawyers and senior lawyers was increasing. This meant that the progress towards equality in the legal profession was moving forward however, women remained underrepresented. Lack of influence for greater promotions was detected and despite similar qualifications between male and female lawyers, the pay gap remained evident. Further recommendations were put forward in order to combat bias in the justice system and to increase support networks for women in the legal profession. Some of the recommendations included flexible working policies and mentoring programmes and women's networks.

With diversity being a top priority in corporate America, Thomas¹⁷⁸ researched the progression of racial minorities at three large American corporations. The findings revealed that minorities who progress furthest share one characteristic, this being strong networks of mentors and corporate sponsors. Therefore, the multi-mentor model is proving to be a crucial element of the mentees'

¹⁷⁵ David Clutterbuck, *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent at Work* (2nd edn, Institute of Personnel and Development 1991).

¹⁷⁶ Lisa C. Ehrlich and Brian Hansford, 'Mentoring: Pros and Cons for HRM' (1999) 37(3) *Journal of Human Resources* 92-107.

¹⁷⁷ David Clutterbuck, *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent at Work* (2nd edn, Institute of Personnel and Development 1991).

¹⁷⁸ David A. Thomas, 'The Truth About Mentoring Minorities. Race Matters' (2001) 79(4) *Harvard Business Review* 98-107.

progression and career development. Furthermore, Mangan and others¹⁷⁹ undertaken a study of 400 lawyers who have left at least one legal employer during their legal career and the findings showed that mentorship would have been greatly welcomed during their legal careers prior to leaving their employment at the time. This suggested that there was perhaps lack of mentoring support available to the participants.

The Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA)¹⁸⁰ in America advocates for the extended hiring, promotion and retention of minorities. The findings from their research undertaken on women and minorities included current trends and development for the diverse legal leaders of mentoring support.¹⁸¹

There are some notable differences between American and European mentoring including the term ‘mentee’ commonly used in Europe differ with ‘protege’ used by Americans. This contradicting term is seen by Europeans as unacceptable due to its patronising and hierarchical nature. Whereas, Americans fail to recognise the term ‘mentee’ claiming this being a trendy term and not actual word in fact. Further to the above language differences, there are more deeper differences to mentoring seen by the both nations. For example, Americans view mentoring as helping the protege advance up the corporate ladder, while Europeans see this function as nepotism and favouritism, and tend to use a more holistic concept of mentoring that is related to the cycle and overall personal development of the mentee, irrespective of their rank or advancement patterns.¹⁸² Furthermore, mentoring provides the mentor with certain benefits for example, rejuvenation of their career and satisfaction of assisting

¹⁷⁹ Kate Mayer Mangan, Erin Giglia and Laurie Rowen, ‘Why Lawyers Leave Law Firms and What Firms Can Do About it’ (14 April 2016) <<http://www.lawpracticetoday.org/article/why-lawyers-leave-law-firms-and-what-firms-can-do-about-it/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹⁸⁰ MCCA, ‘Advancing Diversity, Inclusion and Equity’ (Annual Report 2017) <<https://www.mcca.com>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹⁸¹ MCCA, ‘Advancing Diversity, Inclusion and Equity’ (Annual Report 2017) <<https://www.mcca.com>> accessed 26 September 2019.

¹⁸² David Clutterbuck and Belle R. Ragins, *Mentoring and Diversity: An International Perspective*, (Butterworth-Heinemann 2002).

another develop their capabilities.¹⁸³ In addition, Kanter¹⁸⁴ observed that being mentored not only yielded the most desirable jobs for mentees, but also it enabled them access to the power structure within the organisation. In Europe, mentoring is increasingly recognised as a tool for advancing the labour market including immigrants.¹⁸⁵ Employment-oriented mentoring programmes have the end goal of employment for the mentee, but also aim to achieve important objectives along the way that can promote employment success, including development of social and cognitive skills, expansion of socio-professional networks, and improve self-confidence and self-reliance. Similarly, in Europe and in America, the labour market outcomes of immigrant populations experience more challenges than those of the native population. This may often include the language barrier and/or social inclusion challenges. Although, EU migrants for instance have traditionally been considered highly mobile. There are also, a number of settled ethnic minority communities in the UK, including migrant women who have migrated to the UK, not as secondary migrants or dependents, but as autonomous primary migrants. Further, young adults and the low-skilled individuals have been hit hardest by the economic crisis.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, mentoring is seen as a relevant support for those involved and in particular the traditional one-on-one mentoring is highlighted.

Further international contrasting approach taken from an Australian perspective explores general characteristics of mentoring relationships and its effects in academia. Findings revealed positive responses including the mentoring experience being an extremely valuable encounter increasing mentees' self-confidence.¹⁸⁷ These findings recognise comparable findings of mentoring in the UK and particularly with consistent findings of my thesis proving that mentoring increases mentees'

¹⁸³ Lisa C. Ehrlich and Brian Hansford, 'Mentoring: Pros and Cons for HRM' (1999) 37(3) *Journal of Human Resources* 92-107.

¹⁸⁴ Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Basic Books 1977).

¹⁸⁵ Milica Petrovic, *Mentoring Practices in Europe and North America: Strategies for Improving Immigrants' Employment Outcomes* (Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Emily Dugan, 'The Neet Generation: Why Young Britons Have Been Hardest Hit by the Economic Downturn', Independent, 24 February 2014.

¹⁸⁷ Jeanne Madison, Bruce A. Knight and Kathy Watson, 'Mentoring Amongst Academics' (1993) 20(1) *Australian Educational Researcher* 77-91.

confidence which will be covered in more detail in Section 5.4. In addition, further study of mentoring in the Australian workforce revealed that the mentees felt that they were learning from the mentoring support, in terms of improving their general understanding of the company's operations and in dealing with practical management issues.¹⁸⁸ More recent findings of Nolan¹⁸⁹ from the southern part of Australia provided effects of mentoring experience received by early childhood teachers included the enhancement of mentor's and mentee's professional development and professional identity.

Moreover, the University of Hong Kong in China undergone further research into mentors' perception of their roles in mentoring student teachers.¹⁹⁰ The findings from this research outlined mentors' concerns to ensure that they provide sensible but realistic advice to their mentees depending on their personal strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, their continued support depended on the strength of their interpersonal relationship which enabled them to work together to achieve professional development.

Further research was taken by the Chinese, exploring the mediating effect of mentoring on the relationship between personal learning and career development in Chinese enterprises. The findings revealed that personal learning and mentoring had a significantly positive impact on career development. Mentoring mediated the relationship between personal learning and career development and as a result it has been suggested that when promoting career development benefits, enterprises should enhance the positive effects of personal learning and career development through mentoring mechanisms.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Darryl Dymock, 'Blind Date: A Case Study of Mentoring as Workplace Learning (1999) 11(8) Journal of Workplace Learning 312-317.

¹⁸⁹ Andrea Nolan, 'Effective Mentoring for the Next Generation of Early Childhood Teachers in Victoria, Australia' (2017) 25(3) *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 272-290.

¹⁹⁰ Tammy Kwan and Francis Lopez-Real, 'Mentors' Perceptions of Their Roles in Mentoring Student Teachers' (2005) 33(3) *Journal of Teachers Education* 275-287.

¹⁹¹ Rueywei Gong, Shih-Ying Chen and Shin-Lung Lee, 'Social Behaviour and Personality' (2011) 39(6) *An International Journal* 807-824.

The common theme in mentoring, whether in the USA, Australia, China or Europe, is that there needs to be a close relationship between a mentor and a mentee which is developed during a mentoring programme. Further trust and support are built on that help the mentee to concentrate on their career development and progression. Also, knowing that a senior and more experienced colleague is closely overlooking their progression, as this helps to build motivation and confidence in mentees which advances their personal growth and career development.

The following Section 2.6 is considering mentoring from an entrepreneurial perspective including main advantages of the support.

2.6 *Mentoring in business*

In the business sector, mentoring is also seen as a development tool¹⁹² which helps not only the organisation as a whole but also the individual within the organisation.¹⁹³ The main benefit of mentoring to any organisation is having a more fulfilled, committed, resourceful and motivated workforce. Further, mentoring helps individuals to develop within the organisational framework. Especially an understanding of the company's values and a realisation that the organisation helps them feel they are making a worthwhile contribution.¹⁹⁴ The initial induction process allows people to become familiar with the organisation and its ideologies. The mentoring support however, helps with effective future learning and progresses mentees' careers further by enhancing job related knowledge and skills. Together with proper integration and fairness of treatment mentoring helps people in organisations with major transitions to new stages of their careers and what is involved in the change.

¹⁹² Gordon F. Shea, *Mentoring, A Guide to the Basics* (Kogan Page 1992).

¹⁹³ Georges Delvaux, Sandrine Devillard-Hoellinger and Mary C. Meaney, 'A Business Case for Women: Organisation' (2008) 4 *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

¹⁹⁴ Geof Alred, Bob Garvey and Richard Smith, *The Mentoring Pocketbook* (Management Pocketbooks Limited and Stylus Publishing 1998).

Waters and others¹⁹⁵ investigated the relationship between career-related mentoring, psychosocial mentoring (personal development), business success, and self-esteem in participants of a mentoring programme that was designed to assist in the establishment of a new business. A comparison of mentor and mentee perceptions revealed that mentors considered themselves to provide higher levels of psychosocial support than did the mentees. Mentee perceptions of business success were predicted by the frequency of mentor contact and the level of career-related support provided by their mentor. It showed from the findings of this study that the involvement of a mentor and their support provides an overall business success.

Mentoring in business enterprise is a common practice. Thomson and others¹⁹⁶ found that successful businesswomen, who work together with mentors of the highest possible standards, provide a substantial influence to act as powerful patrons and supporters. Moreover, many of the senior women executives are then capable of becoming mentors to other female mentees themselves. It was further explained that during the mentoring experience the mentoring couple, would meet on a regular basis and discuss the progress ideas which were led by the mentee with a view to reach their desired outcome. Next, I would like to consider further advantages of mentoring including productivity, worker satisfaction and effects of mentoring on retention levels. Let me begin with productivity in Section **2.6.1**.

¹⁹⁵ Lea Waters, Marita McCabe, Denis Kiellerup and Steven Kiellerup, 'The Role of Formal Mentoring on Business Success and Self-Esteem in Participants of a New Business Start Up Program (2002) 17(1) Journal of Business and Psychology 107-121.

¹⁹⁶ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom: The Roadmap* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

2.6.1 *Mentoring in business: Productivity*

One of the crucial aspects within business profession is productivity which finds similarities in the legal sector. As stated previously, mentoring programmes provide cost-effective staff development where a mentor offers substantial help within their responsibilities which increases motivation, productivity and performance of the mentee. Kahle-Piasecki¹⁹⁷ found that mentoring programmes in organisations can be helpful in improving and transferring knowledge, and lead to greater job satisfaction and retention on employees, resulting in higher business productivity. Some of those issues will be discussed later in this chapter.

In business, although women from developed economies are continuing to make substantial gains in the workplace, it remains true that the higher up in a company you look, the lower the percentage of women.¹⁹⁸ This seem to be similar position in the legal sector where despite growing number of female law entrants, fewer female partners reach senior levels of the profession. Therefore, the following question arises could mentoring become a dominating factor to help women make further progressions up the career ladder with relevant mentoring support and mentors' experience.

The accessibility to mentoring varies from one organisation to another and totally depends on the culture of that organisation. Earlier research revealed that some women described their involvement in mentoring as 'it just happened' with others who stated: 'we were just lucky, I guess.'¹⁹⁹ These two varied responses highlight inconsistencies with access to mentoring for women. The discrepancy in the female responses show variation in mentoring support not only from organisation to organisation

¹⁹⁷ Lisa Kahle-Piasecki, 'Making a Mentoring Relationship Work: What is Required for Organizational Success' (2011) 12(1) *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 46-56.

¹⁹⁸ Desvaux G, Devillard-Hoellinger S, and Meaney M.C, 'A Business Case for Women' (2008) *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

¹⁹⁹ Bonnie C. McKenzie, *Friends in High Places: The Executive Woman's Guide* (Business and Professional Publishing 1995).

but also from one employee to another. My research is looking at various types of mentoring offered to the participants of my study and the accessibility to mentoring as the current literature proposes gaps in this area of law and lack of empirical evidence. Further findings of McKenzie's research revealed that out of all the women involved in the survey over four years who had had a mentor, only twelve per cent created mentoring opportunities and planned their mentoring experience. The small percentage remains inconsistent providing further area for improvement and equal treatment between men and women. While mentees gain skills and specific knowledge from their senior peers, they also develop a deeper understanding and a sharper focus on the organisation's culture which helps with their career progression.²⁰⁰

Schein²⁰¹ further added that organisational cultures are created by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and potentially the destruction of culture. Culture and leadership are similar in nature and neither of them can really be understood by itself. In fact, there is a possibility under-emphasised in leadership research that the only aspect of real importance that leaders do, is to create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to work with that culture. Schein's ideology has been made over thirty years ago and it can be argued that his words mean true more now than it has done all those years ago.

There are various advantages of mentoring support that benefit mentors, mentees and organisations. Mentors receive a boost in their career by promoting their organisation's culture and learn alternative aspects of the company which may further their own career development.²⁰² Mentoring programmes also provide greater advantage to an organisation by promoting employees' growth and development,

²⁰⁰ Rajahs Ghosh and Thomas G. Reio Jr, 'Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Mentors: A Meta-Analysis' (2013) 83(1) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 106-116.

²⁰¹ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View* (Jossey-Bass 1985).

²⁰² Rajahs Ghosh and Thomas G. Reio Jr, 'Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Mentors: A Meta-Analysis' (2013) 83(1) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 106-116.

improving productivity, encouraging retention and enhancing business initiatives.²⁰³ All of these factors create positive vibe and response across an organisation which the mentee can then build on together with the mentor culminating in a greater team efficiency and achievement of set goals. This is now leading me onto Section 2.6.2 considering worker satisfaction as a result of mentoring support.

2.6.2 Mentoring in business: Worker satisfaction

A trusted relationship between a mentor and a mentee is crucial. They both benefit from performing their roles by developing a wider perspective on their organisation and work. Nonetheless, with the help of a non-judgmental leader, mentee can further develop their confidence which consequently, helps the mentee to grow quickly within the company and potentially to senior levels. On occasions however, the relationship might be interrupted by a potential conflict of interest. This may be in situations where a manager is also acting as a mentor.²⁰⁴ In situations of this type, a well-documented support would be imperative. In cases where disruption continues, a change of a mentor may be necessary. Most situations will however, prove that mentoring programmes are very successful and supportive as both, the mentor and the mentee, will strive for improvement.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, Parsloe²⁰⁶ defined the purpose of mentoring as to help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.

The FTSE 100 cross-company mentoring programme was launched in 2004²⁰⁷ with a view to improve the gender diversity on the highest boards of the business. This revealed an involvement of several law firms taking part in the programme which showed an increased number of women on FTSE 100

²⁰³ Nicholas Nigro, *The Everything, Coaching and Mentoring Book* (2nd edn, Simon and Schuster 2007).

²⁰⁴ Michael J. Marquardt and Peter Loan, *The Manager as a Mentor* (Greenwood Publishing Group 2006).

²⁰⁵ Eric Parsloe, *The Manager as Coach and Mentor* (CIPD Publishing 1999).

²⁰⁶ Eric Parsloe, *The Manager as Coach and Mentor* (CIPD Publishing 1999).

²⁰⁷ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom* (Palgrave Macmillan 2005).

boards between 2000 and 2010. The gender diversity is continuing to improve in the new Millennium and more women now entering the law profession however, the number of those females reaching senior positions remains lower than men. In addition, the Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognize commitment to advancing careers of women in various professions including science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment higher education and research.

With the worker satisfaction in mind, the following three key points of a successful mentoring programme including the following aspects: firstly, a thorough understanding of the organisational needs and requirements for a mentoring programme. Secondly, the appropriate type of mentoring programme available based on the organisational commitment and availability. Finally, adaptation of appropriate measures to monitor the mentoring programme and communication abilities within the team.²⁰⁸ Another aspect of mentoring advantages which I wish to discuss in Section 2.6.3 is retention.

2.6.3 Mentoring in business: Retention

Retention is one of the most significant elements of any organisation's success. Retention levels highlight an organisation's ability to retain its employees. Therefore, supervision and support of employees is paramount to any organisation's success. Desvaux²⁰⁹ found that hiring and retaining women at all levels also enlarges a company's pool of talent at a time when shortages are appearing throughout industries. Nonetheless, a successful mentee is likely to retain their position with the same company having put the extra time and effort to develop themselves as a skilled employee in a reasonably quick period of time. This is particularly so where reaching senior levels with the same

²⁰⁸ Bonnie C McKenzie, *Friends in High Places: The Executive Woman's Guide* (Business and Professional Publishing 1995).

²⁰⁹ Georges Desvaux, Sandrine Devillard-Hoellinger and Mary C. Meaney, 'A Business Case for Women' (2008) *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

company allows the mentee to then build on to their development and enjoy and, enhance their career. Furthermore, having achieved the support of a mentor will give the mentee confidence to remain with the company and further improve and develop their career.

Furthermore, Ragins²¹⁰ revealed that mentoring relationships help break down the barriers in promoting the advancement of women. By understanding an organisation's culture, women are then able to align their goals to the organisation's goals which allows them to move to a more influential, senior position. Mentoring may help to prevent the loss of talented women and provide the opportunity for female-to-female mentoring, enabling the connection with each other.

As stated in Section 2.6.2, the FTSE 100 cross-company mentoring programme was introduced due to the lack of women on UK boards and to help correct the imbalance. Male senior executives began to actively participate in mentoring programmes and support the idea. Although the connection cannot be proved, the careers of many of the programmes' mentees have developed significantly during or after their mentoring.²¹¹ This suggested that mentoring has played an important role during this mentoring programme as the development of those participating mentees have improved significantly. Despite the detail of monitoring the programme being unknown, the development and progression of the mentees' proved success. Hence, the availability of a mentoring programme and its monitoring predominantly proved the internal success rate and employee satisfaction.

Clutterbuck²¹² further added that mentoring is one of the fastest growing aspects of people development in business and government. It is clear to understand that mentoring is not necessarily used to benefit the organisation but the individual itself. Further, it reduces the chance to give an

²¹⁰ Belle R. Ragins, 'Barriers to Mentoring: The Female Manager's Dilemma' (1989) 42(1) Human Relations 1-22.

²¹¹ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom: The Roadmap* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

²¹² David Clutterbuck, 'Mentoring and Tutoring Partnership in Learning' (1994) 2(1) Business Mentoring in Revolution 19-22.

unfair advantage to an employee over better qualified colleagues, who has not made appropriate connections during their careers and making mentoring available on merit resulting in a better overall approach. Yet, another valuable aspect of mentoring is the general movement of switching the development responsibilities onto the mentee and their mentor which provide for the clear understanding of the goals set by the mentee. With the successful programme of mentoring and further mentee's progression and satisfaction, the retention levels are likely to remain reasonably stable reflecting the success of the organisation.

Section 2.7 will focus on mentoring in education to provide the reader with a further flavour as to how mentoring is perceived in academia.

2.7 *Mentoring in education*

Mentoring in education has become progressively paramount as a mode of professional development. Mentoring is, metaphorically speaking, an investment in the younger generation.²¹³ From the education policy aspect, mandatory mentoring is an oxymoron singling a hidden curriculum where teachers are required to mentor and make documented gains.²¹⁴

Kirkham²¹⁵ revealed that mentoring is an important element in the process of job introduction. Mentoring provides an additional support from the early stages of new recruits' which can help with settling in the new job and assist with future career progression from an early start. Bush and others²¹⁶ further stated that mentoring is a multi-faceted concept incorporating personal support and a more

²¹³ Sarah J. Fletcher and Carol A. Mullen, *Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Sage Publications Ltd 2012).

²¹⁴ Carol A. Mullen *Mentoring: An Overview* (Sage Publications Ltd 2005).

²¹⁵ David Kirkham, *The Nature and Conditions of Good Mentoring Practice* (Kogan Page Limited 1992).

²¹⁶ Tony Bush, Marianne Coleman, Debbie Wall and John West-Burnham, *Mentoring and Continuing Professional Development* (David Fulton Publisher 1996).

vigorous notion of professional development leading to enhanced competence. D'Abate²¹⁷ shared similar opinion and further added that high level of mentoring support is regularly being shared between faculty and peer mentors consequently resulting in better practice and support of their students.

Mentoring in education is highly recognised and used as a development tool for staff and students alike. There has been a great amount of professional training being introduced in education, for example through various types of workshops and programmes, some of which are never used or put into practice.²¹⁸ This may also include notes made and pages of writing done that are being left aside, filed and never seen nor used again. Hence, mentoring is regarded as an important element in the induction process and hands on practice and much more effective way of progression.

McIntyre and Haggart²¹⁹ revealed that mentoring is a mechanism of counselling, educating and socialising the student into the school environment. Mentoring remains highly valued²²⁰ as it is seen as a much more effective way of practical training.²²¹ Crow and Matthews²²² found that in education a career-long mentoring approach is highly recommended. Mentoring is a rather close form of interaction which brings people together. For example, mentors and mentees work very close to one another hence, mentoring is seen as an emotional support bringing personal value to the process.

²¹⁷ Caroline D'Abate, 'Defining Mentoring in the First Year Experience: One Institution's Approach to Clarifying the Meaning of Mentoring First Year Students' (2009) 21(1) *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* 65-91.

²¹⁸ Ofsted, 'Better Education and Care: The Logical Chain: Continuing Professional Development in Effective Schools' (July 2006)
<<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5999/1/The%20logical%20chain%20continuing%20professional%20development%20in%20effective%20schools%20%28PDF%20format%29.pdf>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²¹⁹ Donald McIntyre and Haze Hagger, *Mentors in Schools* (David Fulton Publishers Ltd 1996).

²²⁰ Mel Leedham, 'The Coaching Scorecard: A Holistic Approach to Evaluating the Benefits of Business Coaching' (2005) 3(2) *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* 30-44.

²²¹ Susan Bloch, 'Coaching Tomorrow's Top Managers' (1996) 8(5) *Employee Counselling Today* 30-32.

²²² Gary M. Crow and Joseph L. Matthews, *Finding One's Way: How Mentoring Can Lead to Dynamic Leadership* (Corwin Press 1998).

Moreover, Cervero²²³ echoed the above findings and further added that the popular wisdom among practicing professionals is that the knowledge they acquire from practice is far more useful than what they acquire from more formal ways of education. It is evident that Carvero as well as other researchers value mentoring higher than any education received. Their disclosure is based on the fact that having a mentor who will provide the hands-on practical experience offer greater learning opportunities and is more beneficial.

Further study undertaken by Wildman and others revealed that experienced teachers possess an extensive repertoire of helping strategies and that, with opportunities for collaboration, teachers can develop and shape complex mentoring roles that meet beginning teachers' needs.²²⁴ Moreover, they found that experienced teachers can provide assistance tailored to the circumstances of beginning teachers in individual schools.

Nearly three decades ago, Odell's research²²⁵ revealed that 96 per cent of those teachers who undertaken a mentoring support, were still in the profession and teaching. A further finding indicated that the most valued aspect of the mentoring experience was the emotional support which helped the junior teachers through the challenging stages of the profession. Mentoring still remains an important element of teachers' career progression and their ongoing on-job support.

In addition, the following statement made by a school principal²²⁶ who has experienced the mentoring support during his teaching career from an undergraduate student to an elementary principal confirms the importance of the mentoring support that one should experience. He stated that through his

²²³ Ronald M. Cervero, 'Professional Practice, Learning, and Continuing Education: An Integrated Perspective' (1992) 11(2) International Journal of Lifelong Education 91-101.

²²⁴ Terry M. Wildman, Susan G. Magliaro, Ruth A. Niles and Jerome A. Niles, 'Teacher Mentoring: An Analysis of Roles, Activities, and Conditions' (1992) 43(3) Journal of Teacher Education 205-213.

²²⁵ Sandra J. Odell and Douglas P. Ferraro, 'Teacher Mentoring and Teacher Retention' (1992) 43(3) Journal of Teacher Education 200-204.

²²⁶ Paul G. Young, Jeromey M. Sheets and Dustin D. Knight, *Finding One's Way: How Mentoring Can Lead to Dynamic Leadership* (Corwin Press and NAESP 1998).

mentoring, it has been much easier to cope, grow and move forward. Furthermore, the support from mentoring has been a genuine success and it is crucial for the success to identify a good mentor who will guide and help through mentee's first or even the tenth year.²²⁷

The commencement of the new Millennia brought further data²²⁸ indicating that junior teachers who were provided with mentors from the same subject field and who participated in collective induction activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to move to other schools and less likely to leave the teaching occupation after their first year of teaching. In the UK as well as in America, the value of mentoring in education is highly recognised due to its practical approach that has proven to increase teachers' retention and career development prospects. Therefore, mentoring support in education proves to be an important stage during teachers' career progression whether is being implemented during an early or a later stage of their careers.

In support of the above, Sorcinelli and Yun²²⁹ revealed that mentoring is a vital contribution to a successful academic career, particularly for women. More recently, a model has emerged that encourages a broader, more flexible network of support, in which no single person is expected to possess the expertise required to support a mentee. The multi-mentor model is focused on the engagement of a number of mentors to provide diverse support. The multi-mentor model has been a significant aspect of my research as the mentoring in law firms also refer to this particular model and proposes a gap in empirical evidence which my research addresses. I will now move onto Section **2.7.1** and consider the multi-mentor model.

²²⁷ Paul G. Young, Jeromey M. Sheets and Dustin D. Knight, *Finding One's Way: How Mentoring Can Lead to Dynamic Leadership* (Corwin Press and NAESP 1998).

²²⁸ Thomas M. Smith and Richard M. Ingersoll, 'What are the Effects of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teacher Turnover?' (2004) 41(3) American Educational Research Journal 681-714.

²²⁹ Mary D. Sorcinelli and Jung Yun, 'From Mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy' (2007) 39(6) Journal Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning 58-61.

2.7.1 *Multi-mentor model*

The multi-mentor model is based on the premise that mentoring is not a single event in the life of a worker but rather several events with different levels of mentoring and each level of mentoring requires a different type of mentor with different types of skills and knowledge.²³⁰ Furthermore, the multi-mentor model can be found as a low-cost method of intervention and it will require an involvement of number of senior colleagues who would be required to provide their time and availability.²³¹ This may propose some problems to organisations where the mentors' availability is limited or reduced. Nonetheless, the multi-mentor model will involve a number of mentors often based at different locations.

Some researchers including Dansky,²³² Baugh and Scandura²³³ all considered and discussed multi-mentor model from around the late 1990s. In particular, four components of multi-mentoring were identified through factor analysis including psychosocial support, inclusion, networking and role modelling. Furthermore, inclusion predicted higher job attainment, whereas role modelling made significant contribution to salary. De Janasz and Sullivan²³⁴ took a more in depth look at the concept of multi-mentoring and argued that the traditional hierarchical model of a single, seasoned mentor is no longer realistic in an increasingly complex and challenging academic environment and concludes with the development of a multi-mentor model and its importance. The multi-mentor support offers diverse support to a mentee and therefore, mentee's development can progress significantly quicker.

²³⁰ Larry D. Burlew, 'Multiple Mentor Model: A Conceptual framework' (1991) 17(3) *Journal of Career Development* 213-214.

²³¹ Particularly in the legal field, the multi-mentor model, is likely to come at a cost considering the nature of a lawyer's job occupied by targets and legal deadlines.

²³² Kathryn H. Dansky, 'The Effect of Group Mentoring on Career Outcomes' (1996) 21(1) *Group & Organization Management* 5-21.

²³³ Gayle S. Baugh and Teresa A Scandura, 'The Effect of Multiple Mentors on Protege Attitudes Toward the Work Setting' (1999) 14(4) *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 503-521.

²³⁴ Suzanne C. De Janasz and Sherry E. Sullivan, 'Multiple Mentoring in Academe: Developing the Professorial Network' (2002) 64(2) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 263-283.

Moreover, Kroll²³⁵ has attempted to describe the landscape of multi-mentoring by defining terms and characterising mentoring structures. However, it is perceived that individuals may develop not one but multiple, diverse mentoring relationships over the course of their career to help them succeed professionally.²³⁶

Kay and Wallace²³⁷ supported the theory that the multi-mentor model can provide a mentee with different perspective, knowledge and skill that may further contribute to a career success which have been found earlier by Higgins and others.²³⁸ They revealed that the best resource appears to be not one but multiple mentors as it significantly enriches lawyers' careers. Moreover, Kay and Wallace further added that even if women are more likely to have a mentor, they are no more likely than men to have multiple mentors who would offer the most desirable career rewards, specifically in terms of career progression and development.

Sorcinelli and Yun²³⁹ also considered the multi-mentor model and stated that engaging multiple mentoring partners supports specific areas of faculty's activity and strikes a balance between work and life. On reflection, in the legal field, the balance of work and life appears to be challenging due to the length of qualification limiting women lawyers in particular, to be making choices between having children and family or qualifying. It can be argued that the multi-mentor model may provide females with additional support of career progression. Larger organisations provide a bigger pool of potential mentors and consequently, leading to increased chances for multi-mentorship opportunities. Smaller organisations however, are likely to have limited opportunities to offer the multi-mentor

²³⁵ Jonathan Kroll, 'What is Meant by the Term Group Mentoring?' (2016) 24(1) *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 44-58.

²³⁶ Monica C. Higgins, 2000. 'The More, the Merrier? Multiple Developmental Relationships and Work Satisfaction (2000) 19(4) *Journal of Management Development* 277-296.

²³⁷ Fiona M. Kay and Jean E. Wallace, 'Is More Truly Merrier? Mentoring and the Practice of Law' (2010) 79(4) *Canadian Review of Sociology* 418-452.

²³⁸ Monica C. Higgins, Shoshana R. Dobrow and Dawn E. Chandler, 'Never Quite Good Enough: The Paradox of Sticky Developmental Relationships for Elite University Graduates' (2008) 72(2) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 207-224.

²³⁹ Mary D. Sorcinelli and Jung Yun, 'From Mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy' (2007) 39(6) *Journal Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 58-61.

support due to the limited or reduced number of available mentors. Kay and Wallace²⁴⁰ agreed that mentorship, by one or many, occurred most often in larger law firms, a sector of the profession that most often offered formal mentoring programmes.

Although the literature recognises the multi-mentor model, the gap of empirical evidence is evident, particularly in law firms in the UK. Therefore, my research brings in further empirical evidence from the participants' perceptions of the multi-mentor model. Their experiences enhance the gap of the literature in the area of the multi-mentor support in the participating law firms.

Before further review of the available literature in the area of mentoring in law firms, I would like to consider an overview of significant developments of women in law as per Section **2.8**.

2.8 *Women in law: Significant developments*

While many groups benefit from mentoring, women have been shown to benefit significantly from such relationships. Commencing this review with Menkel-Meadow research²⁴¹ that focused on the growing involvement of women lawyers and their impact on the legal field. The findings revealed that an apparent discrimination by male peers were linked to barriers of female lawyers' career success and other organisational obstacles. These findings led Menkel-Meadow to further research²⁴² looking at the role of gender in the legal profession. It has been similarly found that women have particular transformative contributions to make to the practice of law, perhaps in an alternative

²⁴⁰ Fiona M. Kay and Jean E. Wallace, 'Is More Truly Merrier? Mentoring and the Practice of Law' (2010) 79(4) Canadian Review of Sociology 418-452.

²⁴¹ Carrie Menkel-Meadow, 'The Comparative Sociology of Women Lawyers: The "Feminization" of the Legal Profession' (1986) 24(4) Osgoode Hall Law Journal 897-918.

²⁴² Carrie Menkel-Meadow, 'Exploring a Research Agenda of the Feminization of the Legal Profession: Theories of Gender and Social Change' (1989) 14(2) Journal Article Law and Social Inquiry 289-319.

professional culture.²⁴³ This transformative potential derived from women's experiences of exclusion which created an outsider's critical perception; oppression which engendered greater empathy for subordinated groups; and the learned attention to caring and relationships.²⁴⁴ Women's life experiences are unlike those of the framers of the law and their focus on recognising and accepting different points of view negates the impetus to create universalistic truths which are insensitive to a broad range of experiences.²⁴⁵

One of the most significant pieces of research in Australian legal profession took place during 1990s. Thornton²⁴⁶ explored the position of women in law and the hypothesis that women lawyers will gain the acceptance in the legal profession as their number was continuing to grow. The findings revealed that the perception of female lawyers was that they were less appreciated from the professional perspective unlike male counterparts. This study showed how unconscious bias can lead to differentiate perceptions seen between male and female in the legal profession.

The publication by Bowman²⁴⁷ offered a historical analysis of female lawyers in the legal profession and what impact feminist theory may have had on the obstinacy of discrimination of the female lawyers. The findings revealed that the increasing appearance of women in the legal profession has had a great impact providing a challenge on organisational structures. Nonetheless, the findings also showed the need for substantial changes to be incorporated to then current legal system before male and female lawyers participate equally. Further, some evidence of elusive discrimination has been detected leaving women lawyers feeling intimidated by the counterparts and questioning their

²⁴³ Carrie Menkel-Meadow, 'Feminisation of the Legal Profession: The Comparative Sociology of Women Lawyers' (1987) *Lawyers in Society: Comparative Theories* 221-229.

²⁴⁴ Carrie Menkel-Meadow, 'Feminisation of the Legal Profession: The Comparative Sociology of Women Lawyers' (1987) *Lawyers in Society: Comparative Theories* 221-229.

²⁴⁵ Sharyn R. Anleu, 'Women in the Legal Profession: Theory and Research' (1991) Patricia Easteal and Sandra McKillop, *Women and the Law: Proceedings of a Conference Held* <<https://aic.gov.au/publications/proceedings/16>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²⁴⁶ Margaret Thornton, *Dissonance and Distrust: Women in the Legal Profession* (Oxford University Press 1996).

²⁴⁷ Cynthia Grant Bowman, 'Bibliographic Essay: Women and the Legal Profession' (1998) 7(1) *Cornell Law Faculty Publications* 149-175.

credibilities. The author further argued that female lawyers should refrain from pursuing legal careers within male orientated areas of law, such as high status specialisms and stay and support areas less status-conscious and remain in specialisms such as family law which on average provide less financial reward and have a lower status mark within the legal profession.

Another significant study of women in the legal profession of the old Millennia included an empirical research based on a compound of sociological and feminist theories between 1990 and 1994 taken by Sommerlad.²⁴⁸ Previous research findings included equal or even greater commitment to work by female lawyers whereas Sommerlad's research findings revealed necessity to an absolute commitment. The case of a male professional's commitment has been found as being completely integrated of domestic, social and work balance and not discriminated against. Unlike, the female professional model has been found that it naturally lacked commitment to work differentiated by the gendered concepts of commitment and choice.

The continuation of the research of women in law into the new Millennia and year 2000 where McGlynn²⁴⁹ revealed that in order to fight discrimination in the legal profession is to face and challenge hypothesis and the practices including gender inequality that initially lead to an unequal treatment. She further confirmed that this was likely to be done by recognising it as a moral imperative. Epstein²⁵⁰ further added that difficulties women lawyers faced at the time may not have been simply changed even with their number increasing. Broader attention to discrimination is required, perhaps even with an international consideration and help, before any changes may be seen. Additional focus on a female lawyer was being identified and in particular their role of lawyer and

²⁴⁸ Hilary Sommerlad, *The Gendering of the Professional Subject: Commitment, Choice and Social Closure in the Legal Profession* edited by McGlynn C, *Legal Feminisms: Theory and Practice* (Taylor & Francis Group 1998) 18.

²⁴⁹ Clare McGlynn, 'The Business of Equality in the Solicitors' Profession' (2000) 63(3) *Modern Law Review* 442-456.

²⁵⁰ Cynthia F. Epstein, 'Women in the Legal Profession at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century: Assessing Glass Ceilings and Open Doors' (2001) 49 *University of Kansas Law Review* 733-736.

mother as one in order to re-conceptualise the identity of the 21st century woman in her personal and professional life.

The Law Society funded further research into women in the legal profession which aim was to identify the key factors that affected patterns of entry into the legal profession of England and Wales. The initial findings reported that the culture of the workplace was crucial to combining work in legal professional practice and motherhood. Furthermore, there was no significant gender gap in pay at trainee level, on qualification the rate of salary increase was lower for women, however this was related to the type of firm where they were employed as men were paid similar rates. Those who completed the training contract were virtually guaranteed continued employment with the same firm, emphasising the process of selection for training contracts ultimately shapes the profession.²⁵¹ Ultimately, the qualification system for solicitors is continuously changing. The current system applies until autumn 2021 and provides the final stage to qualifying as a solicitor. The training can be undertaken during or after completing the Legal Practice Course (LPC). The training contract involves supervised working as a trainee solicitor in a firm of solicitors. The period of recognized training is normally two years however, this period can be reduced appropriately based on previous legal experience. Upon completions of the training contract, you become qualified and can be admitted to the roll of solicitors and apply for a practising certificate.

Further qualitative study undertaken by the Law Society²⁵² aimed to find reasons behind female solicitors' decisions to leave their legal careers. Following lack of flexibility in the legal profession at the time, female lawyers' desires to have family or travelling were the main two reasons for ending their legal careers during the early stages of their progressions. The masculine culture of the legal

²⁵¹ Liz Duff, Marc Mason and Lisa Webley, 'Women in Law Literature Review for the Law Society of England and Wales' (2019)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/articles/the-women-in-law-literature-review/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²⁵² Liz Duff and Lisa Webley, *Equality and Diversity: Women Solicitors Research Study* (London UK Law Society 2004).

profession was considered to offer lack of promotion and further development for female lawyers and an overall poor management practices which led to the decisions to leave.

2007 brought further investigations made by Thornton²⁵³ who explored the substantial changes in the legal profession with a particular attention to the nature, organisation and challenges of legal work. Taking into consideration the obvious differences between men and women and their natural routes of taking careers in general, the findings revealed that this was where gender inequality initiated. Women in law were more likely to commence their legal careers within government employment and public work and were seen as less competent and less committed. Their opportunities were therefore, limited facing gender bias and lower opportunities for further career progression.

Further research²⁵⁴ into women in law revealed that the legal profession for female lawyers remains pessimistic with lack of progressive nature. However, other researchers²⁵⁵ strongly believed that the female lawyers' career progression to the senior levels was optimistic however, barriers to the progression has been identified. The existence of the structural barriers in law have been identified more during the female progression than male counterparts.

Some considerable research continued into the last decade looking at women lawyers' career progression and their commitment which included extended hours of work in the office although commitment was not considered the same by the firms. Further issues relating to billing hours, salaries advancement and career progressions were identified. Nonetheless, some law firms considered as

²⁵³ Margaret Thornton, *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations* (Sage Publications Ltd 2007).

²⁵⁴ Sharon C. Bolton and Daniel Muzio, 'Can't Live With 'em; Can't Live Without 'em: Gendered Segmentation in the Legal Profession' (2007) 41(1) *Sociology* 47-64.

²⁵⁵ Fiona Kay and Elizabeth Gorman, 'Women in the Legal Profession' (2008) 4(1) *Annual Review of Social Science* 299-332.

positive were supporting diversity, including further training provided, flexible working and formal mentoring programmes offered however, more likely to have been seen in the larger law firms.²⁵⁶

During the year 2016, researchers from the University of Westminster reviewed the available literature from the UK, America and Australia, with an aim to evaluate concerns relating to access to, promotion and retention, in the legal profession. The main finding was that the talent was not universally understood within the profession. Western and Eastern traditions stretch past the equality however, the evidence showed that in order for the law firm success to exist both traditions were required. The researchers further revealed that each law firm should consider its strengths and weaknesses between employees and distribute roles appropriately in order to gain success. Creation of necessary and successful teams lead to much greater diversity²⁵⁷ within law firms and consequently, leading to further opportunities of career developments, promotions and sustained retention levels.

Section 2.9 provides further review of the available literature on mentoring in law firms and identifies the gap in literature which are being addressed in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.9 *Mentoring in law firms*

Mentoring in the UK law firms is rather a new approach that law firms are adopting to progress their peers to the most senior positions. Further mentoring piloting schemes and adaptations are being integrated by law firms to assist with the ongoing employees' careers progression.²⁵⁸ It is perceived

²⁵⁶ Hilary Sommerlad, Lisa Webley, Liz Duff, Daniel Muzio and Jennifer Tomlinson, 'Diversity in the Legal Profession in England and Wales: A Qualitative Study of Barriers and Individual Choices' (2013) 66(2) University of Westminster Law Press 245-269.

²⁵⁷ Terri Mottershead, *Diversity and Inclusion as the Key to Innovation in Innovating Talent Management in Law Firms* (NALP 2016).

²⁵⁸ Julie Macfarlane, *The New Lawyer: How Settlement is Transforming the Practice of Law* (UBC Press 2008).

that on completion of a mentoring programme, an employee would become more productive and contented in their role therefore, adding profitability to their employer.²⁵⁹ It can be argued that this is likely to increase employers' progression and improve their growth but will also allow employees' progression enhancing their reward which is then likely to add further values to the firm.

2018 saw women solicitors outnumbering their counterparts in practice, bringing about significant change.²⁶⁰ Despite this development, men continue to dominate the upper levels of the legal profession.²⁶¹ Hence, the pressure on female lawyers progression to the most senior levels is continuing to grow and this is where mentoring assists their further developments.

Krakauer and Chen²⁶² revealed that law firms emphasise apprentice type relationships and therefore, should be most conducive to the early development of mentoring relationships. Furthermore, law firms are expected to endorse the mentoring model more so than other settings because mentoring is consistent with the law firm's cultural ethos. Thus, Gray²⁶³ found that women are least likely to get a mentor when an informal mentoring programmes operate in organisations. Informal mentoring programmes are likely to offer employees to find others to be their mentors and therefore, question arises whether women are having difficulties with finding a suitable mentor when informal mentoring operates or simply not wanting one in the first place. As the senior level of law firms possess a higher number of male partners, the opportunities of further progression have been more

²⁵⁹ Melton G. Mobley, Charles Jaret, Kristin Marsh and Yoon Yong Lim, 'Mentoring, Job Satisfaction, Gender, and the Legal Profession, (1994) 31(1-2) A Journal of Research 79-98.

²⁶⁰ The Law Society, 'Annual Statistics Report 2017' (18 June 2018) <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/research-trends/annual-statistics-report-2017/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁶¹ Judith K. Pringle, Candice Harris, Katherine Ravenswood, Lynne Giddings, Irene Ryan and Sabina Jaeger, 'Women's Career Progression in Law Firms: Views from the Top, Views from Below, Gender, Work and Organization' (2017) 24(4) *Gender, Work & Organization* 435-449.

²⁶² Lianne Krakauer and Charles P. Chen, 'Gender Barriers in the Legal Profession: Implications for Career Development of Female Law Students' (2003) 40(2) *Journal of Employment Counseling* 65-79.

²⁶³ William A. Gray, 'Components for Developing a Successful Mentoring Programme in Business' (1986) *The Professions, Education and Other Settings*.

often offered to the male candidates and the support is likely to be made available to the most obvious candidates.

Webley and Duff²⁶⁴ illustrated a consideration to the transformation of the private legal profession and encouraged new values based on this approach. They both agreed that profit and business effectiveness played an important role but felt that these should be part of the significance to the business and not the only consideration. Further findings of their research showed that both, men and women, were keen to welcome a change in the legal profession.²⁶⁵

Some law firms will only provide mentoring support by a senior partner who will act as a mentor however, other law firms may offer mentoring schemes that are set up and regulated by the firm's internal Human Resources (HR) department which provide an impartial mentor. It is envisaged that mentoring programmes are established in larger law firms for example, corporate or city law firms whereas the smaller, high street law firms may have a less enthusiastic approach to mentoring.²⁶⁶ Additionally, mentoring may be confused with an appraisal process as it uses similar types of techniques however, there is a distinction and both should not be compared as the appraisal prices fits the line management where mentoring does not. Further difference between an appraisal and mentoring support is that an appraisal is linked to a formal system of an individual's performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and opportunities of pay rise or promotion. Mentoring however, provides more of an informal process of an individual's learning improvements and development and is led by the mentee's desired level of progression. Despite Kram's caution, the empirical evidence of mentoring in law firms remains limited, providing limited understanding of the effectiveness of the support. With the limited empirical evidence available of mentoring and its effectiveness, this

²⁶⁴ Both of the University of Westminster.

²⁶⁵ Lisa Webley and Lisa Duff, 'Women Solicitors as a Barometer for Problems within the Legal Profession – Time to Put Values before Profits?' (2007) 34(3) *Journal of Law and Society* 374-402.

²⁶⁶ Leslie C. Levin, 'Preliminary Reflections on the Professional Development of Solo and Small Law Firms Practitioners' (2002) 70(3) *Fordham Law Review* 847-900.

study fulfills the gap in available literature through the participants' perceptions of their individual experiences of mentoring support received during their legal careers.

Section 2.9.1 considers the effect of mentoring on the career progression of women lawyers in law firms.

2.9.1 Mentoring in law firms: Female lawyers

At the commencement of this research in 2015, the number of female entrants into the legal profession continued to grow and currently it has outnumbered male counterparts by 1,504 of female solicitors being admitted to the Roll from the latest statistics.²⁶⁷ For the first time in the history of the legal profession, the Law Society confirmed that female practicing certificate holders have reached a majority by 50.1 percent. This significant achievement has demonstrated continuing change in the legal profession and decades of growing changes which are proving that female lawyers are continuing to pursue their legal careers despite challenges they are faced with.

This emerging change within the legal profession also includes an increase of women partners now reaching a total of 8,241. This is compared to 19,884 male equivalents. Nonetheless, the growth of the female partners in law firms has been slow-moving recording a total of 7,985 in 2014, 8,098 in 2015 and 8,105 in 2016. The number of male partners however, marginally dropped over the period of one year, falling 0.7 per cent. The most recent year of the available statistics shows the highest increase of 1.7 per cent of female partners. It is positive that the legal profession is becoming more diverse in England and Wales. This shows that despite majority of female practising solicitors only

²⁶⁷ The Law Society, 'Annual Statistics Report 2017' (18 June 2018) <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/research-trends/annual-statistics-report-2017/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

small number progress their careers to the most senior levels to become partners.²⁶⁸ The gap between men and women practicing partners reflects the male domination at the upper levels of the legal profession.

Nonetheless, this traditional view is making a movement as more female lawyers are achieving greater career progressions which inspires other female lawyers to strive further with the support of their female peers. Tomlinson and others²⁶⁹ revealed that the legal profession in England and Wales is becoming more diverse. We are seeing more women entering the legal profession however, inequalities still remain. This growing female support proves to be a benefiting factor in the female career progression, through mentoring in particular. Therefore, I feel that it is essential to critically assess and examine the effectiveness of mentoring in the legal profession, particularly the effects of mentoring on female lawyers' progression. While many groups benefit from mentoring, women have been shown to benefit significantly from such relationships.²⁷⁰ Rapoport and Rapoport revealed that women who combine work and career with family life in new ways tend to be influenced by role models contrary to normative patterns and by supportive relationships in the social environment.²⁷¹ The presence or absence of role models is part of a larger theme of socialisation. Epstein acknowledged the importance of role models but questions whether or not isolated examples of prominent women serve the need for motivational role models for women. Epstein further revealed that few positive examples exist society, and the role models remained a limited agent of socialisation for young women.²⁷² Therefore, I wish to examine the aspect of female role models in the Section

²⁶⁸ The Law Society, 'Entry Trends Undergraduates and Graduates in Law' <<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/Law-careers/Becoming-a-solicitor/Entry-trends/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁶⁹ Jennifer Tomlinson, Daniel Muzio, Hilary Sommerlad, Lisa Webley and Liz Duff, 'Structure, Agency and Career Strategies of White Women and Black and Minority Ethnic Individuals in the Legal Profession' (2012) 66(2) *Human Relations* 245-269.

²⁷⁰ Gail M. McGuire and Jo Reger, 'Feminist Co-mentoring: A Model for Academic Professional Development' (2003) 15 *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 54-72.

²⁷¹ Rhona Rapoport and Robert N. Rapoport, 'Early and Later Experiences as Determinants of Adult Behavior: Married Women's Family and Career Patterns' (1971) 22 *British Journal of Sociology* 16-30.

²⁷² Cynthia F. Epstein, *Woman's Place: Options and Limits in Professional Careers* (University of California Press 1971).

2.9.2 which provides a review of literature based on female mentors as role models and the effects on career progression from the support received.

2.9.2 *Mentoring in law firms: Female mentors as role models*

During the discussion of the role modelling in social learning and career development, a more specific aspect of a mentor arises. A mentor, similarly to a role model stereotype, provides learning support through the direct application of guarding, coaching or even being a tutor. Roberts stated that having a mentor was like learning a trade on the job under supervision and according to established specification.²⁷³

Further research findings included that mentoring relationships are critical to launch successful careers in law with a mentor's guidance and training.²⁷⁴ Having a mentor who helps lawyers to learn legal practice skills and communicate rules that guide ethical decision making advances the legal practice as a whole.²⁷⁵ Women however, are still being more disadvantaged over their male peers²⁷⁶ and consequently, reducing future possibilities for new women lawyers becoming mentees and later, mentors.²⁷⁷ This unbalanced problem still exists today in the UK, as corroborated by Bernal.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Roy W. Roberts, *Vocational and Practical Arts Education* (2nd edn, Harper and Row 1965).

²⁷⁴ Christina M. Underhill, 'The Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs in Corporate Settings: A Meta-analytical Review of the Literature' (2006) 68(2) *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 292-307.

²⁷⁵ Leslie C. Levin, 'Lawyers in Cyberspace: The Impact of Legal Listservs on the Professional Development and Ethical Decision Making of Lawyers' (2005) 37(2) *Arizona State Law Journal* 589-624.

²⁷⁶ Nancy J. Reichman and Joyce S. Sterling, 'Recasting the Brass Ring: Deconstructing and Reconstructing Workplace Opportunities for Women Lawyers' (2002) 29(4) *Capital University Law Review* 923-977.

²⁷⁷ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

²⁷⁸ Natasha Bernal, 'International Women's Day: Stop 'Fixing Women' and Put Them in Management' (2017) *The Lawyer* <<https://www.thelawyer.com/issues/online-march-2017/international-womens-day-stop-fixing-women-put-management/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

As previously discussed in this chapter, mentoring support provides various benefits to female mentees during career progressions. Young revealed that the idea of having female role models strengthens female career progression, including personal and professional developments comprising of motivation, confidence gains and the drive to continue the progression.²⁷⁹ Young further stated that senior women benefit junior female colleagues identifying them as role models. This phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 4, referring to the empirical evidence gained from the participants of this study who provided supportive perceptions of their experiences.

In addition, Sheehy²⁸⁰ researched mentor relationships and its impact on women's careers. She revealed that women who did gain recognition in their careers had a mentor relationship, although they might not have seen it as such. The same conclusion was drawn by Henning and Jardim²⁸¹ who confirmed that women continue to aspire to the senior positions with the support of a mentor.

Further, female lawyers who continue their legal career while having a family are often challenged by the circumstances of the events and desire to succeed. Slaughter stated that having left a position of power, women who have managed to be both mothers and top professionals were superhuman, rich or simply self-employed and if we truly believed in equal opportunities for all women then she suggested that something has to change.²⁸² Some junior female lawyers question their potential progression of success. However, seeing senior peers progressing through ranks while having family at the same time provides an aspiration to junior lawyers who may question their potentials of progression and success. The aspect of having female role models who progress their legal careers while having family is significant. Some of the findings of my research showed that having senior

²⁷⁹ Danielle M. Young, 'The Influence of Female Role Models on Women's Implicit Science Cognitions' (2013) 37(3) *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 283-292.

²⁸⁰ Gail Sheehy, *Passages: Predictable Crises in Adult Life* (E. P. Dutton and Company 1974).

²⁸¹ Margaret Henning and Anne Jardim, *The Managerial Women* (Anchor Press Doubleday 1977).

²⁸² Ann-Marie Slaughter, *Why Women Still Can't Have it All* (The Atlantic 2015)

<<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

female lawyers as role models provide support to junior lawyers and their career progressions. Furthermore, having female lawyers mentors intensifies the importance of diversity in law firms while supporting junior female lawyers' career progression. It is a common practice across all professions that women take time out to have children if they decide to start a family. This brings a challenging time for women careers especially in the legal profession, when they decide to have a family as the progression in legal field can be a lengthy journey from junior to senior levels. Further reference to this particular aspect of female role model is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

In 2015, Bernal²⁸³ presented that there were only eight women who held senior management roles in the UK's top 50 law firms despite females dominating the profession at the entry level. With a growing number of firms pledging to improve their gender diversity credentials, the Lawyer's UK 200 found that only 19 per cent of the total number of partnership roles in the top 20 law firms were held by women.²⁸⁴ A debate was initiated whether women's success in career progression was through being in the right place at the right time or through sheer will-power that women have risen through the ranks to the very top.²⁸⁵ Further consideration was based on the fact how did they do it and as a result, what insights can they offer to anyone also considering a leadership role. The answer found was that diversity schemes, including mentoring programmes, may be in vogue now, but none of the women in management roles had the advantage of professional contact networks or targets however, they did all have mentors. Strong determination and the support of mentors reflect the potential career developments to senior levels of the profession. This is further supported by Bernal's findings that, out of all the senior positions held by women lawyers in the UK's top 50 law firms, they all had a mentor.²⁸⁶ This further confirmed that females who reached the top levels of their legal

²⁸³ Natasha Bernal, 'Where are the Women Law Firm Leaders?' (2015) 30(9) *The Lawyer* 12-13.

²⁸⁴ Natasha Bernal, 'Where are the Women Law Firm Leaders?' (2015) 30(9) *The Lawyer* 12-13.

²⁸⁵ Natasha Bernal, 'Where are the Women Law Firm Leaders?' (2015) 30(9) *The Lawyer* 12-13.

²⁸⁶ Natasha Bernal, 'Where are the Women Law Firm Leaders?' (2015) 30(9) *The Lawyer* 12-13.

careers had undertaken mentoring through their senior colleagues of the same organisation. One of the highlights of this success was the fact that clients were one of the biggest forces pushing the gender diversity agenda in law firms. Moreover, their responses were very approving and encouraging showing that women bring a different thought process to men and that they are less status-conscious and more focused on trying to achieve a solution that works rather than preserving appearances. Bernal further revealed that women also improve communication by their much more flexible approach. Female mentees are proven to have better self-esteem and confidence and are more active during company meetings. They listen carefully and actively make contributions whereas others not mentored would remain in the background.²⁸⁷

Diversity schemes have been proven to help women achieve the highest positions in law firms however, the progression of women's development remains very slow.²⁸⁸ The number of women entering the legal profession continue to grow however, proportionately few reach the senior positions.²⁸⁹ More often we are aware that the society is encouraging firms to be more diverse in their approach to versatile employment opportunities and this increases pressures on law firms to provide equal opportunities to both, women and men.²⁹⁰

Following the recent findings that while number of women solicitors outgrown male counterparts, only 28.8 per cent of partners are female.²⁹¹ The Law Society has revealed that one third of law firms are now being owned by women because female lawyers decide to take upon themselves and become self-employed rather than continue working in the legal sector for somebody else when they are

²⁸⁷ Natasha Bernal, 'Where are the Women Law Firm Leaders?' (2015) 30(9) *The Lawyer* 12-13.

²⁸⁸ The Law Society, Bill Cole, Nina Fletcher, Tara Chittenden and Joanne Cox, 'Research Unit; Trends in the Solicitors' Profession: Annual Statistical Report (2009).

²⁸⁹ Rachel Moloney, 'Ashurst Falls Short of 40 per cent Female Target in 19-strong Promotions Round' (2017) *The Lawyer*

<<https://www.thelawyer.com/issues/april-2017/ashurst-falls-short-of-40-per-cent-female-target-in-19-strong-promotions-round/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²⁹⁰ Rachel Moloney, 'Clifford Chance Makes up Four Women in 24-strong Promotions Round' (2017) *The Lawyer*.

²⁹¹ Monidipa Fouzder, 'One Third of Law Firms now Owned by Women' (2017) *The Lawyer*.

struggling to find ways of further career progression.²⁹² Furthermore, the Law Society continuously supports the profession and in order to improve diversity in the legal sector, the Law Society's Diversity Access Scheme supports new entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds including women. The scheme assists with financial help, work experience and also a professional mentor.²⁹³ Again, seeing the mentoring support at various levels of the profession allows practitioners to advance their careers further. With this in mind, this study provides empirical evidence of mentoring from various stages of the participants careers including from the junior levels to the senior partners position. In addition, the Law Society is continuously looking for further mentors across the legal sector in order to provide mentoring support for mentees from various areas of law.²⁹⁴ This provides a variety of mentoring between different law firms, law departments and geographic areas for the younger generation of lawyers. At this stage it is unknown how successful this new approach will be but it is evident that the Law Society is taking further steps with mentoring to provide variety of support for the female growing profession. Moreover, mentoring has been seen as a positive developmental tool not only in the legal profession but other professions as well therefore, it is reasonable to state that the legal profession should be better at employing this form of support and providing mentoring equally in the legal sector.

Nearly a decade ago, one of the large international law firms introduced a mentoring programme as a pilot scheme which was launched through its Women's Network. Following a strong history of promoting women, the programme's objective was to increase the quality and quantity of female participation in the firm. This programme offered the more junior women access to act as role models who could then guide their careers at an early stage. The pilot scheme was launched with 27 mentoring

²⁹² The Law Society, 'Diversity and Inclusion'

<<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/Diversity-inclusion/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²⁹³ The Law Society, 'Diversity and Inclusion'

<<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/Diversity-inclusion/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

²⁹⁴ The Law Society, 'Diversity and Inclusion: Women Lawyers Division' (2018)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/women-lawyers-division/2018>> accessed 26 September 2019.

pairs where the feedback was extremely positive and the scheme has attracted wider interest within the profession.²⁹⁵ This law firm has also appeared in the first top ten law firms to vote in a female managing partner.²⁹⁶ Having carefully considered this law firm's ideologies and principles, I have decided to contact the law firm's leading partner for mentoring who was also a member of the firm's board and chairs of the firm's global diversity and inclusion committee, as well as a member of the Solicitors Regulation Authority Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Despite my attempts to involve this firm in my research, their response²⁹⁷ was disappointing.

Nonetheless, mentoring in UK law firms continues to grow, further piloting and adaptations are taking place together with the Law Society's support, we are seeing more law firms initiating mentoring programmes. In 2010, the Law Society carried out research²⁹⁸ which highlighted the following issues: first, to ensure that women lawyers remain engaged and make progress within the legal sector where improved support structures are needed. Second, the improvements included increase of mentoring programmes with senior and influential mentors as well as careful reviews of mentoring programmes to ensure successful matching and clear career paths that were open to all with greater flexibility. Furthermore, in 2015, the Law Society launched a mentoring programme in support of practicing solicitors from under-represented groups including women.²⁹⁹ The mentoring programme aimed to support career progression for the under-represented solicitors and to improve diversity in the legal sector. It was perceived that on completion of the mentoring programme the mentee would become more productive and contented in their role therefore adding profitability to their employers. Further, some law firms introduced mentoring programmes including pilot schemes as a starting point. This

²⁹⁵ Hogan Lovells, 'Citizenship Report 2010'

<<https://www.hoganlovells.com/~media/hogan-lovells/pdf/publication/citizenship-report-2010.pdf?la=en>> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁹⁶ The Lawyer, 'Hogan Lovells' <<https://www.thelawyer.com/hogan-lovells/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

²⁹⁷ Leading Partner reply: '*Unfortunately, I don't think this law firm is able to help at this stage. While we have a mentoring programme for women lawyers who wish to participate, I do not think we have the longevity that would generate sufficient evidence from our mentees to address the topic you are researching.*'

²⁹⁸ The Law Society, 'Obstacles and Barriers to the Career Development of Woman Solicitors' (2010).

²⁹⁹ The Law Society, 'Solicitors Mentoring Scheme for Minority Groups' <<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/law-society-launches-solicitors-mentoring-scheme-for-minority-groups/>> accessed 26 September 2019.

offered employees an opportunity to test the system and consider any potential advantages and disadvantages. Some employees learnt about the mentoring support for the first time which provided them with information about individual career progressions, developments and available opportunities that they may not have known before due to the busy nature of the job.

With the ongoing changes within the legal sector, law firms are focusing on their good practice including diversity, inclusion and mentoring. Some law firms already initiated mentoring schemes within their practice and continue to support this growing idea with some piloting the scheme, and some other still unaware of the potential benefits. With these discrepancies which may be responsible for the shortages of senior women employees.³⁰⁰ This is where mentoring comes in as a bridging step helping women to progress their careers to the highest levels of their profession. It may be seen as challenging when the majority of the senior posts are being taken by men, creating a male domineering culture and a difficult one to break. Furthermore, Ramaswami and others³⁰¹ indicated that male and female are equally likely to have senior male mentors. However, senior male mentors were associated with higher career attainment only for female lawyers. Compared to male lawyers with senior male mentors, female lawyers with senior male mentors had higher compensation, higher career progress satisfaction, and were more likely to be partners or senior executives.³⁰² Ramaswami and others' research³⁰³ further indicated that male and female lawyers were likely to have senior male mentors. The importance of simultaneously considering mentor gender and position was also highlighted, when studying the role of mentoring and gender in career attainment, contributing to the literature on the career development of women in the legal profession and male-dominated profession,

³⁰⁰ Ann P. Bartel, 'Productivity Gains from the Implementation of Employee Training Programs' (1994) 33(4) *A Journal of Economy and Society* 411-425.

³⁰¹ Aarti Ramaswami, George F. Dreher, Robert Bretz and Carolyn Wiethoff, 'The Interactive Effects of Gender and Mentoring on Career Attainment: Making the Case for Female Lawyers' (2005) 37(4) *Journal of Career Development* 692-716.

³⁰² Belle R. Ragins and Dean B. McFarlin, 'Perceptions of mentor roles in cross-gender mentoring relationships' (1999) 37(3) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 321-339.

³⁰³ Aarti Ramaswami, George F. Dreher, Robert Bretz and Carolyn Wiethoff, 'The Interactive Effects of Gender and Mentoring on Career Attainment: Making the Case for Female Lawyers' (2005) 37(4) *Journal of Career Development* 692-716.

in general. There is however, lack of mention of senior female mentors which is likely to be due to the general lack of them. Mentoring makes the bridging aspect more acceptable allowing women to gain the knowledge and experience of male colleagues and progress their careers through ranks reaching top levels. Mixed gender mentoring may become problematic, creating further difficulties during female career progression. Some mentoring relationships may develop into great friendships and others may grow to resemble more intimate relationships or even one like a father-daughter relationship hence, the natural confusion which results in mentors refusing to let their mentees grow up.³⁰⁴ I will discuss this particular point of mentor-mentee relationships in Chapter 5.

In contrast, Collier³⁰⁵ revealed a statement made by a male lawyer during his research that reflects a different view on female progression. He felt that there were no barriers to women progressing through the profession, other than the barriers that they place on themselves - such as having children. He further added that they do not have to have children if they do not want to. It is evident that he has noted that children are seen as a barrier in female lawyers' career progression and therefore, it is their choice to have. The male interviewee has an obvious highly biased view according to which is all down to individual responsibility and not the structural barriers. Further, a female lawyer may well be able to focus on their career progression to the most senior levels if she chooses to have no family and children. The question arises however, what happens if a female lawyer chooses to have children and her progression therefore, is being affected by her choice. Maternity and childcare responsibilities create major obstacles to female progression within the legal profession.³⁰⁶ Particularly, with the long hours culture it makes it difficult for women to achieve a successful legal career whilst having children and to offer any reasonable form of work / life balance.³⁰⁷ It can be argued that a fundamental

³⁰⁴ Bonnie C. McKenzie, *Friends in High Places: The Executive Woman's Guide* (Business and Professional Publishing 1995).

³⁰⁵ Richard Collier, *Men, Law and Gender: Essays on the Men of Law* (Routledge Cavendish 2010).

³⁰⁶ Alexandrine Guyard-Nedelec, 'A Legal Maternal Wall? No Revolution in Motherhood for Women Lawyers in England' (2018) 23(1) *French Journal of British Studies* 1-33.

³⁰⁷ Erika Rackley, *Women, Judging and the Judiciary: From Difference to Diversity* (Routledge Cavendish 2013).

change in a legal workplace culture must take place in order to keep women actively engaged in their career progression while having family and children. In order to meet clients' expectations, who are key stakeholders in law firms, and to achieve better diversity, firms adopted flexible working culture which I will discuss in Section **2.9.4**. Collectively and with mentoring programmes the focus may remain on leadership training for women, thereby providing a specific career development support around maternity transition and re-engagement on a career development path once maternity leave ended.

Furthermore, the practical and the most obvious stage of the development and support across all the law firms in the UK, is supervision. There is no doubt that supervision and mentoring have different principles and qualities as well as the style of learning. As stated before, mentoring is an instrumental tool for a career development and its role is to guide and give advice. Unlike supervision, where the role involves overlooking and ensuring that a person is performing their duties correctly. Mentoring can be used as part of supervision however, not the other way around. Section **2.9.3** provides a deeper understanding of the difference between supervision and mentoring.

2.9.3 Mentoring in law firms: Supervision and mentoring

The supervision of work in law firms is a legal and professional requirement regulated by Chapter 7 of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Code of Conduct.³⁰⁸ The regulation imposes an obligation on all solicitors to ensure that clients' matters are being supervised by competent and experienced people. Further, supervisors are required to spend the necessary time with their supervisees to provide advice, feedback and to evaluate their progress. There is a similarity between

³⁰⁸ Solicitors Regulation Authority, 'SRA Handbook' <<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/handbook/code/content.page>> accessed 21 October 2019.

the career development stages described by Dalton and others³⁰⁹ including the career development process as stages through which an individual progresses, and the roles of supervision as described by Ard³¹⁰ who explained a continuum of roles that change from the standpoint of the supervisor and the supervisee. Ard further explained that when the supervisee reaches the apprenticeship stage, the supervisor may also act as a mentor by helping the supervisee / mentee to learn and identify problems by asking specific and perceptive questions.³¹¹ Ard further revealed that the mentorship is an important aspect of the career development and may include the mentor to handle difficult or challenging situations however, by performing these functions the mentor helps in the formation and development of a professional identity.

Finally, the relationship evolves into a peership where the supervisor and the supervisee become equal as professional and perhaps even mutual lifelong friends. The significance of the models proposed by the authors cited above is that each notes the presence of a mentor type relationship in the development of a person's career. Each author suggests the necessity of such a relationship during the beginning stages of a career, and this is indicated by the stages of career development that follow the mentor stage in each model.

In some circumstances a supervisor may also act as a manager of an organisation. The distinction between a manager and a mentor is mainly that the manager focuses more on the objectives of both, team and organisation, whereas a mentor helps the mentee to learn within the context of a supportive relationship. These circumstances are likely to be very challenging for someone performing both roles and therefore, often the role of a mentor is carefully considered based on their initial responsibilities.

³⁰⁹ Gene W. Dalton, Paul H. Thompson and Raymond L. Price, 'The Four Stages of Professional Careers - A New Look at Performance by Professionals' (1977) 6(1) *Organizational Dynamics* 19-42.

³¹⁰ Ben N. Ard Junior, 'Providing Clinical Supervision for Marriage Counselors: A Model for Supervisor and Supervisee' (1973) 22(1) *National Council on Family Relations* 91-97.

³¹¹ Ben N. Ard Junior, 'Providing Clinical Supervision for Marriage Counselors: A Model for Supervisor and Supervisee' (1973) 22(1) *National Council on Family Relations* 91-97.

The difference between supervision and mentoring is that the latter is driven by a mentee for the purpose of their own development and progression. Unlike supervision that is lead by a supervisor and the development is set to benefit the company as well as the individual. There are also benefits of the overlapping aspects of both which include an ongoing support, having a model figure to follow, simple communication, advise and feedback as well as confidence building support.

With the traditionally view of law firms providing a supervisory support for a new recruit to work alongside with and oversee their performance, mentoring intensifies the support by providing further guidance including necessary knowledge to form a confident personality and professional position within the mentee.³¹² This traditional role of a supervisor may in some way hold too much control over the mentee's development which could potentially reduce the ability to create and reflect on their gained knowledge and experience during the mentoring. Mentoring assists mentees' career development and is development driven. Mentors offer advice and provide practical support of the day-to-day tasks and other matters on how to get things done more efficiently by giving honest feedback.

Section **2.9.4** provides further literature review from the flexible working perspective.

2.9.4 Mentoring in law firms: Flexible working

Flexible working offers employees an alternative way of working that suits the employees' needs. This may include a later starting time or an earlier finishing time or even working from home. This right is available to everyone including women, parents or carers who have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks. Furthermore, flexible working is also regulated by The Flexible

³¹² Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships and Organisational Life* (Scott Foresman and Company 1985).

Working Regulation 2014³¹³ providing set terms and conditions of employment allowing employees to exercise their rights. As a consequence, the right to flexible working offered women lawyers to continue with their legal careers after having children and it has been noted recently that more law firms are adopting this statutory right through various opportunities. One of the first law firms that adopted flexible working when the idea of flexible working was first put into practice, actually now offers flexible working at the point of hire. Furthermore, the growing aspect of the flexible working culture has been developing and together with the Law Society's support, more law firms continue to offer and support the idea of flexible working. Some law firms flexible working by allowing to work from home for example, up to two days per week, providing further flexibility for women at home.³¹⁴ Hence, various practices and arrangements for flexible working provide and helps women to continue their legal careers progression and development to rise to senior levels.

As revealed by Herrick-Phelps,³¹⁵ women experience daily challenges including having their voices heard over their male counterparts and receiving fewer opportunities to enter networks within their organisations. Additionally, Herrick-Phelps stated that women were more likely to rely on less effective sources of power which consequently reduces their chances of success and were often seen as token employees who struggled to reach the senior management positions.

In aid of the above, Thomson and others³¹⁶ revealed in their study that many mentees' careers have significantly developed during and after their mentoring. It is therefore, arguable that mentoring programmes could also be part of succession planning within organisations as it would potentially provide a distinct advantage to organisations and individuals within it. As explained in Section **2.9.3**,

³¹³ The Flexible Working Regulations 2014, No 1398 <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1398/made>> accessed 21 October 2019.

³¹⁴ Richard Simmons, 'Morgan Lewis Launches Flexible Working in UK and US' (2017) *The Lawyer* <<https://www.thelawyer.com/morgan-lewis-launches-flexible-working-uk-us/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

³¹⁵ Johnna Herrick-Phelps, *Seen But Not Heard* (VDM Verlag Dr Muller & Co KG 2008).

³¹⁶ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom: The Roadmap* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

traditionally, every law firm in the UK requires a new employee / executive to work alongside their supervisor and in most situations this person will be a senior executive or a partner, who will support, overlook and guide the new practitioner. Nevertheless, mentoring programmes vary significantly from the traditional supervision. Despite the ongoing support and guidance provided by the supervisor for day-to-day work, the mentoring relationship is specifically designed to intensify the supervision with further necessary knowledge, skills and ability which will form a confident personality and professional position within the mentee.³¹⁷ In support of the same, Mobley and others³¹⁸ confirmed that having a mentor improved lawyers' job satisfaction. Next Section 2.10 offers further literature review of the aspect of networking which I believe should be considered alongside the mentoring aspect.

2.10 Networking

In addition to the above literature review, networking has been outlined by the participants of this study as a benefit of mentoring during their career progression (Section 4.10). Further research of Linehan and Scullion³¹⁹ explored the role of mentoring and networking in the career development of global female managers. The voices of the female managers illustrated some of the difficulties associated with informal organisational processes, in particular mentoring and networking, which hinder their career development. Their findings further confirmed that female managers can miss out on global appointments because they lack mentors, role models, sponsorship, or access to appropriate networks – all of which are commonly available to their male counterparts. Linehan and Scullion further revealed that the interviewees suggested that men, as the dominant group, may want to

³¹⁷ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships and Organisational Life* (Foresman and Company 1985).

³¹⁸ Melton G. Mobley, Charles Jaret, Kristin Marsh and Yoon Yong Lim, 'Mentoring, Job Satisfaction, Gender, and the Legal Profession' (1994) 31(1-2) *A Journal of Research* 79-98.

³¹⁹ Margaret Linehan and Hugh Scullion, 'The Development of Female Global Managers: The Role of Mentoring and Networking' (2008) 83(1) *Journal of Business Ethics* 29-40.

maintain their dominance by excluding women from the informal interactions of mentoring and networking. Their findings further suggested that if females had more access to networks and mentors, they could be socialised in both the formal and informal norms of the organisation and gain career advantages from these. The managers revealed that they encountered additional barriers in the man's world and said that there is still much to be changed.

Furthermore, Diani and McAdam³²⁰ revealed that networks as social mechanisms have been characterised in a number of social, political and economic studies which aim to identify social locations of actors and relational structures. Furthermore, Jones and others³²¹ emphasised the informality of association within the network, which involved repeated communications among its members with a patterned but open-ended exchange structure. Networking characteristics can be further described by Hatch³²² as a new form of social structure, replacing vertical or controlled relationships with a lateral relationship, making information exchange more rapid and effective. In summary, a network can be viewed as corresponding and structured. Often women's networks, especially in the context of development, can be perceived as a common reason of empowerment. Cummings and others³²³ provided that women's networks are communication channels as well as a forum to challenge power that stereotyped representation of women. Moreover, Friedmann³²⁴ suggested that networking women's organisations reinforce the process of women's social, psychological and political empowerment. Hence, they all suggested that the most important reason of women's networking is empowerment.

³²⁰ Mario Diani and Doug McAdam, *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action* (Oxford University Press 2003).

³²¹ Candace Jones, William S. Hesterly and Stephen P. Borgatti, 'A General Theory of Network Governance: Exchange Conditions and Social Mechanisms' (1997) 22(4) *Academy of Management Review* 911-945.

³²² Mary J. Hatch, *Organization Theory* (Oxford University Press 1997).

³²³ Sarah Cummings, Minke Valk and Henk van Dam, *Women's Information Services and Networks: A Global Sourcebook: Gender, Society & Development Series* (KIT Publishers 1999).

³²⁴ John Friedmann, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development* (Blackwell Publishers 1992).

Further link between mentoring and networking has been seen in higher education sector as having positive outcome on female career progression.³²⁵ Through variety of career-supportive relationships that provide career guidance and psychosocial support, females in education develop their careers progressively. Each person's network contains a range of different types of relationships and contacts that serve different purposes. Formal mentoring, networking and peer support programmes offer benefits to women and their career progression. Rawlins and Rawlins³²⁶ revealed that awareness of mentoring and networking assisted with helping professionals personally and consequently, they work and guide their students and clients towards their life and career goals.

It has been further recognised by Hayes and others³²⁷ that mentoring and networking were critical components for success in science as well. It was therefore, evident that throughout various careers, mentoring and networking provide successful characteristics which assist career development. Furthermore, following the successful findings of the links between mentoring and networking across females' career progression in business and education, this study also looked at mentoring and networking links across law firms and in particular female lawyers' career progression. Further findings and discussion relating to mentoring and networking will be provided in Chapters 4 and 5.

Section 2.11 focuses on the aspects of self-development and career progression which also have been outlined by the participants of this study as benefits of mentoring.

³²⁵ Kathleen M. Quinlan, 'Enhancing Mentoring and Networking of Junior Academies Women: What Why and How?' (1999) 21(1) *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 31-42.

³²⁶ Melanie E. Rawlins and Larry Rawlins, 'Mentoring and Networking for Helping Professionals' (1983) 62(2) *Personnel and Guidance Journal* 116-118.

³²⁷ Laura Haynes, Sherrill L. Adams and Jeremy M. Boss, 'Mentoring and Networking: How to Make it Work' (2008) 9(1) *Natural Immunology* 3-5.

2.11 *Self-development and career progression*

Self-development is recognised as being the process by which a person's character or abilities are gradually developed.³²⁸ The process of self-development includes one's efforts put towards further progression and self-fulfilment by taking steps to assist in the development. Similarly, career progression is recognised in gaining experience in the field of one's interest to help with improving and working up the ranks. Having goals and positive approach to progression enables career advancement in particular knowing one's desired outcomes. It is up to the individual to further their self-development however, the organisation should be made aware of one's personal desires and goals to achievement. It is then up to the employer to assist one's progression which should involve regular meetings with discussions of further development which would likely involve their encouragement. Another aspect of a keen and a caring employer may include offering necessary training, support and mentoring, as well as providing links and connections with the right people and mentors to advance an ongoing progression. It is also important that the employer gives credit to an employee to keep their positive attitude and welcome promotional opportunities when they arise.

Available literature of Kram³²⁹ and Levinson³³⁰ form a generous level of evidence that mentoring provides benefits for the mentee and in particular, one of the key benefits of mentoring for the mentee is career advancement. Further empirical literature provided by Sampson and Yeomans³³¹ found that mentees value supportive behaviour such as encouragement, friendship, advice and guidance. Further study of Van Emmerik³³² reconfirmed that mentoring has positive outcomes on job and career

³²⁸ Jochen Brandtstadter and Richard M. Lerner, *Action & Self-Development Theory and Research through the Life Span* (Sage Publications Ltd 1999).

³²⁹ Kathy E. Kram, 'Phases of the Mentor Relationship' (1983) 26(4) *Academy of Management Journal* 608-525.

³³⁰ Daniel Levinson, Charlotte N. Darrow, Edward B. Klein, Maria H. Levinson and Braxton McKee, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (Ballantine Books 1978).

³³¹ John Sampson and Robin Yeomans, *Analyzing the Work of Mentors* (The Falmer Press 1994).

³³² Hetty Van Emmerik, 'The More You Can Get the Better: Mentoring Constellations and Intrinsic Career Success' (2004) 9(6) *Career Development International* 578-594.

satisfaction and with this positive association of mentoring, De Janasz and Sullivan³³³ revealed that it is evident that mentoring should be a critical resource to boost any career and psychosocial development of employees. Scandura's³³⁴ findings stated that mentors provide mentees with vocational and psychosocial support and these were found to be related to further managers' salary level and promotions.

2.12 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review the existing literature on various aspects of mentoring to assist with this research objective which was to examine the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms and particularly, effects on female lawyers participants' career progression. Available literature on mentoring in law firms remains limited and therefore, my research addresses this gap, focusing specifically on female lawyers' career development and effects of mentoring in law firms. For this study, mentoring refers to a one-to-one developmental relationship between a less experienced and more experienced person which supports personal and professional growth in the legal profession and in particular, female progression in law firms with mentoring support.

The review began with an overview of mentoring followed by addressing key forms of mentoring available to individuals in organisations through informal and formal versions, before addressing organisations' concerted moves to the formal advancement of such initiatives and their rationale.³³⁵

An informal mentoring provides an indirect support for employees but may often not be seen actually as mentoring due to its informal nature where relationships can form naturally anyway. The formal

³³³ Suzanne C. De Janasz and Sherry E. Sullivan, 'Multiple Mentoring in Academe Developing the Professorial Network' (2002) 64(2) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 263-283.

³³⁴ Terri A. Scandura, 'Mentorship and Career Mobility: An Empirical Investigation' (1992) 13(2) *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 169-174.

³³⁵ Leandro Galli, Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 21 October 2019.

mentoring offers more of a settled support but relatively for a shorter period of time. This form of mentoring can also lead to an ongoing informal mentoring support with more relaxed arrangements. Kram supports mentoring at work and its various forms of developmental relationships that can exist in work settings as a support during mentoring.

Having established the broader definitions and remit of mentoring schemes, the study further offered a critique review of mentoring schemes from an international perspective, outlining the effects of cultural and organisational norms on its development and implementation. Mentoring remains one of the most popular social interventions in American society³³⁶ and is seen as helping the mentee advance up the corporate ladder. Unlike in Europe, mentoring is seen as function of nepotism³³⁷ and favouritism³³⁸, and tend to use a more holistic concept of mentoring that is related to the cycle and overall personal development of the mentee, irrespective of their rank or advancement patterns.³³⁹ Further, it is evident from the review of the available literature that the broad acceptance of the benefits that mentoring schemes provide to organisations and those individuals involved.³⁴⁰ This theme is spread across the globe and is being seen in many countries across the world. Mentoring is used as a developmental mechanism to improve forever changing environment.³⁴¹ Nonetheless, the common theme in mentoring, whether in the USA, Australia, China or Europe, is that there needs to be a close relationship between a mentor and a mentee which is developed during a mentoring programme. Trust and support are both found to further help to achieve advancement in career progression.

³³⁶ Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, 'Mentoring relationships and Programs for Youth' (2008) 17(4) Sage Journal 254-258.

³³⁷ The practice among those with power or influence of favouring relatives or friends.

³³⁸ The practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another.

³³⁹ David Clutterbuck and Belle R. Ragins, *Mentoring and Diversity: An International Perspective*, (Butterworth-Heinemann 2002).

³⁴⁰ Cliff Olsson, Andrew Cruickshank and Dave Collins, 'Making Mentoring Work: The Need for Rewiring Epistemology' (2016) 69(1) Taylor & Francis Online Journal 50-64.

³⁴¹ Lesley Petersen, Suja Premchandran and Garry Clayton, 'Mentoring as a Mechanism for Organisational Development in a Globally Changing Environment' (2017) Teaching and Learning with Technology 137-147.

Moving on, the study further focused on mentoring schemes which were being addressed from a sectoral perspective including, business³⁴² and education³⁴³ where mentorship is well practiced and developed supporting those professions from the youngest generations of entrepreneurs and teachers. Mentoring in business is seen as a developmental tool³⁴⁴ where researchers found that by having a mentor helps an overall career success for mentees. Furthermore, mentoring increases productivity and workers satisfaction within organisations and also reduces retention levels.

In education, mentoring is also used as a developmental tool offering paramount support to all levels of the teaching progression. Researchers found that hands on experience such as mentoring is far more effective way of progression. Moreover, mentoring is also seen as well-being form of support offering tailed assistance in employees' career development. Mentoring schemes are well-established and developed in the education and business sectors yet, are largely missing or are only a relatively recent phenomenon in law firms.³⁴⁵

Thus, the review further progressed into mentoring in law firms to identify the prevalence and understanding of mentoring schemes available. With the most recent findings provided by the Law Society in their annual statistics report 2018, the legal profession is progressing. Diversity is becoming a significant feature in the legal profession. Women prove to be the majority of the entrants to the legal profession however, their male counterparts still dominate the senior levels. The Law Society has taken considerable research in women in law and diversity remains a domain. With more female lawyers progressing their desires, researchers found that mentoring plays a significant feature

³⁴² Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 21 October 2019.

³⁴³ Andrew J. Hobson, Patricia Castanheira and Kerry Doyle, 'Mentoring and Coaching Across the Professions' (2016) Research and Enterprise, University of Brighton <<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/groups/education/research-projects/mentoring-and-coaching-across-the-professions.aspx>> accessed 21 October 2019.

³⁴⁴ Gordon F. Shea, *Mentoring, A Guide to the Basics* (Kogan Page 1992).

³⁴⁵ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

in their career developments. Mentoring not only helps the career progression but supports women in the legal field to balance their professional lives with having family. As noted earlier in this chapter, researchers found that female lawyers who chose to have a family often left the profession all together due to pressures of return and possible future progressions. Outcome of the previous research showed that men succeed within mentoring schemes, but less conclusive findings are available in relation to female staff.³⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Law Society revealed that in respect of female talent, women's networks, mentoring schemes and the like become increasingly commonplace.³⁴⁷ Dame Gaymer further added that looking to the future, the current way of working may need to change, and that the pace of work for some will not change, by choice. The gap of empirical evidence has been highlighted previously and question arose whether mentoring can support female lawyers during their early and later career stages of the career progression. My study recognises a significant gap in the literature review of the mentoring support available to female lawyers and their career development in law firms. The outcome gained from this study offers an original contribution to knowledge by presenting empirically based evidence of the effects of mentoring programmes and provides further support for the profession in general. It allows the participating law firms to use the found data of this study to further progress their mentoring schemes available to their lawyers. Moreover, with my empirical research findings, new data is being seen and related to a beginning of something new that may even change law firms' current practice with regards to training and career developments. The outcome of this research is significant and provides constituent support and assistance to the participating law firms including the participants, female lawyers.

Further research is inevitable to potentially identify further changes in law firms practices which may follow with a view for the future to set up an effective mentoring scheme across all the law firms or

³⁴⁶ Norma T. Mertz, *Why Women Aren't Mentored* (ERIC Clearinghouse 1987).

³⁴⁷ Dame Janet Gaymer, The Law Society, 'Law Firms - The Future of Work' (2019)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/communities/the-city/articles/law-firms-future-of-work/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

even writing a Protocol on how law firms could facilitate the mentoring programmes to help to develop and improve their employees and consequently, firms' practices.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified the prevailing literature gaps of the effects of mentoring available to female lawyers' participants in law firms. The Law Society is continuing to support the profession with a particular focus on women lawyers progression and it has recognised that more can be done to create a more equal, diverse profession which would result in more work placement, sponsorship and mentoring.³⁴⁸ The most recent Law Society's support scheme available to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) including women, offered opportunities to receive free mentoring for developing firms involved approaches to LGBT and inclusivity.³⁴⁹ The scheme, being the ground-breaking scheme, facilitated the sharing of good practice in the solicitor's profession. During the scheme, the mentoring firms supported other, smaller firms by providing two hours of free support and guidance every month. The mentoring scheme was found to be beneficial to the mentees involved and increased mentoring opportunities.

As stated earlier in Chapter 2, the aim of my research is to discover the views and experiences of female lawyers' participants with mentoring support, bearing in mind the overarching desire to explore the effectiveness of their mentoring experiences.

In order to structure this methodology chapter to reach the objective, I adopted the empirical research using qualitative methods as this sets it in the context of existing approaches reviewed in Chapter 2

³⁴⁸ The Law Society, 'How Can We Make the Law More Accessible?' (2019)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/articles/how-you-and-your-organisation-can-support-the-diversity-access-scheme/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

³⁴⁹ The Law Society, 'LGBT + Firm Mentoring Scheme' (2019)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/articles/sra-stonewall-lgbt-mentoring-scheme/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

of the literature review. Empirical research is based on what is experienced or seen rather than theory, and I believe that this type of research was most appropriate type in order to achieve my research objective. The empirical data helped to discover the participants' perceptions and the effects of mentoring experiences received during their legal careers. With the female only participants, the feminist theory underpins my research and feminist approach is discussed further in Section 3.2.

3.2 *Feminist approach*

Feminist approach focuses on themes including discrimination, oppression, patriarchy and stereotyping.³⁵⁰ For the purpose of this study the type of feminist approach taken is feminist legal theory. I adopted a feminist approach in my study as women in law are still considered a minority population, especially women lawyers in senior positions, and the issues experienced by female lawyers have been subject to gender inequalities for many years.³⁵¹ In this thesis I examine whether mentoring provides a substantial support to female lawyers during their career progression, including professional and personal developments. Therefore, having female participants only, a feminist approach was adopted in my study to allow to focus on and prioritise the accounts of female lawyers' mentoring experiences during their legal careers.

There are various definitions of feminism available however, it is based on the view that women have been oppressed by patriarchy.³⁵² Walby defined patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Feminism can have different overall goals for example, it can aim to reduce or remove gender inequalities, improve the position of women while still maintaining gender differences or it can have the radical aim of transforming gender

³⁵⁰ Nancy Levit and Robert R.M. Verchick *Feminist Legal Theory* (2nd edn New York University Press 2016).

³⁵¹ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

³⁵² Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Blackwell Publishers 1990).

relations and gender standards.³⁵³ Together with contrasting approaches of the feminism's theoretical positions and interpretations, Gelsthorpe and Morris³⁵⁴ revealed that at the very least, a feminist is someone who believes that women experience subordination on the basis of their sex. Therefore, I believe that this study considers the feminist approach as it aims to discover issues related to gender and power.³⁵⁵

Feminist research focuses on female experiences and issues related to gender which have been significantly under-represented in traditional social sciences research.³⁵⁶ There has however, been significant debates surrounding feminist methodology and whether a definite feminist methodology exists. Traditionally, research in the social science focused on male participants and then been extended to women.³⁵⁷ Moreover, the research provided that there is not a single feminist methodology, instead it is an approach based on feminism, in that it seeks to expose how women are oppressed by a patriarchal system.³⁵⁸ The methodological approach aims to contribute to social change for women using methods that focus on empowering women through taking their accounts of lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge.³⁵⁹ In addition, qualitative methods provide the opportunities for women voices to be heard rather than quantitative methods that can silence women by putting their experiences into set categories.³⁶⁰ The quantitative methods of research fail to reflect the experiences of women and have consequently misrepresented women³⁶¹ and suggested that only

³⁵³ Sylvia Walby, 'The Impact of Feminism on Sociology' (2011) 16(3) Sociological Research Online 1-21.

³⁵⁴ Loraine Gelsthorpe and Allison Morris, 'Feminism and Criminology in Britain' (1988) 28(2) British Journal of Criminology 93-110.

³⁵⁵ Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (Oxford University Press 1992).

³⁵⁶ Sandra G. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues* (Indiana University Press 1987).

³⁵⁷ Sandra G. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues* (Indiana University Press 1987).

³⁵⁸ Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul Plc 1983).

³⁵⁹ Rebecca Campbell and Sharon M. Wasco, 'Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets' (2000) 28(6) American Journal of Community Psychology 773-791.

³⁶⁰ Rebecca Campbell and Sharon M. Wasco, 'Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets' (2000) 28(6) American Journal of Community Psychology 773-791.

³⁶¹ Nicole Westmarland, (2001) 'The Quantitative/qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity' (2001) 2(1) Forum Qualitative Social Research 1-13.

qualitative methods can represent women's experiences adequately.³⁶² Furthermore, qualitative methods help to reveal the characteristics of various mentoring supports available to female lawyers including its effectiveness and succession. Generally, mentoring programmes would offer a rather lengthy support to its employees that can provide an indefinite support and continue in a more informal way with the mentor's support.

Qualitative methods are mainly associated with feminist studies however, it is not the case that qualitative approaches are always feminist and equally not all quantitative approaches lack feminist sensitivity.³⁶³ However, to reach the objectives of my study, I felt that qualitative methods are more suitable and likely to offer the depthness of the participants' perceptions. Although quantitative methods can also be incorporated in feminist studies, I believed that the quality of the participants' perceptions was far more valuable for my study and helped to achieve its objective.

The charts below provide statistical overview of the total numbers of female and male solicitors with practicing certificates based on the Annual Statistics Report 2017 (latest report available to date).³⁶⁴

³⁶² Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (Routledge and Kegan Paul Plc 1983).

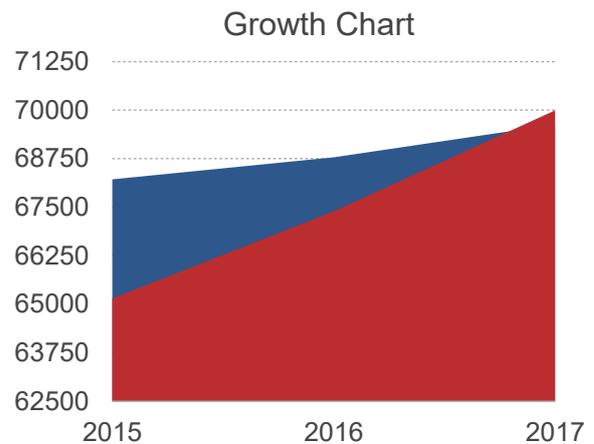
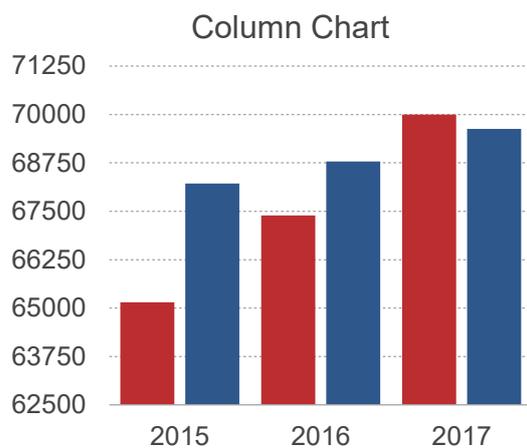
³⁶³ Loraine Gelsthorpe, *Feminist Methodology in Criminology: A New Approach or Old Wine in New Bottles* (Open University Press 1990).

³⁶⁴ The Law Society, Annual Statistics Report 2017 (2018)

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/research-trends/annual-statistics-report-2017/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

Statistics for Solicitors with Practising Certificates

	2015	2016	2017
Women Solicitors with Practising Certificates	65147	67393	69995
Men Solicitors with Practising Certificates	68220	68783	69629



The number of female practising solicitors have been significantly growing particularly over the past three years. The increased number of female solicitors with practising certificates make a remarkable change in the legal profession reflecting a special achievement for female lawyers' progression. Nonetheless, qualitative approaches may also present limitations. As an example, women who may feel uncomfortable in participating in an interview may be excluded from the research. Other women may refuse to participate due to the direct position of providing information about themselves. Therefore, having considered potential limitations of the circumstances surrounding my research, I thought of alternative methods to interviewing to reflect the same that offers an advantage of being confidential and will reveal information which may not have been obtained in an interview

situation.³⁶⁵ The methods selected for this study will be discussed further in Section 3.3. Furthermore, Ramazanoglu and Holland³⁶⁶ provided that it is the methods that are used by the researcher and the underlying epistemology that makes a methodology feminist rather than the methods used. Furthermore, feminist research is defined by the topic, rather than the choice of methods,³⁶⁷ providing that the topic relates to the experiences of women and revealing the impact of these experiences on gender inequalities. The nature of qualitative research relates to a study of the quality of relationships and experiences received³⁶⁸ and therefore, my focus was on the depth of the feedback of the participants. As a qualitative researcher, I have engaged in naturalistic study looking at real-life experiences³⁶⁹ of female lawyers' mentoring support and to generate rich narrative of my study that lead to common themes arising and providing real-life quality feedback. The most common themes which arose as a result of this qualitative research are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The primary adaptation of a qualitative method in my research provided the evidence which was drawn from the detail of the participants' narratives. Further, this method also provided the opportunity to generate understanding, description and emergent concepts and theories.³⁷⁰ Section 3.3 provides an explanation of the rationale for methods selected in my thesis.

3.3 Rationale for methods selected

In order to provide a true reflection of the benefits of mentoring support available to female lawyers across various law firms, a qualitative approach allowed me to explore information in more depth than a quantitative approach would have done. Nonetheless, some of the methods of the qualitative

³⁶⁵ Liz Kelly, Sheila Burton and Linda Regan, *Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's Oppression? Reflections on What Constitutes Feminist Research* (Taylor and Francis 1994).

³⁶⁶ Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland, *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices* (Sage Publications Ltd 2002).

³⁶⁷ Loraine Gelsthorpe, *Feminist Methodology in Criminology: A New Approach or Old Wine in New Bottles* (Open University Press 1990).

³⁶⁸ Corrine Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (5th edn, Pearson 2016).

³⁶⁹ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (4th edn, Sage Publications Ltd 2015).

³⁷⁰ Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis, *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (London Sage 2003).

approach had to be carefully considered taking into account the nature of the participants' jobs. In this study, the women who agreed to participate were all lawyers by profession and at different levels of their legal careers who experienced mentoring support at various stages of their profession. Some of the participants are continuing to receive the mentoring support indefinitely whereas others were subject to a fixed term mentoring programme which ended during my research.

With the qualitative method of research, the participants were able to choose the way to reveal their own views and perceptions of their experiences of mentoring during their legal careers. Through a qualitative approach, the opportunity to explore information in more depth was greater than would be available from a survey for example. Furthermore, the qualitative approach provided a more detailed comparison between the participants and their mentoring experiences. Also, a solely quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the mentoring support, lacking the context of the participants' lived experiences, would have potentially lead to incorrect assumptions of the pros and the cons of the support.³⁷¹ Therefore, I have selected qualitative approach in my thesis to help me answer the research question being, how effective is mentoring support to female lawyers' career progression.

Furthermore, as a former lawyer myself, I was aware of the competitive and busy nature of the participants' profession and potential issues with their availability, commitment and eagerness to take part. In support of this, Renee and others³⁷² stated that professional employees are required to work inefficiently long hours indicating leads to rat-race³⁷³ equilibrium in which associates work too many hours. This proposed additional limitations with researching the profession as well the barriers of entering the legal profession in the first place. With this in mind, I have initially decided to approach my fellow colleagues at the Sheffield Hallam University's law department, who are former lawyers

³⁷¹ Carol Hedderman, Clare Gunby and Nicola Shelton, 'What Women Want: The Importance of Qualitative Approaches' (2011) 11(1) *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 21-35.

³⁷² Renee M. Landers, James B. Rebitzer and Lowell J. Taylor, 'Rat Race Redux: Adverse Selection in the Determination of Work Hours in Law Firms' (1996) 86 *The American Economic Review* 329-348.

³⁷³ An endless, self-defeating, or pointless pursuit.

themselves, in order to discuss my concerns, including issues with participants commitment, availability, questions proposed and further networking prospects. Following general feedback, my concerns have been carefully considered which helped me with the final structure of the proposed questions to the participants and further networking potentials discussed. The feedback also highlighted differences in mentoring supports available in law firms of different sizes. The larger law firms offered their employees a more structured and formal mentoring support including Women's Network whereas, the smaller law firms provided more of an informal mentoring support with more relaxed arrangements. With the piloting exercise undertaken at this level, I was eager to learn about availability and effectiveness of different mentoring supports available to women in law firms across the UK.

My initial focus was on the selection of law firms willing to take part in my research as well as establishing potential participants and their availability to participate. I was also aware of gaining the trust from both, the law firms and the participants, in order to continue my research. Therefore, the selection process was crucial and after gaining the ethical approval from Sheffield Hallam University (Appendix 1), I commenced the process by a review of the law firms with mentoring programmes already in place and focus on female progression levels including partners' diversity element. The review revealed the larger law firms with mentoring opportunities across the south of the country and particularly, based in London. One of those firms, initiated the idea as a pilot scheme that was launched through their Women's Network, with the objective of increasing the quality and quantity of female participation in the firm. This programme offered the more junior women access to act as role models who could then guide their careers at an early stage. The name of the law firm has been kept anonymous due to the confidentially aspect. Having established the substantial mentoring base of this law firm and the existence of the Women's Network, I felt that this law firm would provide a reasonable starting point for the selection process of my research. Having contacted the law firm directly, their response confirmed that unfortunately, due to the lack of the longevity of their

mentoring programme for women lawyers at their firm, this meant that they were unable to take part in my research as their involvement would not generate sufficient evidence from their mentees to address the topic of my research. They have confirmed however, that they offer mentoring scheme to women lawyers who wish to participate.

Together with the support of the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the google search, the selection process continued and a total of twenty-eight law firms were selected and further contacted. The selection was based on the following two factors first, identifying firms' mentoring focus and second, considering the firm's female progression levels, including high and low. The names of all the law firms selected and contacted during this research have been kept anonymous due to the confidentiality aspect. Initial letter, (Appendix 2), was sent to each law firm, the employer, explaining my research focus and requirements in terms of the participation and outcome of my study. Some law firms responded promptly whereas others failed to even acknowledge my correspondence. I have initially received response from two law firms who showed a particular interest in my research and further six participants came forward willing to take part in my study. An introductory correspondence was sent to the participants explaining the research focus and proposed questionnaire, (Appendix 3). This included first, what led the participants to join the mentoring programme second, what challenges and opportunities they have experienced during the programme third, what was their desired outcome of the mentoring programme and finally, did they reach their target and consequently, achieved any promotions.

On reflection, the initial selection process revealed a noticeable theme of law firms' uncertainty in participating in research relating to mentoring. Mentoring in law firms continue to develop and firms are engaging in the process however, an overall lack of information about mentoring support in law firms was recognised. Even the larger law firms with mentoring schemes already developed were sceptical to offer their participation. Succession levels of mentoring support continue to be uncertain

due to law firms low key and cautious engagement with further research and revealing their practices to a larger audience. My research acknowledges this gap in available literature and provides empirical data to improve the legal profession. In Section 3.4, the data collection tools used during this research are explained before moving onto the Chapter 4, where key findings and data analysis is provided.

3.4 Data collection tools: Questionnaire and interview

Engagement and contribution of twenty-two participants from six different law firms forms part of my research. The experiences provided by the participants of mentoring showed different levels of the support received during this study. The participants' development varied due to their position held at the time of the research including, from junior to senior stages. Each participant experienced different level of the mentoring support and as a consequence each individual's perceptions offer varied experiences. Every participant was able to give their individual perceptions and personal encounters of the mentoring support during the legal careers which led to the development of varied abilities and achievements. Furthermore, each individual had their own level of expectations and drive which differentiated all the participants and their desires to progression. The depth of the data received from the participants provided a fair proportion of qualitative data moving away from an anecdotal evidence. The written responses from the participants included their own and individual perceptions of the support received through answering the research questions and including personal feelings, views and experiences. Referring to Patton³⁷⁴ I also believe that in order to provide a true reflection of the experiences and evidence of the participants, conducted through empirical data collection and using thoughtful analysis, qualitative methods were necessary.

³⁷⁴ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd edn, Thousand Oaks Sage Publications 1990).

Data collection began during 2016 and ended at the end of December 2018. At the first instance, I have requested that the law firms put forward those women who might be able to help and wish to participate in my research, as the law firms are the gatekeepers of the participants. Once I have successfully recognised the willing participants, some element of snowballing was used where they would put me in touch with other women who had experienced mentoring. Some number of law firms did not wish to contribute or participate in my research, or simply failed to respond all together which perhaps was to be expected and was entirely reasonable. A succinct overview of law firms' response is provided below in the response table and the firms' identity has been kept anonymised for the purposes of this research:

RESPONSE TABLE

	AGREED TO PARTICIPATE	CHOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE	NON RESPONDENT
LAW FIRM 1 (LF1)	X		
LAW FIRM 2 (LF2)	X		
LAW FIRM 3 (LF3)	X		
LAW FIRM 4 (LF4)	X		
LAW FIRM 5 (LF5)	X		
LAW FIRM 6 (LF6)	X		
LAW FIRM 7 (LF7)		X	
LAW FIRM 8 (LF8)		X	
LAW FIRM 9 (LF9)			X
LAW FIRM 10 (LF10)			X
LAW FIRM 11 (LF11)			X
LAW FIRM 12 (LF12)			X
LAW FIRM 13 (LF13)			X
LAW FIRM 14 (LF14)			X
LAW FIRM 15 (LF15)		X	
LAW FIRM 16 (LF16)			X
LAW FIRM 17 (LF17)			X
LAW FIRM 18 (LF18)			X
LAW FIRM 19 (LF19)			X
LAW FIRM 20 (LF20)			X
LAW FIRM 21 (LF21)			X
LAW FIRM 22 (LF22)			X
LAW FIRM 23 (LF23)			X
LAW FIRM 24 (LF24)		X	
LAW FIRM 25 (LF25)			X
LAW FIRM 26 (LF26)			X
LAW FIRM 27 (LF27)			X
LAW FIRM 28 (LF28)		X	

All the willing participants were female lawyers who provided feedback of their own individual experiences of mentoring support reflecting their own views and opinions. Further, I believe that quantitative approach would unlikely provide the necessary detail and as a result would offer incorrect assumptions about benefits or impact of the support.³⁷⁵

In order to carry out data collection, I felt that the following tools including, questionnaires and interviews, would offer most effective method to gain feedback and provide true reflection of the participants' experiences of mentoring and its effects. Having considered and proposed both methods to the participants, questionnaires were preferred method chosen by majority of the participants. Time pressures were relevant during data collection due to the participants' availability and busy nature of their jobs. The questionnaires provided more flexibility for the participants as they were able to provide their feedback at the most convenient time to them. Moreover, the questionnaires also proved to be more effective method offering the participants privacy and honesty when providing their perceptions. The participants' written responses were thorough and the quality of the data was rich. The data that I have received proved to be deep with some exceeding well over thousand words written feedback from each participant.

Furthermore, questionnaires offered more flexibility for the participants and reduced opportunities to lose potential participants. I cooperated with and assured the participants throughout the data collection stage and accommodated their requests appropriately for suitability and convenience. The time scale for the participants to provide their responses was reasonable and majority were received promptly. The participants' feedback was supplied in writing via emails, which again was the most convenient and contemporary way of their responses. As per my initial suggestion to the participants, interviewing was one of the two methods of data collection I felt would be most effective however,

³⁷⁵ Carol Hedderman, Clare Gunby and Nicola Shelton, 'What Women Want: The Importance of Qualitative Approaches' (2011) 11(1) *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 3-19.

there was only one participant who felt that an interview was more suitable option to her personally which I accommodated effortlessly at a weekend, as per the participant's request. The interview was carried out in dialogue using a pre-planned guide with questions, from which I often deviated for more free-flowing discussion, hence the semi-structure. Semi-structured interviews provide an in-depth discussion to various types of questions allowing interviewer to carry a free-flowing discussion in case the answer deviates further, as was the case here. The interview lasted for about thirty minutes and the data received also proved to be thorough and rich with nearly one thousand five hundred words received. Kahle-Piasecki³⁷⁶ also used primarily semi-structured interviews to collect data during her research into mentoring programmes in organisations. The research findings were helpful in improving and transferring knowledge which led to greater job satisfaction and retention on employees, resulting in higher business productivity. Some of those findings were consistent with this study's results, including greater job satisfaction and improving and transferring knowledge. Therefore, both methods were considered as appropriate tools for my data collection providing true reflection of the participants' experiences of mentoring support during their legal career progression. Data collection tools, including questionnaires and interviews rely upon participants being truthful,³⁷⁷ and where they are not, validity decreases. Therefore, I developed trust with all the participants and firm's representatives by regular contact and communication. The participants remain the core elements of this study that provides qualitative data to help to answer the research question. It is therefore, important to have the trusted bond with the participants and appreciate their willingness to share their experiences with the researcher to fill the gap and further develop the knowledge in this area of law. The data received from the participants is always crucial as the whole research rests on the robustness of the data and therefore, it is vital to have the trusted relationship between the researcher and the participant in order to get the work-trust balance correct.

³⁷⁶ Lisa Kahle-Piasecki, 'Making a Mentoring Relationship Work: What is Required for Organizational Success' (2011) 12(1) *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 46-56.

³⁷⁷ Annelies De Schrijver, 'Sample Survey on Sensitive Topics: Investigating Respondents' Understanding and Trust in Alternative Versions of the Randomized Response Technique' (2012) 8(1) *Journal of Research Practice* 1-17.

With all the responses received but before the commencement of the data analysis, further contact was made with all the participants via a follow up email. I have chosen to do this with a view to ensure and update any potential developments relating to the participants' individual mentoring experiences. I felt that it was necessary to ensure that all the data was gained, especially that some of the participants continued with their mentoring programmes during the earlier data collection stage. Therefore, I felt that updating any further developments, added to the robustness of the data and reliability of its content. Also, having the opportunity to research with the participants strengthen the trust between both and allowed the participants to give updates and offer corrections and /or new evidence in our communications. Following my final exchange of emails with the participants there was no further rescinding of data required at this stage. Once all responses were transcribed, the task of data analysis commenced. The method I used to help me with the data analysis was based on the coding table.³⁷⁸ Coding is a way of indexing or categorising the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about the research.³⁷⁹ The coding approach that I have adopted for my data analysis was data-driven coding. This allowed me to look for concepts or themes in the data by reviewing the participants responses to construct a coding scheme based on major themes that emerge. This method required initial and thorough readings of my data and writing down the themes that emerged most that I have noticed. By using coloured-coded method, I was able to highlight the most common themes emerging from the reading of the data. These included: confidence, motivation, networking, self-development, career progression and the multi-mentor model. By establishing the main themes emerging from the data analysis which enabled me to further organise the data so that I was able to examine and analyse the themes in a structured way. Further data analysis and key findings are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

³⁷⁸ Vicky Heap and Jaime Waters, *Mixed Methods in Criminology* (Abingdon: Routledge 2019).

³⁷⁹ Graham R. Gibbs, *Analyzing Qualitative Data* (Sage Publications Ltd 2012).

Whilst the preferred tools of my data collection were questionnaires and a semi-structured interview, other method was also considered carefully which included a case study. First, the case study approach represents a broader qualitative philosophy³⁸⁰ however, there is no universal explanation of a case study, some describe it as ‘approach’,³⁸¹ others posit as a ‘research strategy’.³⁸² Further, case studies are commonly criticised for lacking generalisability³⁸³ and some scholars see case studies as researchers’ own viewpoints, hypothesis and theories.³⁸⁴ Having considered all of the above including that a case study is not without limitations, results cannot be generalised and arguably lacks academic credibility. Therefore, I felt that this method was not suitable for my type of research as I believed that the participants’ perceptions were better seen and understood through questionnaires and interviews providing general inside and understanding of their experiences. Further, I believe that questionnaires and interviews reveal the reality of women lives which have not been highly respected or taken into account in the past providing women with the opportunity to offer their views and to be taken seriously and respected.³⁸⁵ Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews provide flexibility and often allow themes to emerge as the feedback is being received which may allow further follow-up to take place in the future, either by further interview or additional question/s which may arise as a result of the answers received. Furthermore, once themes emerge as the field work progresses, an opportunity for further feedback remains an option if necessary. As stated earlier in this section, majority of the participants (95 per cent) provided their feedback through the questionnaire with the remaining (1 participant) providing their feedback through a semi-structured interview.

³⁸⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods. Applied Social Research Methods* (Sage Publications Ltd 1994) 5.

³⁸¹ Carla Willig, *Introducing Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology* (McGraw Hill 2008).

³⁸² Jean Hartley, ‘Case Study Research’ (2004) 1 *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research* 323-333.

³⁸³ Chih-en Hsieh, *Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Case Study Research* (University of Leicester Publishing 2004).

³⁸⁴ Bent Flyvbjerg, ‘Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research’ (2006) 12(2) *Qualitative Inquiry* 219-245.

³⁸⁵ Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland, *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices* (Sage Publications Ltd 2002).

3.5 *Data collection tools: Snowball sampling*

Snowball sampling may be defined as a technique for finding research subjects where one subject gives the researcher the name for another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on.³⁸⁶ Snowball sampling is considered as the most common method of sampling in qualitative research and may also be considered to be the most appropriate sampling method to use with a view of identifying participants with certain attributes necessary for the study.³⁸⁷ Further, Bryman and Bell stated that the researcher makes contact with a small group of people relevant to the research who will be asked for referrals from other people who have the same characteristics and can take part in the study.³⁸⁸ Often the case is that referrals made by the initial participants increase trust in the researcher which proved to be the case in my study. The initial selection process was a challenging experience including, getting through to the relevant individuals in law firms and finding willing participants. Some law firms ignored my correspondence and others opted out from taking part either, by giving a reason for their decision or not. Following the initial data collection from six participants, I believed that it was necessary to consider alternative tools to help with further data collection. Having decided upon snowball sampling, the results proved successful, additional referrals were made and further sixteen participants came forward willing to take part in my study. The snowball sampling is mainly used within a qualitative research strategy.³⁸⁹ Further, Bryman³⁹⁰ explained that in some circumstances, snowball sampling may be a better approach than conventional probability sampling especially when the researcher needs to focus upon or to reflect relationships between people, tracing connections through snowball sampling. Moreover, Baltar and Brunet³⁹¹ stated that

³⁸⁶ William P. Vogt, *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences* (2nd edn, London Sage 1999).

³⁸⁷ Chaim Noy, 'Sampling knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research' (2008) 11(4) *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 327-344.

³⁸⁸ Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, *Business Research Methods* (4th edn, Oxford University Press 2015).

³⁸⁹ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (5th edn, Oxford University Press 2016).

³⁹⁰ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (5th edn, Oxford University Press 2016).

³⁹¹ Fabiola Baltar and Ignasi Brunet, 'Social Research 2.0: Virtual Snowball Sampling Method Using Facebook; Internet Research' (2012) 22(1) *Emerald Group Publishing Limited* 57-74.

when trying to contact specific group of people, the best person to email is the administrator of the group. During the snowball sampling, I learnt that some law firms had no mentoring scheme available at all, some others had the scheme available in the past but ended and not been made available since and even with some other law firms who offered mentoring support informally and indefinitely. Therefore, significant inconsistencies of mentoring support availability between law firms have been identified with the cause of these inconsistencies remaining unclear.

Further consideration was taken with a view to expand the number of participants of my study and so self-selection (as described by Saunders and others³⁹²) which minimises bias, provided further opportunity to raise the number of potential participants and social media, like LinkedIn, were assessed. The LinkedIn social media is a platform which connects professionals and can be used for research purposes³⁹³ and potentially offered a great scope of contacts and connections some of which were considered but unfortunately, did not produce any willing participants for my study. This result proposed further uncertainty and question of why lawyers are not freely willing to participate in mentoring research. Some potential concerns are arising for the lack of willing participants which may be considered to be due to female lawyers' reassurance of their position and longevity or and overall lack of commitment by law firms or even perhaps lawyers' lack of time. These raised concerns may be considered and taken further into potential future research. The snowballing techniques proved effective as I have managed to successfully achieve further referrals leading to additional data collection mounting to twenty-two participants in total. The techniques used during my data collection are appropriate methods used in qualitative research³⁹⁴ which proved to be beneficial to my study.

³⁹² Mark Saunders, Adrian Thornhill and Philip Lewis, *Research Methods for Business Students* (7th edn, Pearson Education 2016).

³⁹³ David E.Gray, *Doing Research in the Real World* (3rd edn, Sage Publications Ltd 2014).

³⁹⁴ Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, *Business Research Methods* (4th edn, Oxford University Press 2015).

3.6 Confidentiality and ethics

Confidentiality of data and the anonymity of research participants are key area of concern for participating law firms. As such, confidentiality was agreed with all participants in the initial communication and it was further reiterated in the email to each participant.³⁹⁵ In addition, during the write-up stage, none of the comments were attributed to law firms or participants within them³⁹⁶ as all participating law firms and participants were anonymised in the transcripts and each were numbered accordingly. I used simple numbering for the participants 1 to 22 and law firms, LF1 - LF6.

Ethics are an essential consideration in research. Defined by Ghauri and Gronhaug³⁹⁷ as the moral principles and values that influence the way a researcher or a group of researchers conducts their research activities, a code of conduct or expected societal norm of behaviour while conducting research.³⁹⁸ The appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it,³⁹⁹ ethics provide a moral compass, ensuring all work is carried out with honesty, integrity and accuracy. Ethics deal with judgement and moral evaluation⁴⁰⁰ which includes preserving the anonymity of participants and their respective employers.

Appendix 1: Ethics approval letter from the Sheffield Hallam University.

Appendix 4: Ethical consent form for the participants.

³⁹⁵ Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th edn, Pearson 2009).

³⁹⁶ Pervez Ghauri and Kjell Gronhaug, *Research Methods in Business Studies* (3rd edn, Prentice Hill 2005).

³⁹⁷ Pervez Ghauri and Kjell Gronhaug, *Research Methods in Business Studies* (3rd edn, Prentice Hill 2005).

³⁹⁸ Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (5th edn, Wiley 2010).

³⁹⁹ Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th edn, Pearson 2009).

⁴⁰⁰ David Partington, *Essential Skills for Management Research* (Sage Publications Ltd 2002).

3.7 *Summary*

With my empirically based research, the qualitative method chosen for this study helped to achieve the research objective. Further, having all female based participants, it was inevitable to include the feminist theory which consequently, underpins this study. Qualitative method offered to outline the participants' views and experiences in much greater detail of their mentoring support received. Questionnaires and semi-structured interview supported the data collection tools choice and helped the participants with their reflections. In support of the methods selected for this study, I refer to previously carried out research into mentoring in education by Leung⁴⁰¹ who also used qualitative method of research including questionnaires and interviews as research instruments to collect necessary data. Moreover, in support of my decision to mainly focus my research using qualitative methods, I refer back to Dreher and Ash (Section 2.2).⁴⁰² They carried out research into linkages between global measures of mentoring experiences and gender in managerial and professional positions. Their vision was to determine whether mentoring is differentially associated with career outcomes for both, men and women, and used questionnaires to help with data collection. The questionnaires proved effective in their study as the participants were offered opportunities to provide their views in anonymous circumstances. In my study, questionnaires provided the participants with an opportunity to outline their views in writing which may sometimes be more difficult to talk about or discuss in an interview or face-to-face. Furthermore, questionnaires are helpful in gathering data on experiences, attitudes and preferences of the participants.⁴⁰³ Hence, questionnaires were adopted in my study which set out to explore the experiences of female lawyers and their perceptions following mentoring support. As stated earlier in this chapter, questionnaires have also been

⁴⁰¹ Mee Lee Leung, 'Characteristics of Effective Mentoring in Higher Education: Perspective of Students and Mentors' (University of Leicester 2001)

<<https://ira.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/30975/1/U601129.pdf>> accessed 21 October 2019.

⁴⁰² George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

⁴⁰³ Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (6th edn, Routledge 2007).

evidenced as a widely used method in previous mentoring research and therefore, I strongly believe that the data received from the questionnaires proved to be effective and most suitable method for this qualitative research.

This thesis and its outcome will be available to all participants and all the participating law firms in support of their employees' further career development and further growth of their mentoring support. Some of the participating law firms were keen to consider the content and results of my research to help to develop and progress their employees further. In addition, I feel that my research findings will attract a wider interest within the legal profession as mentoring is becoming more popular way of training and development of employees across law firms and particularly, female lawyers' progression. I hope that my study can assist law firms with further mentoring vision and support for the future of employees' development. I strongly believe that the crucial time has come to gain, compile and reveal the mentoring schemes' experiences to help and make my findings available to all the law firms across the UK, to use in support of their employees' development and in particular, to strengthen female progression to the most senior levels.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Key Findings

4.1 Introduction

Female lawyers have only recently outperformed their male counterparts and currently comprise a majority in practice however, they still struggle to reach the same senior levels of the profession (Section 2.9) as their male counterparts. Mentoring provides the necessary support for female lawyers to continue to progress through the ranks and the evidence gained from this research showed that the participating female lawyers strived for progression from the junior levels of the profession (Section 2.9).

The qualitative approach taken to accomplish this study has delivered insights into the participants' experiences of the impact of mentoring support received during their legal career progressions. The analysis of the empirical data collected during this research revealed the following key findings: first, lack of consistency in mentoring support across the participating law firms (Section 3.3). Second, the available data revealed further inconsistencies as to what type of mentoring (formal or informal) actually provides foremost support for the participating mentees. In particular, there is no indication from the participants as to which form of mentoring is more successful. This is likely to be due to the fact that only one type of mentoring type would operate in each law firms at one time and therefore, no comparison available. Third, the data revealed by the participants suggests that mentoring support contributed to the participants career progression as discussed in Section 4.7. The same findings have also been identified across other professions, including education (Section 2.7) and business (Section 2.6).

Further finding of this study showed that mentoring provides support for the participants and expanding their confidence as discussed in Section 4.8. Confidence gain assisted the participants in

carrying out day-to-day tasks including working on their own initiatives, focusing on clients' care and making decisions. Another key finding of this research includes increased opportunities of networking as discussed in Section 4.10. Networking was identified as a benefit of mentoring from the participants' perceptions that helped them with making extended connections, leading to potential career progression opportunities. Networking was found to offer support in transferring knowledge leading to greater job satisfaction and assisting the participants in gaining wider connections with more colleagues from different departments and offices (Section 4.10). Having wider networks, motivation growth (Section 4.12) was also established during this study and played a significant role as a result of mentoring in the participants' career progression. Some participants found mentoring to be motivating and inspirational, encouraging them to emulate successful female figures within the firm and become involved in self-development opportunities. The empirical data of this study also revealed that seeing other female lawyers progressing through the ranks helped junior participants to establish their vision of success leading to further career developments.

Another significant key finding from the data of this research revealed that the participants who experienced mentoring would have liked to have an additional support of a multi-mentor opportunity (Section 4.4). The participants' perception was clear that if the multi-mentor model was made available to them during mentoring then their career progression could have potentially increased through the support of various mentors. As Burlew⁴⁰⁴ suggested that mentoring is not a single event in the life of a worker but rather several events with different levels of mentoring and that each level of mentoring requires a different type of mentor with different types of skills and knowledge. The participants of my study also confirmed that the multi-mentor model could provide an opportunity to share knowledge leading to greater job satisfaction and further career progression. Nonetheless, empirical data of my research further revealed that the multi-mentor model may need to be well

⁴⁰⁴ Larry D. Burlew, 'Multi Mentor Model: A Conceptual Framework' (1991) 17(3) *Journal of Career Development* 213-221.

balanced. This is because if having too many mentors, the support could potentially get confusing and contradicting. As what one mentor sees as adequate or appropriate, the other may not. Therefore, too many mentors could potentially offer confusing advice to mentees hence, the balance of the support may be considered carefully by law firms. The multi-mentor model is potentially more difficult to put into practice in smaller firms, particularly given the limited number of potential mentors within the mentoring pool compared to the larger law firms who may be better placed to offer cross-departmental or even an inter-office support. Nonetheless, some of the participants felt that the multi-mentor model would offer the chance to develop stronger networks, especially for the more junior lawyers with so much yet to learn, achieve and progress.

Further finding of this study revealed that mentoring support across all the participating law firms lack monitoring of the mentoring programmes. Monitoring of any ongoing developmental process is crucial to help with identifying and recognizing any parts of the process that may require an improvement or even a change if necessary. In the absence of monitoring schemes, it is challenging to focus on future improvements of the support if there is no data available to show how successful the process was, or how the process was conducted.

The final key finding of my research revealed that mentoring support in law firms remains under-researched and gaining access to the potential participants showed difficult. This includes first, connecting with law firms and finding the right person/s responsible for the mentoring support ie senior partner/s or Human Resources (HR) and second, through willing participants, including female lawyers, many of whom may be reluctant to participate in an empirical research of mentoring (Section 3.3). At this stage, there is no data available regarding the reasons of potential participants' reluctance to take part in this type of research however, if further research of mentoring was to take place in the future, then this may be an aspect of consideration and further exploration by requesting a response from the participants who decide not to participate and to explain why.

To achieve the objective of this study and explore participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring support on the progression of the participants' careers, twenty-two female lawyers took part in my research by providing empirical data based on their personal experiences as mentees. It is important to note that this research is not doctrinal and is based purely on the perceptions of the participants of this study therefore, the data cannot be generalised. At the time of the data collection, all of the participants were practicing lawyers and existing employees of six law firms from across the United Kingdom. All of the participants agreed to be involved in my research by answering a questionnaire or taking part in an interview. The participants' work positions included three paralegals, five trainee solicitors, twelve solicitors and two senior solicitors (see Table 1.1). To clarify the meaning of the vocabulary used in my thesis, which may vary depending on the law firm, a 'senior solicitor,' often a partner in a law firm, is higher-ranked than a solicitor and generally a more experienced lawyer and potentially also responsible for generating the firm's revenue. Again, some law firms may refer to a 'senior associate'⁴⁰⁵ which reflects the level of experience and seniority in practice. Furthermore, a 'solicitor'⁴⁰⁶ is a lawyer who has been admitted as a solicitor by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and whose name appears on the roll of solicitors. Some law firms however, choose to use the title 'associate'⁴⁰⁷ instead and, as confirmed by the SRA, an associate is as a lawyer employed by a law firm and in charge of handling a case.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ Sally Kane, 'Guide to law Firms' Titles and the Career Ladder' (13 August 2019)

<<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/legal-jobs-part-i-lawyer-careers-2164537>> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁴⁰⁶ The Law Society, 'Legal Glossary' (2019) <<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/for-the-public/legal-glossary/#S>> accessed 22 October 2019.

⁴⁰⁷ Solicitors Regulation Authority, 'Legal Jargon Explained' (24 September 2015)

<<http://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/using-solicitor/legal-jargon-explained.page>> accessed 9 October 2019.

⁴⁰⁸ Solicitors Regulation Authority, 'Legal Jargon Explained' (24 September 2015)

<<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/find-use-instruct-solicitor/legal-jargon-explained/>> accessed 9 October 2019.

Table 1-1

	PARALEGAL	TRAINEE SOLICITOR	SOLICITOR	SENIOR SOLICITOR
LAW FIRM 1 (LF1)	1	1	9	2
LAW FIRM 2 (LF2)			1	
LAW FIRM 3 (LF3)	1	2		
LAW FIRM 4 (LF4)			1	
LAW FIRM 5 (LF5)	1	2		
LAW FIRM 6 (LF6)			1	

In addition, the further position of a ‘trainee solicitor’⁴⁰⁹ has been defined by the SRA as a person completing their training requirements in a law firm before applying to become a solicitor. For many, the commencement of their legal career journey may start as a ‘paralegal’⁴¹⁰ which means that they would generally assist lawyers in their every-day work. Paralegals undertake some of the same work as lawyers however, they do not provide advice to consumers of legal services. Consequently, a paralegal⁴¹¹ is a person who is trained in subsidiary legal matters however, they are not as fully qualified as a lawyer. Therefore, it has been established that the number of participants in my study and the varied levels of their experiences provided a range of perspectives within the qualitative data of my research.

Furthermore, the participants were involved in two types of mentoring, formal and informal, which have been discussed in detail in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. Moreover, 74 per cent of the participants (16 participants) within my study were involved in a formal type of mentoring and the remaining 26 per

⁴⁰⁹ Solicitors Regulation Authority, ‘Legal Jargon Explained’ (24 September 2015)

<<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/find-use-instruct-solicitor/legal-jargon-explained/>> accessed 9 October 2019.

⁴¹⁰ The Law Society, ‘Legal Professionals – Who Does What’

<<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/for-the-public/legal-professionals-who-does-what/#I>> accessed 22 October 2019.

⁴¹¹ National Association of Licensed Paralegals, ‘What is a Qualified Paralegal’

<https://www.nationalparalegals.co.uk/what_is_a_paralegal> accessed 22 October 2019.

cent of the participants (6 participants) encountered an informal type of mentoring support. However, the style adopted for the formal mentoring was perceived by the participants as being rather informal. This involved mentoring meetings taking place as and when was necessary with no written records being kept for the purposes of monitoring of the scheme. Once the formal mentoring programmes ended, the participants continued to receive informal mentoring support indefinitely. Therefore, as a result, all the participants within my study experienced informal mentoring support at some stage of their careers.

Moreover, this chapter explores the participants' accounts of their reasons for commencing the mentoring programmes. Further consideration of their perceptions of relevant links between access to mentoring support and career advancement is considered carefully and supported by the participants' statements. Analysis of the qualitative responses and recognition of relevant themes demonstrated perceived impact that mentoring has had on the participants of my study. There is also discussion of the importance of networking and its links to mentoring and a particular focus on having a female mentor as a role model and its inspirational and motivating factors to the participants' career progression. I will then conclude by summarizing all the key findings of my research before moving to the discussion Chapter 5.

4.2 Reasons for participants' commencement of mentoring programme

When discussing the effects of mentoring on women lawyers, it is important to consider the initial reasons for their commencement of mentoring. Mentoring facilitates good opportunities⁴¹² for professional development and career progression whether the programme is of a formal or an informal nature. The majority of the participants of my study felt that if an individual's wish is to seek a career

⁴¹² Zoe Amar, 'How to Become a Professional Mentor' *The Guardian* (2012) <<https://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/become-professional-mentor>> accessed 21 October 2019.

advancement, then having a mentor can offer further help and support to achieve that goal more quickly. Some of their statements are included later in this Section.

Section 4.5 outlined various types of mentoring which have been found by the participants to be positive. Further, as established in Chapter 2, mentoring must be led by a mentee⁴¹³ and not by an organisation. Apart from the fact that all of the participants have been mentees during their legal careers also, a further 14 per cent of them (3 participants) were mentors as well in their organisations. Those participants' choice to become a mentor was made voluntarily. For example, participant 22 (LF6) stated that '... because of the beneficial impact a mentor had on me and my career, I now aim to provide that type of support and guidance to others to assist them.' The data showed that the participants' perception on supporting others through mentoring provided an essential experience from their earlier mentorship. Often the support is linked to the mentors' previous experience as a mentee hence their need to pass on their knowledge and assistance to continue the support.

Participant 20 (LF2) affirmed this statement, suggesting that entering the legal profession can be significantly daunting and challenging with high expectations. She stated: 'I did this (became a mentor) so I could support those entering the profession, as I know first-hand how difficult it can be!' This statement confirms that those entering the legal profession are faced with challenges, getting to know the firm, colleagues and the job itself which is likely to add further pressures to a new job. Moreover, the participant 13 (LF5) further added that she was looking to mentor junior colleagues following the support that she received from her mentor during her earlier legal career progression: 'I am now a buddy mentor for more junior colleagues who, like I did, want to get a training contract and I am trying to help them achieve this, as my mentor buddy did for me.' This response indicated how mentoring schemes may create an upward spiral of development with mentees becoming mentors

⁴¹³ Everwise, 'Why Mentoring Should Be Protégé-Lead' (27 April 2017) <<https://www.geteverwise.com/mentoring/why-mentoring-should-be-protege-led/>> accessed 9 October 2019.

to continue the provision of support for more junior employees developing their legal careers in law firms.

The analysis of the data suggested that mentoring offers career advice and support. All of the participants from my study became mentees either through a compulsory scheme at work or voluntarily. It could be argued that the compulsory mentoring scheme is often seen as a formal type of mentoring whereas, voluntary mentoring takes more of an informal style. The compulsory mentoring should see a distinction from line management that may overlap the internal support and training as mentoring must be led by a mentee and not by an organisation. All the participants had a mentor who was either a colleague from the same department or an external colleague from another department but the same firm. Both categories, compulsory and voluntary mentoring, will be further discussed in Section 4.5 and supported by the participants' statements. Moreover, 14 per cent of the participants (3 participants) provided their individual justifications for joining the mentoring programme which together suggested their willingness to learn and their need for progression. Participant 1 (LF1) stated:

I joined the mentoring programme...just one month after starting employment with the firm...I am very ambitious and having undertaken paralegal roles prior to commencing my training contract, I do feel slightly behind my peers. I wish to ensure that I am making the best impression possible during these early months of employment, whilst also ensuring that I am an asset to the firm. I recognise that I still have weaknesses and wish to develop myself into a good solicitor.

This participant recognised her weaknesses and showed eagerness to develop herself further through the mentoring support which she started reasonably early on in her employment. It is crucial that the mentee recognises her weaknesses and leads the learning and development. Similarly, the following

participant felt that the mentoring support would provide a good opportunity for her further progression and more specifically, help her to focus on a niche area of law for specialization. She stated: 'I started the mentoring programme...and it seemed a good opportunity to start thinking about moving away from junior tasks and beginning to concentrate on making a niche for myself and/or working on my contacts network.' (Participant 2 LF1).

Another participant felt the need to focus on her career development when involved in mentoring programme and considered various options in law, including the necessary steps that she would need to take before making a final decision on an area of law for her future specialism. She stated:

I commenced the mentoring programme... I joined to discuss future options for myself. I am coming to the end of my training contract and I needed advice on options and I believed this would be a great time to join a programme whereby a more experienced individual is able to offer me advice and talk to their journey to get to where they are. I was hoping that it would allow me to make a decision on what the next step would be for me and the pros and cons of the options I was considering in terms of areas of law to practice in etc. Participant 4 (LF3).

This participant's perception seemed clear when she decided to join the mentoring programme in order to help her find the right practice area of law for her. The mentorship offered the more in-depth support for the final stages of the training contract which is an important step moving onto specialised area of practice. From the participant's perception it is evident that mentoring support can offer both, general advice as well as more specialised support, to the trainee solicitors.

4.3 *Buddy scheme*

Mentoring offers advancement in career development by providing opportunities for mentees to learn new perspectives from someone more experienced, advance their career progression by acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses and often gain personal satisfaction by facilitating current growth and development. Moreover, participant 6 from LF3 stated that she would like to see her mentor as a buddy where she could discuss things outside of work. Furthermore, one of my study's participating firms has adopted the title of 'buddy' which has been further explained by Participant 7 (LF1) as follows:

My informal mentoring programme began when I joined the firm and I was allocated a buddy. A buddy is a member of your team who is assigned to assist you into your transition into life at the firm. The mentoring programme has helped to develop my career by giving me a point of contact for any queries, this means that I can learn on the job and ask any questions as I go along without the need ask questions in a more formal manner. The mentoring programme also allows the mentor to pass on their knowledge and any advice they might have to assist me in my work and this also aids development.

A buddy is in other words a mentor who is assigned to assist a mentee or a new member of staff into their transition into life at the firm. With the support of the buddy / the mentor, the mentee learns the job to help with their career development by receiving any hints, tips and more advanced knowledge from their buddy / mentor.

A further participant confirmed that the buddy system at her law firm is a compulsory system introduced to all new recruits to help and support new employees. The person supporting or mentoring the new recruit is someone of a higher rank and generally comes from the same department.

Participant 11 (LF1) revealed that ‘The buddy system is compulsory. Upon being hired with the firm you are assigned a buddy who is your “go to” for enquiries and has the job of assisting you to settle into your new role. Your buddy is generally someone within your department.’

The participating law firm 1 with the buddy scheme (mentoring scheme) in place supported new employees in adjusting to their responsibilities from the initial stages of their employment. It is further evident that this buddy system rolled into a mentoring system through an informal practice of buddy or mentor support. Furthermore, I refer to statements made by participant 7 from LF1 of my study who confirmed that there is no such distinction in actual practice and that mentoring is a continuation of the provision of ongoing training and support. Other participants from another law firm linked the buddy scheme to mentorship as it helped and supported their further legal career progression. Participant 13 (LF5) stated:

I participated in the buddy scheme after I reached the final stage of the training contract application process and was unsuccessful. I wanted a mentor and someone who had successfully been through the process to help me obtain a training contract, give me tips and advice, to help me achieve my goal of becoming a Solicitor.

The buddy / mentoring scheme available at the participating law firms offered further opportunities of support to more junior peers including trainee solicitors. Participant 16 (LF1) confirmed: ‘As part of being a trainee solicitor, I was paired with a partner mentor.’ This empirical data provided by the participants confirms an ongoing mentoring support from the early stages of the legal profession. Those participating revealed that the mentoring support helps with their early career choices and development which are crucial to their future specialization and legal practice.

Furthermore, it is evident from the following two statements of my participants that mentoring aided career progression by promoting self-development and good work practice. Participant 12 (LF1) joined mentoring programme ‘To aid career progression at the time, promote self-reflection and learn from others’ best practice.’ Participant 21 (LF1) further added that she wished to progress her career and join mentoring programme for guidance and support with her training contract. As a trainee solicitor, the career development is an ongoing fast-track progressive journey before qualifying and therefore, trainees require additional level of guidance and advice to help with the rapid career progression.

4.4 *Multi-mentor model*

The following findings from the analysis of the participants’ perceptions established the importance of the multi-mentor support in legal practice. Section 2.7.1 discussed the multi-mentor model and highlighted lack of empirical evidence in this area of law during the literature review. The multi-mentor model has been highlighted by 23 per cent of the participants of my study (5 participants) suggesting its importance in the female solicitors’ career progression. It has been initially highlighted by participant 8 (LF1) who stated that, if possible, she would have liked to have more than one mentor to provide her with as she called ‘a wonderful network position.’ She confirmed that the multi-mentor model was not available at the time of my research however, she suggested that this would be a very beneficial and superior support for anyone willing to progress their careers.

Moreover, participant 12 (LF1) confirmed that a multi-mentor model would provide additional support as it is likely that different mentors would have different guidance to offer. Therefore, this participant’s perception confirms that having more than one mentor is likely to provide the mentee with a more rounded and varied programme of support. She further explained that:

... one mentor could be a parent, the other may not be, one mentor may have chosen a particular or career path which is relevant to you (for example in the legal profession may have gone with a non-traditional route to qualification as a solicitor). Having mentors from different practice areas may also provide additional support as a person from outside of your practice area or department may have a fresh approach or different advice to offer on a certain topic or objective.

Furthermore, different mentors offer diverse views that can provide contrasting approaches giving mentees wider opportunities of advice and support.

This particular prospect of multiple mentors has not been widely considered in law firms as discussed in Section 2.7.1 and it may be seen as a valued opportunity offering even better support in the workplace in terms of facilitating access to wider networks. The multi-mentor model can encourage career development based on the premise that mentoring is not a single event in the life of an employee but rather comprises several events with different levels of mentoring.⁴¹⁴ The quote of Burlew suggests that different stages of mentoring potentially require a different type of mentor with different types of skills and knowledge which in return offers multi-skills support. The perception of the participants however, do not acknowledge different stages of mentoring just simply having different mentors during mentoring who may provide various and diverse support during their legal careers. There is no evidence confirming different stages of mentoring, simply suggestions that multi-mentor support could potentially offer different advice from various types of mentors.

The participants' perceptions support the multi-mentor model suggesting that it provides a valuable opportunity to help female lawyers careers' advancement. Participant 13 (LF1) added that having

⁴¹⁴ Larry D. Burlew, 'Multiple Mentor Model: A Conceptual Framework' (1991) 17(3) *Journal Career Development* 213-221.

more than one mentor could help as she would gain other perspectives of the business and have access to a range of advice on how to obtain information regarding different aspects of the business and her career. Further two participants (1 and 7) from LF1 similarly found that the multi-mentor support can be useful for their career progression. Participant 1 stated that ‘different partners, management and colleagues can help to mold you into a truly stand out lawyer by giving guidance and constructive criticism. Also, having different people’s opinions as to how to diversify and stand out from the crowd could be very helpful to a junior lawyer and a mentee.’ Moreover, participant 7 revealed that the multi-mentor approach would provide a beneficial support especially in circumstances where an alternative mentor had a better understanding of a particular area that she needed assistance with.

Moreover, participant 2 (LF1) confirmed these findings by disclosing that she takes advice from numerous mentors who are from different departments and senior colleagues within her firm. She further stated that having access to the multi-mentor support provides added benefits to her legal career progression by generating a ‘crowd’ opinion on best practice and enabling her to take a more rounded view on different issues. She further found that she was able to discuss her next career steps as well as widening the number of her sponsors for her future career progression. This empirical data illustrates the diverse support of mentoring offered to this participant who felt that the multi-mentor support has played an important aspect in her career progression. Participant 2 further revealed that the multi-mentor model support available at her law firm was known as ‘the trust cabinet’ between the mentees where various opinions were shared, enabling mentees to choose from a range of advice. Perhaps this was an informal way of referring to the multi-mentor support in this particular law firm and no further confirmation of why this is referred to as 'the trust cabinet' has been suggested.

When discussing the advantages of the multi-mentor model it is also fair to consider any disadvantages of the support. First, some potential challenges with the availability of the multi-mentor model in law firms may be due to lack of potential mentors or their accessibility, particularly in law

firms of a smaller size. Second, mentors may be unwilling to participate in the scheme and provide their support voluntarily. A third issue may be linked to the mentors' physical ability to spare their time as per challenging targets or deadlines. The balance is often more difficult to control when there is lack of relevant personnel (such as mentors). The analysis suggests a potential merit in law firms offering an informal rather than formal type of mentoring. The larger law firms are likely to be more capable of offering either form of mentoring support, including formal or informal, than the smaller law firms. This is likely to be due to the availability of the mentors and systems operating on a larger scale, often through external resources including Human Resources (HR).

Further, the findings of my research have highlighted some mixed responses over the multi-mentor model. Participant 7 (LF1) revealed that she had only one mentor to ensure that there was a consistent approach in the mentoring support that she was receiving. Nonetheless, she further stated that she could see why a multi-mentor approach would also be beneficial, for example if the original mentor was out of the office or if a different mentor had a better understanding of an area that she needed help with. Participant 1 (LF1) also provided similar feedback with regards to the multi-mentor model and stated that she felt uncertain as to whether multiple mentors would add further benefits to her career progression as sometimes, the process can become confusing if more mentors were involved. However, she further added that the multi-mentor model can be useful for receiving various opinions during career progression. This participant's perception was that she would not suggest that any more than three to five mentors per each mentee would benefit anyone however, she believed that mentees can learn a lot from all colleagues. This reconfirms my earlier findings which revealed that the multi-mentor model is likely to add further benefits to mentees career developments by offering diverse support. The final point made by participant 2 (LF1) further highlighted the time pressures for potential mentor and the fact that if they had numerous mentees to support, the mentors should be in a position to provide equal amount of time and support for each mentee. This issue is likely to create further problems for smaller law firms where the number of mentors is limited and therefore, their

availability reduced. Having identified advantages and disadvantages of the multi-mentor model, it is clear that having access to a variety of mentors was beneficial and welcomed by the participants with some aspects of time and availability to be considered.

4.5 *Types of mentoring*

With any kind of mentoring, whether formal or informal, compulsory or voluntary, ongoing or for a fixed period of time, the majority of the participants of my study indicated that mentoring has had a beneficial impact on their career development and progression (Section 4.7). 73 per cent of my participants (16 participants) were part of a formal type of mentoring with the remaining 27 per cent (6 participants) who experienced informal mentoring support. The majority of the formal mentoring relationships became informal and continued on an ongoing basis. This basically meant that the mentor who was providing the formal type of mentoring support remained available to the mentee after the time lapsed and the formal mentoring ended. The mentor was still happy to continue to support the mentee in such a way, as was needed.

Furthermore, the findings of my research also indicated that some of the formal mentoring programmes have been facilitated with HR support other were controlled by mentoring representative or a partner of the firm. However, HR was only involved in the initial establishment of the mentoring webpage and recording the dates of the mentoring meetings with no further monitoring of the programme. This included lack of record keeping of any mentoring training received, any issues raised by the mentees with regards to their needs and development requirements, any substantial information about the support offered or given by mentors or any further aspects relevant requiring follow up exercise including future meetings. This indicated that the formal mentoring operated with the initial formal set up of the programme but an informal practice followed thereafter by the organisation. It was further reported by the participants that, despite formal mentoring processes

operating at the time, support was rather informal. I will now discuss the participants' views of their mentoring support received. Participant 1 (LF1), a mentee of a formal mentoring system revealed:

My mentoring programme is quite informal. The managing associate is my mentor and we meet as and when is necessary... Due to the informal nature, neither myself nor my mentor kept a written record of each meeting... Our HR department is involved in that they took charge of the mentoring webpage. Mentors were asked to update the page as and when we met to ensure that we were meeting regularly.

Participant 2 (LF1) further explained that their mentoring system only recorded the dates that the meetings took place. Furthermore, the meetings were on an informal nature held in the partner's office over a cup of tea or in a café or a public house as echoed by the participant 6 (LF3). The mentoring sessions remained very relaxed and informal with no written records of the meetings. Participant 5 (LF3) further confirmed that there was supporting documentation in place at the start of the process however, no further written records had been taken during her mentoring programme. Following the participants' feedback with regards to the lack of monitoring, it is also evident that there were no specific arrangements for the mentoring meetings as they remained irregular based on each individual mentee's needs. The mentoring meetings took place when it was necessary and such help and support was needed by the mentee which suggests that the support was available with lack of monitoring thereafter.

Participant 3 (LF3) confirmed in her statement: 'I'm afraid I do not have any written records – I just have a conversation with my mentor every few months.' The empirical data from the participants' perceptions suggested that the mentoring support, whether formal or informal type, remained natural in its nature, offering mentees an easy-going approach and relaxed atmosphere. This made them feel at ease and both parties carried discussions openly. Majority of the participants explained how their

formal or informal mentoring support was ongoing with no real end date. Having revealed earlier that mentoring can continue indefinitely,⁴¹⁵ the mentorship became a cycle where the mentee eventually became a mentor in some occasions. Hence, the informal continuity of the support led to sufficient results of practical support which in turn became a development of a virtuous circle with mentees becoming mentors to continue the support for the more junior employees commencing their careers.

4.6 *Mentees' desired outcomes from participation in a mentoring programme*

Mentoring can have various perceived effects on mentees depending on how far they wish to take up opportunities and develop themselves. From developing aspirations to achieving ascertainable results, it is the mentee who would normally lead the mentoring process and direct the mentoring journey where, and as far, as they wish to take it. Hence, my study asked each participant specifically, what led them to the commencement of the mentoring programme and what was their desired outcome of the mentoring support (Appendix 3). The participants provided their responses outlining various reasons behind their desires to be mentees. Further, 41 per cent of the participants (9 participants) of my study agreed that the most desired outcome was networking including determination to develop relationships with senior staff and seek their advice during various stages of the career progression. Therefore, networking⁴¹⁶ as a process of exchange of information and ideas among individuals that share a common interest proved in my study to be the most desired outcome of mentoring during the participants' career progression. The participants felt that obtaining advice from a more senior colleague provided a guide for the similar journey that they were taking at the time. Participant 8 (LF1) revealed: '...networks are important...people knowledge...Mentoring is about a connection, it's about someone really wanting to help someone else.'

⁴¹⁵ Anthony Aparicio, 'Business 209: Mentoring and Leadership Development in the Workplace' <<https://study.com/academy/lesson/history-of-mentoring.html>> accessed 9 October 2019.

⁴¹⁶ Harve Panetto, Ricardo Jardim-Goncalves and Arturo Molina, 'Enterprise Integration and Networking: Theory and Practice' (2012) 36(2) Annual Reviews in Control 284-290.

This Additional statement illustrates the mentee's desire to have a mentor during the legal career to provide her with the required support during the training process and ongoing career assistance.

Participant 13 (LF5) stated:

I wanted a mentor and someone who had successfully been through the process to help me obtain a training contract, give me tips and advice, to help me achieve my goal of becoming a Solicitor... My mentor introduced me to senior partners in the firm, gave me advice on other things to get involved with within the firm to raise my profile such as joining the netball team and the Charity Committee as well as carrying out a mock interview with me, to help me practice my interview technique and perfect my answers in preparation for my second attempt at getting a training contract... invaluable advice from a senior person within the firm in order to progress my career... give me advice throughout my career.

Networking offers a unique opportunity for mentees to connect with more senior staff mentors, including individuals from different departments. The participants' perception on networking showed that having a mentor offers opportunities to meet other people much quicker where connections are made through the mentor who introduces the mentee to others who may be based in another department or even another office. Networking has the ability to provide opportunities to meet different people from diverse backgrounds which often begins with a single point of common interest, like having a mentor. Participant 4 (LF3) explained that '...speaking to someone who has experience in different areas of law on what it is like to move to another area or another firm.' Depending on individual, networking connects people who may help one another with personal and professional aspects of career progression.

With own desires for having a mentor, each participant was able to gain help and support from various aspects of career development, by required contact with the mentor or mentors, some from different. Participant 3 (LF1) was keen to obtain advice on various areas of her profession from someone outside of the immediate department who was be able to provide a different insight to those who she worked with on a day to day basis. The following areas included:

- Business development
- People management
- Presentation skills
- Clarify outcomes, issues and goals
- General career development and progression.

Having the ability and options to interact and communicate with various senior staff from across the firm proved to be a valuable experience for the mentees who participated in my research and consequently, gained benefits from cross-departmental operation. The practical experience aided mentees' development with effective and helpful assistance from mentors involved.

The second desired outcome from having mentoring support was to gain career progression. 32 per cent of the participants (7 participants) of my study were conscious of their career position and eager to progress further. Some participants felt that mentoring has definitely assisted them in terms of their career development and others also found mentoring to be beneficial from a personal perspective. Participant 12 (LF1) stated that: (mentoring) '... enabled me to progress my career at the firm and make a worthwhile contribution to the business, also to maximise opportunities for self-development.' This participants' experience confirmed that having mentoring opportunities to progress her career, she was also able to contribute further to the business itself by maximizing her opportunities. With mentees progression and an overall development and business focus, the firms

are likely to progress further by having more capable staff and consequently, a stronger workforce. Moreover, participant 18 (LF1) revealed that: ‘In my view the (mentoring) programme achieved its purpose and helped my career progression in a very practical way.’ Through mentoring, this participant was able to progress her career in a very practical way and by having taken mentors advice, her support offered hands on experience developing her career further.

Participant 21 (LF1) who was a trainee at the commencement of her mentoring programme stated that through mentoring she was able to develop and improve her application. The mentor provided helpful tips and pointers on how to complete the trainee application process and generally given her advice on how to improve her chances for being successful. She found the mentoring programme very beneficial to her legal career progression, especially during the application process. Furthermore, participant 22 (LF1) revealed that the insight gained from having a mentor has undoubtedly assisted her career progression. In turn she dealt with issues more constructively and felt more emotionally supported. This participant’s feedback revealed that the mentoring support provides not only support at work but also, personal and emotional. The emotional support may be significant to a mentee especially during different stages of their legal careers. Further, the closeness of the relationship may provide additional support and comfort for the mentee which could strengthen the mentorship even further.

Subsequent desired outcomes from the mentoring programme experienced by the participants of this study included gaining confidence in their job competence. The confidence component will be individually discussed in Section 4.8 as an important aspect of the job of a lawyer where confidence remains key in decision-making when working on own initiatives.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ Jonathon P. Schuldt, Christopher P. Chabris, Anita Williams Woolley and Richard J Hackman, ‘Confidence in Dyadic Decision Making: The Role of Individual Differences’ (2015) 30(2) Behavioral Decision Making 168-180.

Furthermore, 14 per cent of the participants (3 participants) looked to develop their organisational knowledge, aspiring to become senior lawyers as soon as possible or to become mentors themselves. Participant 19 (LF1) stated: 'My desired outcome was to make sure, even from qualification, that I will make senior associate at the right time when I was above 5 years qualified.' Some participants' feedback showed that they were more eager to progress to the most senior levels of the profession however, this may not always be the case with everyone. Some individuals would still choose to progress their careers however, may not wish to reach the most senior levels of the profession. The participants feedback showed that some may have a stronger desire to progress their legal careers to the most senior levels of the profession whereas, others would reach a certain stage of their career and remain at that stage.

Mentoring offered the necessary support required by each individual and may be used to their desires. Participant 12 (LF1) provided her feedback and confirmed that her initial focus on the career progression was to reach the senior level of the profession. Mentoring helps her to get involved in the self-development opportunities that arise at her law firm and she eagerly ensures to put herself forward to be in the best position to be eligible for promotion to a senior position when the time is right. As mentioned earlier, not everyone wishes to gain the senior position at the law firm, as others seek further progression from their mentoring experience to obtain training contract and/or become fully qualified solicitors. The progression is down to an individual mentee and how they wish to progress to reach their desired goals. Participant 18 (LF1) revealed that her desired outcome of a training contract was to qualify as a solicitor and secure a job as a solicitor on qualification. Further two participants (14 (LF5) and 21(LF1) expressed interests in their law firms in becoming a solicitor and were keen to obtain a training contract to continue with their legal careers. It is evident that participants' desired outcomes from mentoring varied considerably depending on the participant's current position in the firm.

Furthermore, participant 17 (LF6) revealed her desire to be more forthright yet to ask fewer questions which was her priority when joining the mentoring programme. She stated: ‘The frequent meetings with senior people are helpful, it would however be good also to have an independent element to mentoring so you can perhaps be more frank.’ Some participants felt that the desire to become more employable across the firm and to make the best impression which consequently could lead them to ask less questions was also important. Participant 1 (LF1) stated: ‘...to be utilised as and when possible...making the best impression possible whilst also ensuring that I am an asset to the firm.’ Participant 7 (LF1) revealed: ‘...my desired outcome would be that as the months pass I ask less questions.’

The participants’ perceptions of their desired outcomes from mentoring support vary considerably. However, it is up to each individual to find their own desires to progress which showed that some participants seek more senior responsible positions with others who wish to gain training contract and become fully qualified solicitors or others who are simply happy with their current position in the firm however, would like to improve their current skills i.e. confidence, motivation or even networking opportunities. All of the above appeared as the career progression to varied levels of the profession.

4.7 Identified links between mentoring support and career progression

As discussed in Chapter 2, despite the increased attention to career development, it has Colarelli and Bishop identified that having a mentor was the strongest correlates of career progression.⁴¹⁸ This was further supported by the findings of my research (Section 4.7). Moreover, mentoring also offers sponsorship, coaching, from protection to exposure and challenging assignments.⁴¹⁹ Therefore,

⁴¹⁸ Stephen M. Colarelli and Ronald C. Bishop, ‘Career Commitment: Functions, Correlates and Management’ (1990) 15(2) Group and Organization Studies 158-176.

⁴¹⁹ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring in the Workplace: Career Development in Organisations* (Jossey-Bass 1986).

mentors can enhance their mentees' psychosocial⁴²⁰ development through role modelling, counselling, psychological support and friendship.⁴²¹ These aspects of mentoring should enable mentees to develop a positive attitude to career developments and further progression. 91 per cent of the participants (20 participants) of my study expressed a belief that the mentoring support helped their legal career progression. Participant 22 (LF1) said:

I think the insight I gained from having a mentor has undoubtedly assisted my career. It gave me somewhere to go to sound out issues and provided me with an opportunity to discuss matters with someone not directly involved with any given transaction or issue. In turn I dealt with issues more constructively and felt more emotionally supported.

Emotional and psychological support at work between mentees and mentors was also significant not only from the productivity point of view⁴²² but also it helped the participants to excel in their roles at work as seen in the earlier statements of the participants. Mentoring relationships are based on understanding and trust, and its main aim is to build capabilities and self-reliance in the mentee.⁴²³ Mentoring provides emotional support, guidance and a sense of continuity and stability which guarantees the mentee to have someone who will be there for them in dealing with day to day challenges.⁴²⁴ This aspect of mentoring has been also established during my research and participant 7 (LF1) revealed that: 'The mentoring programme has helped to develop my career by giving me a point of contact for any queries, this means that I can learn on the job and ask any questions as I go along without the need ask questions in a more formal manner.' Furthermore, she added: 'My mentor

⁴²⁰ Psychosocial development relates to the interrelation of social factors and individual thought and behavior.

⁴²¹ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring in the Workplace: Career Development in Organisations* (Jossey-Bass 1986).

⁴²² Chiswick Consulting, 'Why Offering Emotional Support in the Workplace can Lead to Increased Productivity' (2015) <<http://www.chiswickconsulting.com/why-offering-emotional-support-in-the-workplace-can-lead-to-increased-productivity/>> accessed 9 October 2019.

⁴²³ Ferda Erdem and Janset Ozen Aytemur, 'Mentoring—A Relationship Based on Trust: Qualitative Research' (2008) 37(1) Sage Journals 55-65.

⁴²⁴ Kent Mentor Support, 'Mentoring & Educational Support' <<http://www.kentmentorsupport.co.uk/what-is-mentoring.php>> accessed 2 September 2019.

has helped me transition from Claimant work to Defendant work and this has therefore advanced my legal career at the firm and has helped me achieve my desire to prosper on “the other side” so to speak.’ Another view of participant 9 (LF1) outlined the detail as to how, in particular, the mentoring programme has helped her career progression so far, in progressing from the paralegal role. She stated: ‘Informal mentoring has definitely assisted in terms of career progression, initially with regards to securing funding for my studies and later in securing an NQ solicitor position in the department I had previously worked as a paralegal.’ She further explained:

More senior colleagues simply have more knowledge of the firm and its processes and have the benefit of experience. As a junior associate I am now looking to make the move to mid-level associate within the next year or so and then senior associate once I am about 5 years PQE. I hope that my mentors will assist me in developing as a solicitor and best positioning myself for promotion.

The aspiration of progression whilst participating in a mentoring programme increased the participants' ambition which in turn advanced their career progression. During career development in law, a lawyer goes through a long journey of various progression stages, from a junior trainee to a senior solicitor / partner and therefore, there are multiple aspects of the job which need to be considered at each level. For example, the initial application process hence, the mentor may offer their support to the mentee as they have already been through it themselves and can confidently help and direct the mentee as necessary. Participant 12 (LF1) stated:

... it is always helpful... to be made aware of good practice across the firm and ways to develop yourself in a way which will assist your career progression.... It is always helpful to have feedback (particularly from female partners within the firm) and guidance on ways to improve one's own prospects within the career progression structure within the firm...

She further revealed:

Still a junior solicitor at the moment, but the programme has inspired me to emulate successful female figures within the firm and get involved in the self-development opportunities available. I am therefore putting myself in the best position to be eligible for promotion to a senior position when the time comes.

A further three statements of the participants of my study confirmed that a link between the mentoring support and the career progression existed which supported the findings of my research. Participant 10 (LF5) disclosed: ‘... the mentoring programme helped me secure my training contract application...’ A further statement from participant 14 (LF5) revealed: ‘The programme has resulted in me now being a Trainee Solicitor and has definitely helped my career progression.’ Finally, participant 19 (LF1) added further: ‘My (mentor) has been particularly supportive and has ensured that I am on the right tracks to achieve my career progression...I am now a senior associate.’

Despite participants occupying different levels within the legal profession, it became evident from the findings that mentoring is perceived to facilitate career progression and advancement. Sometimes, this was through simply helping mentees to fill in an application form, providing emotional support or even confirming advice as to what directions to take at the time. All these aspects lead to mentees’ further career progression. With an ongoing support, the mentees were placed in much stronger positions at work, and supported to better themselves and consequently, advance their developmental journeys.

4.8 *Confidence*

‘I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.’⁴²⁵

Nelson Mandela

This famous quote is a clear reflection that courage and confidence assist people with taking on challenges in all situations. The most important quality for success in our busy society, especially in business or in interacting with other people is the quality of self-confidence.⁴²⁶ This may be developed as a result of self-esteem, self-respect and perhaps other aspects that may happen during mentees’ lives. The participating female lawyers within my study spoke about how mentoring had helped them to build confidence in relation to their ongoing progression and career development. They related their confidence to the support provided by their mentors who helped with further career advice. Participant 1 (LF1) revealed:

My mentor has helped to build my confidence in my role in the team, whilst also providing advice as to how to progress. She encourages me to be self-driven and push myself beyond my comfort zone, whilst also nudging me in the right direction in relation to putting myself forward for projects and to undertake various roles within the team.

She further confirmed that mentoring has helped to advance her legal career as it built her confidence. It is the participant’s individual experience which may vary nonetheless, she further added that mentoring helped her to settle into the role of a solicitor and formed relationships with management.

⁴²⁵ The Telegraph, ‘Nelson Mandela: in his own words’ (London, 6 December 2013) <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/nelson-mandela/9734032/Nelson-Mandela-in-his-own-words.html>> accessed 11 October 2019.

⁴²⁶ Judi Chamberlin, ‘A Working Definition of Employment’ (1997) 20(4) *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 43-46.

As her confidence was increasing, she continued to push herself forward and volunteered for different roles within the team which gave her more responsibilities. She further stated that mentoring helps and encourages all career progression and it is very much what you take from it. She personally found that mentoring has built her confidence and drive and as a consequence her career progressed further. The above statements confirmed perceptions of a gain in confidence and drive during her legal career as a result of mentoring support. Mentors play an important role in providing on-job support by pushing mentees to believe in themselves and to go out of their comfort zone to progress further. Another statement of participant 5 (LF3) supports perceptions of the strong link between confidence gain and mentoring support: ‘mentoring has helped put me in a stronger position in the market of law, as due to my mentor’s support and advice.’ It is evident from the data received that mentoring helps build confidence and skills relevant to further career progression which consequently assures female lawyers of their abilities and competence at their jobs. Confidence gain helped the participants in strengthening their drive for succession and continuous improvement.

Moreover, self-efficacy is person’s believe in their ability to succeed in a particular situation.⁴²⁷ As a result, self-efficacy is much more specific as this can have an effect from a psychological state to behaviour and motivation which will also be discussed in Section 4.12. The findings of my study confirmed that mentoring helps to fulfil this particular component of self-efficacy which was evident through the statements of various participants. First, participant 15 (LF4) stated that mentoring helped her to maintain standards and ensure that mistakes were not made. She was conscious of high expectations in her job role and with mentoring support she was more capable of offering flawless performance. Second participant 19 (LF1) confirmed that mentoring ensured that she was at the position of her career where she wanted to be and was continuously improving. Further disclosure by participant 10 (LF5) revealed that she desired to become the strongest (at the position in her career)

⁴²⁷ Albert Bandura, ‘Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioural Change’ (1977) 84(2) Psychological Review 191-215.

individual in her specialization and the most proficient lawyer she can be during her legal career and mentoring assisted her with these desires. Moreover, participant 1 (LF1) confirmed that with her ambitious personality and opportunities of mentoring support, she pushed herself forward and even volunteered for various roles that gave her more responsibilities which in turn she was able to demonstrate her strengths to the firm and progress quickly. Final disclosure of participant 12 (LF1) revealed that mentoring aid her career progression by promoting self-reflection and learning from others' best practice in order to develop herself further. She felt that mentoring offered necessary guidance on ways to improve her prospects and feedback on how to maximise her opportunities for self-development.

Self-efficacy theory helps to explain expressions of motivation in the above participants' statements who wished to progress their careers and take up relevant opportunities. The participants reconfirmed that when hearing about mentors' successful progressions who have been through similar journeys, filled the junior mentees with motivation and strong beliefs that further progression is possible. All of the above participants revealed that they have had positive visions of success within their firms that they worked for and perceived capabilities of driving the vision forward. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to manage this perception forward and to apply self-control over behaviour. The next Section 4.9 will provide key findings of my data relating to the participants' career developments.

4.9 *Self-development and career progression*

Referring back to the literature review chapter where a reference to self-development has been made in Section 2.12 which recognised the process as being a gradual development.⁴²⁸ This gradual process

⁴²⁸ Alan Carr, *Positive Psychology and You A Self Development Guide* (1st edn, London Routledge 2019).

includes one's efforts that are put forward towards further progression and self-fulfilment by taking steps to assist in the development. Similarly, and as stated in Section 2.2 of the literature review, career progression is recognised in gaining experience in the field of one's interest to help with improving and working up the ranks.

From the analysis of my data, 96 per cent of the participants (21 participants) felt that self-development and career progression were the most common topics for the discussion of mentoring. With the participants being at various stages of their careers during my data collection, the majority of the participants talked in detail about how mentoring had helped their career advancement, being assisted and encouraged throughout this process. Participant 1 (LF1) stated: 'The mentoring programme is helping my career progression including advice on how to progress.' She further revealed that mentoring encourages her continuously to be self-driven and push herself beyond her comfort zone, whilst also nudging her in the right direction in relation to putting herself forward for projects and to undertake various roles within the team. It is evident from the participant's experiences that the mentoring programme has made her more ambitious, as her mentor, she confirmed, has encouraged development and speedy progression, whilst providing advice as to how to meet her own personal aims. The mentor's support provided an influential drive for the mentee who developed further self-believe and courage. It is evident that female lawyer participants were eager to maximise their potential skills and qualities, set goals and aim for success in order to further their careers. Participant 2 (LF1) found mentoring particularly helpful with route-mapping her career for example, what steps were required to take in order to progress her legal career further. Moreover, she explained that she felt that mentoring helped to think about her personal impact in and around the firm as well as within the wider community. Similarly, participant 4 (LF3) revealed that mentoring helped her in making career decisions by discussing options both, inside and outside of the firm. Participant 6 (LF3) added further that mentoring kept her progression consistent having access to a mentor to discuss matters as she was going along. This type of ongoing and informal mentoring support was perceived

by many participants as a definite assistance in terms of career progression. Moreover, participant 9 (LF1) stated that she has found mentoring to be extremely beneficial from a personal perspective and hoped to give others a similar experience. She further confirmed that mentoring has definitely assisted her career progression from paralegal to associate, ultimately enabling her to qualify as a solicitor and stay with the firm.

Employees continually build new competencies that enable them to adapt to the changing demands of a workplace across multiple types of work and organisations.⁴²⁹ With law as a competitive and fast changing business environment where changes in procedures are being regularly updated, it keeps the workforce on constant guard having to adapt swiftly in order to keep their progress improving. This is evident from the participants' statements who are conscious of the ongoing changes in law and their need of continuous need of improvement and progression. For example, participant 15 (LF5) confirmed that her aim and a desired outcome of mentoring was to keep abreast of changes in the law and procedures to ensure best practice. Continuous progression in the career of law proved to be one of the main aims of the majority of my participants who talk about skills development, career progression and succession. Participant 14 (LF5) further explained that she found mentoring to be a very organic way of progressing her career because it focused on developing her skills. It was evident that the junior participants aim to reach their goals to become fully qualified solicitors by adopting appropriate skills to help them achieve the training contracts and further qualifications. She further added that mentoring provided her with the experience that she needed to help develop the necessary skills to obtain a training contract. Moreover, the mentoring programme has resulted in her now being a trainee solicitor and has definitely helped in her career progression. In addition to the above, participant 18 (LF1) felt that the mentoring programme helped her career progression in a very practical way. Her desired outcome of the mentoring programme was to gain a training contract and

⁴²⁹ Edward E. Lawler III and David Finegold, 'Past, Present, and Future: Individualizing the Organization' (2000) 29(1) *Organizational Dynamics* 1-15.

secure a job as a solicitor on qualification. She has achieved her desires and was practicing law in her intended law firm following additional training in different departments which she found very useful.

Even for the senior solicitor participants, mentoring was always a useful experience. Participant 19 (LF1) stated that even at the time of qualification she was eager to progress her career further and to make sure she will progress to senior solicitor level at the right time. Her mentor was particularly supportive and has ensured that she was 'on the right track' to achieve her career progression and desire to become senior solicitor.

With the support of a mentor, some participants felt that they had greater chances of progression and being successful. Participant 21 (LF1) confidently stated that mentoring was very beneficial, giving her helpful tips and pointers on her application and generally how to improve her chances to being successful. With the support of a mentor, the participant felt that it was undoubtedly much easier to progress her career as the mentor was likely to have a beneficial impact on her career by providing support and guidance to assist her. Moreover, participant 22 (LF1) further revealed that the insight that she gained from having a mentor has undoubtedly assisted her career as well. She further added that mentoring gave her somewhere to go to sound out issues and provided her with an opportunity to discuss matters with someone not directly involved with any given transaction or issue. In turn, she dealt with issues more constructively and felt more emotionally supported...taking a holistic approach to supporting individuals to become the best version of themselves that may result in better career progression. Overall perceptions of different participants of this study showed the positive experiences of mentoring which assisted the participants with their career progressions. Having a mentor allowed the participants to seek necessary advice when required and felt supported through various stages of their career development.

The next Section **4.10** looks at the participants' perceptions of mentoring in relation to networking.

4.10 Networking

As previously established in the literature review chapter and Section **2.10**, expanding networks and connections offer invaluable opportunities to help and prepare mentees for their career progression and further development. This mutually beneficial process provides vital keys to the achievement of career goals through sharing skills, knowledge and resources. Networking has been one of the key findings of this research, helping the participants to advance their careers through mentoring. Participant 13 (LF5) confirmed that she wanted a mentor and someone who had successfully been through the process to help her obtain a training contract, gave tips and advice and to help achieve goal of becoming a Solicitor. Networking can be a daunting experience for some individuals having to speak and connect with new people. Nonetheless, with commitment and career progression in mind, networking provides a wider opportunity for a new mentee to further their career through meeting and talking to others. With other people around and often more experienced or senior colleagues, a mentee is likely to gain an inevitable experience to help their career development. Networking includes being involved in various activities which offer opportunities to connect with more people at once. Participant 13 (LF5) stated: ‘My mentor introduced me to senior partners in the firm, gave me advice on other things to get involved with within the firm to raise my profile such as joining the netball team and the Charity Committee.’

Mentoring support offers direct help and advice to mentees who informally get to know various people from higher levels of the profession and even from different departments or offices. 82 per cent of the participants (18 participants) of my study made a positive reference to networking and its effects. The participants made express links between mentoring and networking. Their desires to gain and expand their networking circles were executed through mentoring networks and a result

networking has contributed to their career progression and further development. For example, participant 9 (LF1) stated:

I have a number of senior colleagues who provide me with informal mentoring. They have supported me throughout my time at the firm, initially with training contract applications, then whilst working part-time as a paralegal during my LPC studies and finally, following my return to full-time employment and qualification as a solicitor. I continue to find it useful to speak with colleagues both in terms of my personal development and my long-term career aspirations.

From the feedback of this participant it is evident that mentoring not only helped her throughout various stages of her legal career but also in terms of her personal development. This type of support was offered through an informal mentoring which continued indefinitely. Female mentors' section will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Moreover, participant 8 (LF1) explained that networking was very important as the employer's expectations, especially at the initial stage of the training contract, focused on the basic information before anything else. This mainly included information about the firm and people as to who they are, their roles and responsibilities. She further confirmed that through the informal type of mentoring, the mentee was aware of various partners' capabilities and who to see in connection with different types of relevant training opportunities. This helped with the expansion of networks and alternative connections including sharing tips and advising who to contact with regards to particular queries. Moreover, participant 8 further revealed her personal perception of mentoring and networking link:

Mentoring is about a connection, it's about someone really wanting to help someone else. If you network and get a senior partner that come in with the formal set up of the mentoring

network you would get a better quality of mentoring than an informal mentoring, I think. If the firm said let's set up a formal mentoring scheme then, you will get an access to partners and senior partners to whom you wouldn't get an access to before. Further, formal mentoring is a different quality of mentoring. The formal type of mentoring is a different and more varied type of mentoring because when the mentoring is informal you only rely on people around you, around your desk, in your department, perhaps people to who you have an organic access to.

With this thorough feedback provided by participant 8 (LF1), her perception confirmed that an informal type of mentoring only can offer the usual support through the people that the participant already knows. Whereas, if the participant was a mentee within a formal type of mentoring, this may have offered an access to various individuals across the whole of the law firm and facilitate greater chances of further networking.

Networking offers an informal support of exchange of information and ideas between individuals who normally share a common interest. The data collected from the participants included various aspects of networking. Some participants felt that networking between female mentors and mentees may help generally and be more beneficial to a female mentee, others stated that there is no particular relevance on the gender type of the mentor at all. The participant 3 (LF1) confirmed that having female mentors can help however, it would not make a difference to her if there were not any available. Moreover, participant 8 (LF1) felt that male mentors are better connected because even from her current experience, in her own department, they go out for lunches together and they seem to have more of an informal network going on. This idea, i.e. going out together, like even drinking and so on, they seem to network better and that's when they pass a lot of information. Further, she added:

If I have chosen to have children then I may have had a preference to have a female mentor or if I had a family, I would have want to talk to a woman mentor, especially one in the same circumstances who has a family of her own. Just to emphasise my answer, I think you can either have a female or a male mentor, and as if possible have numerous mentors which would be even better. This would be a wonderful network position.

This view has showed that mentoring and networking further links the multi-mentor model, discussed earlier in Section 4.4.

Further evidence demonstrated that 27 per cent of the participants (6 participants) in my study felt that networking and having a female mentor was an important aspect for their career development and progression as it provided an aspiration to better themselves and led them to believe that the progression is possible. The different views and perceptions of the participants of this study vary to some extent however, it is evident that having a female role model, particularly in a demanding profession such as in law, helps to provide encouragement and boost confidence. This particular aspect of female mentors will be discussed further in the next Section 4.11.

4.11 Female mentors and their characteristics

Further findings confirmed that the majority of the participants of my study prefer a female mentor over a male mentor. Some of the women stated that they aspired more to having a female mentor to help provide support with career progression and developments. In particular, females who balanced a professional full-time career as a lawyer and also decide to have a family. Having a strong female lawyer model provided further inspiration for the participants of a junior level to advance their careers. It showed that having a balance between a full-time career and a family was certainly possible, improving females' confidence and their career advancement. Participant 3 (LF1) and 6

(LF3) stated that having female partners as role models help female lawyers to strive for career progression.

Pringle and others⁴³⁰ recognised the lack of women partners (in law firms) and the absence of role models, with or without children. Female mentors who progress their career to senior levels as well as having a family provide an inspiring vision for the younger generation of female lawyers. This perspective was mentioned by some of the participants of my study including participant 1 (LF1) who stated the following:

I wanted a strong female role model, who is striving to reach the top of her career and I have found that this has built my confidence and drive. I do think female partners are role models for female lawyers, particularly the partners who seem to have it all, i.e. a family life, work / life balance etc. I chose my mentor on the basis that she had progressed with the firm and we had similar career interests. My mentor raised a family whilst working full time, which was admirable. In a time where some female professionals choose to take a career break or reduce their hours to part time, it is good to see someone further their career and balance both family and work life.

The next statement made by participant 2 (LF1) confirmed the importance of having female lawyer mentors for the purposes of support and inspiration to the younger generation of trainee lawyers in particular. She revealed that

To work with an established female partner when I thought about role models, I was keen to have a female mentor... having women in leadership roles (of whatever nature) paves the path

⁴³⁰ Judith K. Pringle, Candice Harris, Katherine Ravenswood, Lynne Giddings, Irene Ryan and Sabina Jaeger, 'Women's Career Progression in Law Firms: Views From the Top, Views from Below' (2017) 24(4) *Gender, Work & Organization* 435-449.

for a discussion about my own career, whether that is towards partnership, management positions or leadership (for example, managing a client relationship).

She further confirmed that her departmental head partner was a woman who was in her thirties and this was inspiring and interesting to find as she said that it also ‘exemplifies how the department’s direction was changing e.g. towards greater acceptance of flexible working.’

Women who achieved the balance of a full-time career in law and having a family, offered junior female lawyers an opportunity to strive towards the. Often however, it was solely dependent on the individual and their own eagerness to succeed. Nonetheless, having the opportunities to see what some female lawyers have achieved on the same career path proposed a positive vision towards succession for others.

4.12 *Mentoring and motivation*

As discussed, mentoring is based on the traditional model where an older and more experienced person, provides advice, support and help to a younger, less experienced person as discussed in the literature review chapter, Section 2.2. This kind of support may be career related or a psychosocial, personal type. Some of the participants of my study felt that the experience of being mentored had significantly contributed to their goals achieving further career progression and as a result they have become mentors themselves. They have highlighted the importance of mentoring and its valuable outcomes during their career development. Participant 20 (LF2) revealed:

I became a mentor so I could support those entering the profession, as I know first-hand how difficult it can be! In a busy practice where business development and fee earning is key, not

a huge amount of weight is placed upon mentoring. The busy reality of life in practice means that it isn't necessary acknowledged by management as much as it should.

This participant's perception showed that due to the busy nature of the job, mentoring support may often be omitted where in fact its benefits would be greatly appreciated.

Mentoring may provide access to new relationships with people from different networks to their own. It may open horizons for further learning, opportunities and connections with people and networks often difficult to reach. Further findings of my research revealed that mentoring provided the participants with an emotional support as well as greater opportunities to develop friendships as seen in education sector and mentioned by various researchers in Section 2.7.

Participant 22 (LF1) stated:

I think the insight I gained from having a mentor has undoubtedly assisted my career. It gave me somewhere to go to sound out issues and provided me with an opportunity to discuss matters with someone not directly involved with any given transaction or issue. In turn, I dealt with issues more constructively and felt more emotionally supported. Because of the beneficial impact a mentor had on me and my career, I now aim to provide that type of support and guidance to others to assist them.

Moreover, participant 13 (LF5) added: 'I am now a buddy mentor for more junior colleagues who, like I did, want to get a training contract and I am trying to help them achieve this, as my mentor buddy did for me.'

With having inspirational and motivating mentors, mentees develop encouraging and influential abilities to progress with a strong motivation. The participants of my study relate mentoring to motivation as a stimulating process to desire and accomplish goals. More generally, motivation is seen as a willingness to do something. Initially, to recognise a weakness, then set up a goal and follow necessary action to achieve it. Participant's 1 (LF1) perception offers just that by stating:

I recognise that I still have weaknesses and wish to develop myself in to a good solicitor...I wish to ensure that I am making the best impression possible...whilst also ensuring that I am an asset to the firm...I am specifically concentrating on building up my confidence and abilities in business development and I am hopeful that by the end of the (mentoring) programme I will be better placed and prepared to assist with this area of the business.

Having a mentor enables a mentee to focus on their desired progression whatever this may be. Mentors can also help with motivating mentees through their ongoing help and support. Participant 19 (LF1) expressed the following: 'My mentor has been particularly supportive and has ensured that I am on the right track to achieve my career progression and to ensure I am where I need to be and always improving. This is to make sure I will make senior associate.' Moreover, one of the participants who was a senior solicitor confirmed that having a mentor has undoubtedly assisted her career and she felt that it helped individuals to become the best version of themselves which consequently resulted in better overall career progression. There was a further link made by the same participant between motivation and having a female mentor which helped female mentees' career progression even further. Having a senior female mentor, the younger generation of female lawyers may find it inspiring to progress their careers further by motivating them to achieve their set goals. Motivation is the reason for people's actions, willingness and goals.⁴³¹ Motivation has been

⁴³¹ Management Study Guide

<https://www.managementstudyguide.com/what_is_motivation.htm> accessed 9 October 2019.

considered as one of the most important reasons that inspires a person to move forward.⁴³² Together with motivation is the mentees' strength and willingness to achieve goals. Having inspirational leaders in the workplace can motivate the early career lawyers and mentees to achieve their desires and goals.

4.13 Summary

The following summary provides insights into the participants' experiences of the impact of mentoring support received during their legal career progressions. The qualitative nature of the adopted methodology for this research assisted with gaining necessary feedback from the participants to answer the research question about the effectiveness of the mentoring support received by the participants and to fill the empirical gap. The findings of this study are as follows:

1. Lack of consistency in mentoring support across the participating law firms as discussed in Section **3.3**.
2. Inconsistencies as to what type of mentoring (formal or informal) actually provided foremost support for the participating mentees. Particularly, lack of indication which form of mentoring was more successful as discussed in Section **4.5**.
3. Mentoring support contributed to the participants' career progression. Through the mentors' support the participating mentees experienced career progression as discussed in Section **4.7**.

⁴³² Daniel Wallen, 'The Simplest Ways to Inspire People and Change Their Life' <<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/20-ways-inspire-people-around-you.html>> accessed 9 October 2019.

4. Increased opportunities of networking as discussed in Section **4.10**. Networking assisted the participants with making extended connections, identifying potential career progression opportunities. Networking was also found to offer support in transferring knowledge leading to greater job satisfaction and assisting the participants in gaining wider connections with more colleagues from different departments and offices (Section **4.10**).
5. Mentoring support contributed in expanding the participants' confidence and self-efficacy. Through the mentors' support the participating mentees experienced confidence growth as discussed in Section **4.8**.
6. The empirical data of this study also revealed that having female lawyers progressing through the ranks who then became mentors themselves provided further inspiration and encouragement for the participating female mentees who strive to further their career progression (Section **4.11**).
7. Mentoring support contributed to further development of mentees' motivation. Through the mentors' encouragement mentees experienced motivation growth as discussed in Section **4.12**.
8. Lack of a multi-mentor support as discussed in Section **4.4**. The participants' perception was clear that if the multi-mentor model was made available to them during mentoring then their career progression could have potentially increased through the support of various mentors.
9. Mentoring support across all the participating law firms lack monitoring of their mentoring programmes. Without any form of monitoring of the mentoring programmes, it is challenging

to focus on future improvements of the support if there is no data available to show how successful the process was and how the process was even carried out.

10. The final key finding of my research revealed that mentoring support in law firms remains under-researched. Initial attempt of gaining access to the potential participants proved rather difficult including connecting with law firms and finding the right person/s responsible for the mentoring support ie senior partner/s or Human Resources (HR). Furthermore, finding willing participants, including female lawyers, many of whom may be reluctant to participate in an empirical research of mentoring also proved challenging during my data collection as discussed in Section **3.3**.

The above findings of my research provided further insights into the participants' experiences of the impact of mentoring support received during their legal career progressions. As a result of this study, the empirical data filled the gap in the current literature to support this area of law and female lawyers' progression.

The next Chapter **5** provides the discussion of the main findings of this research as summarised above in Section **4.12**.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I highlighted the findings from the analysis of the empirical data which leads me on to this chapter, where I delve into the participants' responses, evaluating the findings while relating them to the literature outlined in Chapter 2. Furthermore, I will also provide an overview of how the findings relate to the research question before my overall conclusion. The purpose of this study was to explore the views and experiences of female lawyers' participants who have experienced mentoring support during their legal careers. The study was undertaken in the context of assessing the perceived effectiveness of mentoring support in the participating law firms which were made available to the participants. Having identified them in Chapter 1, the aims and how they have been addressed through the research questions which are summarised as follows in Table A:

TABLE A

Aims	Research questions
Expand empirical understanding of why female lawyers participants became mentees within the mentoring programme at their law firm.	1. When and why did you commence the mentoring programme at this law firm?
Understand whether the mentees are finding the mentoring programmes beneficial and to what extent they believe that the schemes potentially lead to further career progression.	2. From a career development point of view, to what extent do you believe that the mentoring programme is helping your career progression?
Clarify all inspirations and desired outcomes of the mentoring programme that were considered by each mentee.	3. What is your desired outcome of the mentoring experience?
Expand empirical understanding of each mentee's perception of the mentoring support and any effect that the mentoring programme has on their career progression.	4. Do you feel that the mentoring programme has helped you to advance your legal career or achieve your desires?
Clarify the perceived impact of the mentoring support for each mentee and the extent to which they believe that the programme has assisted their career advancement.	5. Have you moved to a senior position following the completion of the mentoring programme?

This research has focused particularly on the female participation and their individual perceptions of the mentoring support. The participants' perceptions are unique findings of my study offering distinctive views of mentoring experiences adding originality to the current knowledge.

5.2 *Feminist theory and female lawyers' progression through mentoring programme*

A feminist theory⁴³³ underpinned my study and a qualitative research methodology was adopted. This has allowed me to produce original and timely findings of the participants' perceptions and to establish a contribution to the existing body of literature. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, there are relatively few empirically-based studies examining the use of mentoring programmes in law firms, particularly from a UK perspective. The empirical evidence shared by the participants of my study relates to the findings from international studies presented in the existing literature (Section 2.2). The initial findings of Kanter,⁴³⁴ followed by Levinson and others⁴³⁵ demonstrated that mentoring aids the career development of females in law firms (Section 2.2). The findings of my study support the above claim as my participants also found mentoring support beneficial and assisting their career progression as discussed in Section 4.9. As mentoring aids career progression,⁴³⁶ it provides additional support for female lawyers during all stages of their legal careers⁴³⁷ and in addition, it assists with personal development including self-efficacy (Section 4.9) and confidence (Section 4.8). Despite the findings of female lawyers' progression with the support of mentoring, the statistics⁴³⁸ proved that men continue to dominate the upper levels of the legal profession (Section 2.6) and therefore, highlighting a consideration of structural issues (gender and class process) of mentoring programmes in law firms surrounding female progression in particular. There may be an opportunity for law firms to develop mentoring programmes with a particular focus on how to overcome the issue of female lawyers' further progression through the use of mentoring programmes that could help them advance their

⁴³³ Hilary Sommerlad and Peter Sanderson, *Gender, Choice and Commitment* (1st edn, Routledge 2019).

⁴³⁴ Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Basic Books 1977).

⁴³⁵ Daniel J. Levinson, Charlotte N. Darrow, Edward B. Klein, Maria H. Levinson and Braxton McKee, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books 1978).

⁴³⁶ Beronda L. Montgomery, 'Mapping a Mentoring Roadmap and Developing a Supportive Network for Strategic Career Advancement' (2017) 7(2) Sage Publications Journals 1-13.

⁴³⁷ Jean E. Wallace, 'The Benefits of Mentoring for Female Lawyers' (2001) 58(3) Journal of Vocational Behavior 366-391.

⁴³⁸ Judith K. Pringle, Candice Harris, Katherine Ravenswood, Lynne Giddings, Irene Ryan and Sabina Jaeger, 'Women's Career Progression in Law Firms: Views from the Top, Views from Below, Gender, Work and Organization' (2017) 24(4) Gender, Work & Organization 435-449.

careers. There may be an opportunity to focus on further development structures of mentoring programmes including for example, the multi-mentor model (Section 2.7.1) or female-mentor support (Section 2.9.2). The findings of my research demonstrated that female lawyers seek female mentors (Section 4.11) who they find inspirational and supportive. They believe that this helps them with their motivation (Section 4.12), confidence (Section 4.8), job satisfaction and further career progression (Section 4.9). Similarly, it was established during this study that the multi-mentor support model (Section 4.4) also offered additional support to female lawyers by providing greater opportunities to share advanced knowledge (Section 4.10) which helped with confidence growth and further career developments (Section 4.9). One of the most significant distinctions and findings of the participants' perceptions of this study was the fact that some participants desired to progress to the most senior levels of the profession whereas others only desired to progress to the next stage of their profession or even just to build on their confidence or networking connections. This is a significant finding of this research supporting the fact that mentoring aids not only progression to the most senior levels but also provide support on a daily operation aspect.

Furthermore, during the data analysis stage, various themes were identified by the female lawyers' participants and have been included in Chapter 4 with the following key themes identified as:

1. networking and confidence (Section 5.4);
2. career progression, motivation, personal development and self-efficacy (Section 5.5); and
3. multi-mentor and female mentor model (Section 5.3).

First, female lawyers' participants of this research confirmed that mentoring support received during their legal careers helped with advancing their career development. Aspects of feminist theory has been recognised in this research as the findings support the development of female lawyers within law firms. Through the identification of the above key themes, further barriers to female lawyers'

career progression and development were identified. These included inconsistencies in mentoring support received by the participants of this study (Section 4.5) which reflects the wider picture of mentoring opportunities for females across the legal sector (Section 2.3) proving that men mentees gain greater progression in the male orientated circles.⁴³⁹ As stated in Section 2.3, that female career progression has remained challenging with thoughts of having a family and children, the traditional precedent is now proving difficult to break. Nonetheless, with informal mentoring, some of the participants' perception confirmed that men are more likely to help one another and continue their professionalism in the legal field. This may be an issue faced by women in law, as the competition to progress to senior levels remains challenging especially, with more female lawyers at the lower levels of the profession. Female lawyer's approach may vary from the one of male counterparts, who help one another, socialize in a more relaxed way where they share a lot of information as stated in Chapter 4 by some participants unlike female lawyers who find it harder to maintain similar approaches. The same view was shared by Dreher and Ash⁴⁴⁰ (Section 2.3) who found that common developmental experiences including mentoring in, and membership of, the same social networks facilitate a stronger bond between male mentees and mentors. The intensity and quality of the mentoring relationships were greater for male mentees, resulting in a significant progression. This was further supported by Hawkes⁴⁴¹ (Section 2.3) who revealed that men have benefited from informal mentoring in male dominated fields for a long time while Sambunjak⁴⁴² found that women have reported difficulty in finding mentors in this way and in these environments (Section 2.3).

The inconsistencies in the provision of mentoring support that have been identified in Chapter 4 which prove to have an effect on some of the participants' further career progression, it showed that some

⁴³⁹ Sarah L. Hawkes, 'Supporting Women's Mentoring in Higher Education: A Literature Review' (2010) London King's College London.

⁴⁴⁰ George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

⁴⁴¹ Sarah L. Hawkes, 'Supporting Women's Mentoring in Higher Education: A Literature Review' (2010) London King's College London.

⁴⁴² Dario Sambunjak, Sharon E. Straus and Ana Marusic, 'Mentoring in Academic Medicine: A Systematic Review' (2006) 296(9) *American Medical Association* 1103-1115.

law firms might be able to do more to support further female career progression. Furthermore, some law firms may not be able to offer multi-mentor support due to the size and mentors' availability. Having limited number of available mentors often creates limited opportunities to all the staff. Larger law firms with offices across various locations and higher number of senior members may offer greater opportunities to cross mentoring opportunities between departments or even across offices.

Second, as stated above, there are inconsistencies with the type of mentoring support offered across the participating law firms as some facilitate more structured systems whereas others provide more of an informal support. Depending on the type of mentoring programme offered, the informal type of support often limits the opportunities for monitoring the training (Section 2.3). The formal mentoring is likely to provide more structure including opportunities for monitoring and the mentoring relationships tend to last for a specific period of time (Section 2.2). In comparison with mentoring in either the education or business sectors, the pool of potential mentors is likely to be larger than in law as mentors may potentially be based in different locations increasing their numbers as well as going beyond the organization they work for. Furthermore, mentoring programmes in education (Section 2.7) and business (Section 2.6) are often formal and begin at the commencement of mentees' career. Although the formal mentoring support is likely to be monitored for a defined period of time whereas, informal mentoring offers an ongoing support indefinitely as seen in the participating law firms (Section 2.3). During both forms of mentoring, mentees are more likely to have made further connections across wider networks introducing informal communications and find access to broader networks (Section 2.10). Access to mentoring support opportunities should offer the same amount of support and availability to all employees equally whether the support is based formally or informally.

Third, a lack of monitoring and follow up in relation to the mentoring support has been identified during my research and the inconsistencies of the monitoring present potential issues that offer scope for improvement. It has been recognised in the earlier paragraph that formal type of mentoring is

more structured and therefore, monitoring of the programme should provide further support. However, the findings of my research showed that even with the formal type of mentoring there is lack of monitoring available. Section 4.5 outlines further findings from my research which reveal a lack of special measures for monitoring mentoring programmes including an overall success rate. Further, a lack of monitoring of mentoring programmes reduces opportunities for employees' progression because, without such process, it is difficult to identify what works and what does not work in practice. In particular, as mentoring involves mentees at various stages of their learning progression, a lack of monitoring reduces opportunities to learn how personal relationships develop, whether the strategies work and what can be done to improve the programme for the future. Previous qualitative research,⁴⁴³ discussed earlier in Section 2.4, was undertaken to show the importance of advantages and disadvantageous in monitoring mentoring programmes and provided suggestions for future mentoring practice. With this in mind, my study adds further knowledge to the available empirical evidence for further improvements in this particular area including, monitoring of the mentoring support and consistent support across the participant law firms. Monitoring provides regular observations of the systems in place, outlining objectives and measuring performance which may be used to maintain and improve previous, current and future practices.

5.3 *Multi-mentor and female-mentor models*

The participants of my study revealed that having a multi-mentor support (Section 4.4) would offer an additional assistance during the career progression. Moreover, the participants confirmed that the multi-mentor model would have been welcomed if it was made available to the participants involved. The empirical evidence gained from this study showed that the multi-mentor model may also provide greater opportunities for wider networking across departments and therefore, further chances of career

⁴⁴³ Lillian T. Eby and Angie Lockwood, 'Proteges' and Mentors' Reactions to Participating in Formal Mentoring Programs: A Qualitative Investigation' (2005) 67(3) Journal of Vocational Behavior 441-458.

progression and development. Therefore, the findings in my study would agree with Burlew⁴⁴⁴ who stated previously that a multi-mentor model can bring a unique aspect of career development (Section 2.7.1). The experiences of this study's participants suggest that having numerous mentors offer a wider scale of learning and consequently, further opportunities for career progression and development. This may include both male and female mentors who could provide greater benefits to each mentee with extensive network connections and wider support. Each mentor could potentially offer and add broad values depending on their personal experiences, knowledge and specialisation that present a larger scope of learning, opportunities and possibilities for mentees' future progression. This approach relates to Burlew's view of a multi-mentor model which is based on the promise that mentoring is not a single event in the life of a worker but rather several events with different levels of mentoring (Section 2.7.1). The findings of my research also reflected a positive desire of having various mentors as each level of mentoring requires a different type of mentor with different types of skills and knowledge.

Participants' feedback revealed that the multi-mentor support was positively regarded as it would potentially provide an excellent network position for every mentee. In addition, further findings from my research showed that the participants, who currently only have one mentor, shared the view that the multi-mentor model would likely to provide them with additional support as every mentor could offer different guidance, as a result of their own individual career experiences (Section 4.4). Having numerous mentors' support is likely to provide mentees with a more rounded and varied programme. As each mentor's legal career journey was likely to have been different, the help that they can provide could also vary accordingly to their lived experiences. Some mentors, for example, may be parents themselves and others may not have family at all therefore, their experiences and support may prove to be contrasting. Nonetheless, further findings showed that having mentors from different practice

⁴⁴⁴ Larry D. Burlew, 'Multiple Mentor Model: A Conceptual Framework' (1991) 17(3) *Journal Career Development* 213-221.

areas were helpful as each mentor provided a fresh approach and varied advice depending on the topic or objective (Section 4.4). Moreover, having that broad area of support through various mentors, could help mentees to show how to diversify and become unique. Having the multi-mentor support can also potentially help to shape the mentee into a truly unique lawyer by giving guidance and constructive criticisms. From the participants' perspective, having multiple mentors may be more beneficial to a female lawyer's career progression than having just one mentor. Also, some law firms may want to consider the benefits of having mentors at different stages or multiple mentors at one time, as they both offer diverse learning opportunities in the legal field. If there is a group of mentors, it is likely that they may work as a coordinated team in a collective manner providing similar advice as per initial training or may be that individual mentors possess varied experiences offering valued help, including personal and emotional support.

In contrast, there may also be some potential difficulties with the provision of multi-mentor support, especially for law firms of a smaller capacity who may not have the requisite resources. A primary issue would be the lack of available mentors or even their willingness to cooperate. Furthermore, some law firms may simply be reluctant to adopt the multi-mentor model because, without the formal framework of a monitoring scheme, that could prove to be challenging. The larger law firms may potentially have better opportunities to provide the multi-mentor support, especially in organisations where specialisms vary and their location is multiple as this provides more opportunities to meet different people from various backgrounds whose experiences are diverse. Also, smaller law firms may have fewer senior lawyers and partners covering a potentially narrower spectrum of specialisms to act as mentors in offering their time and knowledge. Further findings have revealed that having a ratio of more than three to five mentors per mentee may not offer any more support than having one (Section 4.4). Although, some participants confirmed that they can learn a lot from their colleagues, although the balance between having too few or too many mentors should be carefully considered. One participant, in particular, felt that having too many mentors may simply confuse their process of

their progression given that potentially conflicting advice may be given (Section 4.4). She has however, confirmed that the multi-mentor model was likely to be beneficial just not with too many mentors that could potentially provide conflicting advice and support. If mentoring was made available to junior lawyers at the commencement of their employment in a law firm, which could be considered the ideal opportunity to offer as it is in the education sector (Section 2.7) and provide necessary support to new recruits, the varied support provided by multi-mentors could potentially offer wider network connections and further career progression. With the multi-mentor support, mentees are likely to receive mentoring help with facing their fears as a new employee, learning the job and developing good connections with the firm and its colleagues. Therefore, the findings from my research relating to the multi-mentor model echoed the original ideas of Kram's original scholarship⁴⁴⁵ focused on developmental relationships (Section 2.2). Also, recent works of Higgins and others⁴⁴⁶ that contended that most people draw on a broad and diverse range of individuals for mentoring support during their working lives (Section 2.7.1). In general, individuals benefit from having a multi-mentor support offering various developmental functions that different mentors fulfil⁴⁴⁷ which has also been found during this research.

The previous findings during the literature review demonstrated that mentoring has become an increasingly common tool used by many organisations and management in particular, to aid retention levels and to lift restrictions to career progression and consequently, to benefit the workforce (Section 2.6.3). Retention levels reflect both, employees' potential for advancement and their satisfaction levels hence, employees' contentment is considered to be very important. The findings of my study revealed that mentoring support improved the participants' progression and aided their further career

⁴⁴⁵ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (Foresman and Company 1985).

⁴⁴⁶ Monica C. Higgins, 'The More, the Merrier? Multiple Developmental Relationships and Work Satisfaction' (2000) 19(4) *Journal of Management Development* 277-296.

⁴⁴⁷ Mary D. Sorcinelli and Jung Yun, 'From mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy' (2007) 39(6) *Journal Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 58-61.

development, increased career satisfaction which in turn leads to individuals staying with the same firm. These elements are important aspects to firms which remain the domain for trust and customer service. Further findings from my research confirmed that mentoring support offered a broad variety of benefits to lawyers including career progression, boosting career satisfaction and consequently minimising risks of attrition (Section 4.9). Further discussions included in this chapter present my recent findings which are based on the participants' perceptions of their personal experiences and views of the mentoring support received during their legal career experiences as senior solicitors, solicitors, trainee solicitors and junior paralegal staff. The next Section 5.2 will discuss the themes of networking and confidence which emerged from my findings.

5.4 *Networking and confidence*

As a result of my research, networking has been found to be one of the main benefits of mentoring for the legal career progression of the participants in this study. Networking has been identified and discussed in Section 4.10 where it was recognised as means of a direct support, offering mentees advanced help during their legal career progression. The participants of my study confirmed that mentoring allowed them to establish networking connections easier with senior colleagues. The participants related the advanced networking support directly to mentoring following mentors' support and advice in situations where senior help was being sought. Generally, mentors possess greater experience and knowledge to junior mentees that they can share with them to help with supporting further progression. Also, mentors are generally more aware of the networking circles and consequently, able to connect mentees with the relevant senior colleagues who can provide direct support as and when needed. It has been highlighted during my data collection that the networking circles were considerably important during lawyers' career progression. Often the networking connections developed into informal friendships outside of work facilitating opportunities to share information and consequently, continue the learning process (Section 4.10). It has been suggested by

some participants of my study that some law firms may have regular outings organised for their employees outside of work for example, golfing, walking or football events where colleagues are able to share information as well as to build upon the networking connections. Both, mentors and mentees, are then able to talk and discuss matters outside the formal working environment and become more open and approachable, developing their other values, such as confidence (discussed later in this Section). Moreover, the perception and experience of the participants of this study further found that male mentors and mentees may be better connected as they tend to go out together more often, frequently on an informal basis (for example, for a drink or lunch). Some of the female participants of this study felt that male colleagues seem to have developed more informal network connections to facilitate better transfer and exchange of information. The question that arose from the above findings was why cannot the participants in my research create the same opportunities? Perhaps, female mentees also possess abilities to create similar opportunities through alternative hobbies and interests however, difficulties arise in situations potentially involving a male mentor and a female mentee.⁴⁴⁸ The general perception of people may suggest that when a male and a female mentoring couple decide to go out for a drink or lunch together, they are immediately being seen as potentially a couple in a relationship.⁴⁴⁹ This creates further difficulties for female mentees whose mentors remain males for the obvious reasons. Nonetheless, the further findings of my study show that mixed mentoring relationships do not pose specific issues in female lawyers' career progression as long as they remain in formal settings or during the working environment. Further indications have been made by the participants of this study that it would not make a difference to have either, a male or a female mentor to a female mentee. This is for as long as they have a mentor who had successfully been through the process before in order to help with progressing mentees careers, provide an appropriate advice and help achieve goals on the way to soliciting qualification. Moreover, participants who choose to have no children or have not yet decided to have a family were happy to also have either a male or a female

⁴⁴⁸ Anne G. Bogat and Belle Liang, *Gender in Mentoring Relationships* (Sage Publications Ltd 2005).

⁴⁴⁹ Jean E. Rhodes, Anne G. Bogat, Jennifer Roffman, Peter Edelman and Lisa Galasso, 'Youth Mentoring in Perspective: Introduction to the Special Issue' (2002) 30 (2) *American Journal of Community Psychology* 149-155.

mentor. However, they indicated that their preference to having a female mentor would have been greater if they decided to have children and family. They further revealed that having a female mentor who has reached the partnership level of their career while having a family and children provided them with an admirable model to copy as discussed in Section 4.11. Therefore, it is evident that having a female senior model who reached the highest levels of the legal profession supports the younger generation during the initial stages of the career. My findings further showed that the junior participants valued the female model figure in the legal profession as it helped them to aspire to have it all; family, children and a good work / life balance. To work with an established female partner was an aspiration for some participants of my study who further stated that the changes seen in current practice are exemplifying and show how the law firm's direction was changing towards greater acceptance of flexible working (Section 2.9.4). Having women in leadership roles paves the path for junior lawyers and their career progression as it inspires them to emulate successful female figure within their organisations (Section 2.9.2). Participants indicated that having much broader networking connections increased their confidence (Section 4.8). A significant level of increased confidence helped female lawyers to progress their careers in the legal profession and operate more collectively and positively during everyday tasks and make decisions on their own initiatives. Whilst confidence cannot be taught, because it is a state of mind,⁴⁵⁰ it can be developed with positive thinking, training, talking with others, practice and gaining knowledge. Therefore, mentoring is seen as an inevitable opportunity to a mentee's career progression further discussed in the next Section 5.5.

5.5 Career progression, motivation, personal development and self-efficacy

Review provided in Chapter 2, included Kanter's⁴⁵¹ perspective which similarly were found in my research where participants suggested that an access to a mentor was advantageous to their career

⁴⁵⁰ Mattei Dogan, 'Erosion of Confidence in Advanced Democracies' (1997) 32(3) *Studies in Comparative International Development* 3-29.

⁴⁵¹ Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Basic Books 1977).

outcome. Every participant of my study felt that having access to either a single mentor or number of mentors during their legal careers was an excellent opportunity for their further career progression. Additional findings also revealed that whether mentoring was compulsory or voluntary, formal or informal, having access to a mentor added prosperous opportunities to their career development. This echoes the initial view of mentoring introduced by Kram in 1977 (Chapter 2). Moreover, Kram's subsequent findings affirmed that the mentorship can significantly enhance development in early adulthood and also in the mid-career stage of the more experienced individual. The findings of my study also revealed the succession element of mentoring support received particularly from the feedback of more junior participants who desired to become fully qualified solicitors. Their perceptions supported the earlier findings that mentoring can significantly help early legal career progressions as this is what they have experienced. In addition, earlier research provided by Dreher and Ash⁴⁵² (Section 2.2) found that mentees experiencing extensive mentoring relationships receive additional promotions, income and an overall better job satisfaction. Kram's subsequent findings⁴⁵³ of mentoring also offer an array of potential benefits for a female mentor, such as organisational recognition, a loyal base of support, career rejuvenation, and improved job performance (Section 2.2). This can be directly related to the findings of my study which proved that mentoring offered female lawyers' participants a range of potential benefits including networking across various departments, career advancement and individual job confidence and satisfaction (Chapter 4).

Further findings of my research revealed that mentees perceived increased motivation during their mentoring journey. Section 4.12 discussed the empirical evidence that demonstrates how motivation was perceived as a profound benefit for the participants, improving their career focus and advancement. Motivation was therefore found to be a significant and influential element in the participants' career progression. In order for the motivation to exist, the supportive bond between a

⁴⁵² George F. Dreher and Ronald A. Ash, 'A Comparative Study of Mentoring Among Men and Women in Managerial, Professional, and Technical Positions' (1990) 75(5) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 539-546.

⁴⁵³ Kathy E. Kram, *Mentoring at Work* (Glenview IL Basic Books 1985).

mentor and a mentee must exist to support the desire to achieve their goals. Often, motivation can be lost if the support is taken away hence, it is important to ensure that the mentoring relationship lasts for a necessary period of time, sometimes this may be indefinitely, based on an informal connection between two people. Having motivating staff, it helps and ensures that the less experienced staff can focus on their progression through others and behaviour that supports others during various stages of lawyers' career progressions. Necessary balance should be considered when mentoring continues indefinitely, especially to reduce the risks to the other stakeholders for example, the mentors and the firm itself. If mentoring support was to last indefinitely, further pressures are added to the mentors who will be providing additional support and also the firm who will be potentially managing the overall support. Therefore, there would be some level of managing the process needed to help to continue with the ongoing mentoring support. Future research may be considered in exploring how a best practice mentoring model could support the stakeholders in potentially managing mentoring indefinitely.

Progressing in a legal career requires completion of various stages, from trainee levels of the profession to potentially achieving a senior partnership. Every progression stage poses various challenges. Therefore, mentoring introduces a pivotal step and offers support from professional to personal level of the progression to embrace on the mentees' careers. When the mentoring pair is found to have a good bond, the mentee is able to settle into the new role with more confidence and focus on their professional development. My research revealed that some participants felt that mentors provide encouragement for further career development throughout the legal careers whilst providing advice as to how to meet own personal aims (Section 4.9). With this level of support, including professional and personal, mentees are then capable of focusing directly on career goals and achievements which consequently helps them with career progression to qualification and further seniority. Earlier findings of Crow and Matthews (Section 2.7) revealed that mentoring interaction provided emotional support through the development of very close relationships. This also proved to

be the same outcome of my research where 55 per cent (12 participants) found mentoring to be significantly helpful from a personal perspective including an emotional support (Section 4.6). Although, mentoring focuses on supporting professional development, it has also been found to provide personal support to individuals who then build further confidence and progression.

5.6 *Summary*

Following the review of the literature in Chapter 2 where the broad acceptance of the benefits that mentoring schemes provide to organisations and those individuals involved has been established. Furthermore, mentoring is being seen in many countries across the world and used as a developmental mechanism to improve forever changing environment. Such schemes are well-established and developed in the education and business sectors as described in Sections 2.6 and 2.7 yet, are largely missing or are only a relatively recent phenomenon in law firms (Section 2.9). Therefore, this study further contributes to the existing knowledge by providing the empirical data received from the female participants and the experiences of mentoring support received during their legal careers. Their qualitative responses offer unique and broad data of mentoring support that contributes to the existing body of literature of mentoring in law firms. Particular focus is based on the effects of the participants' mentoring experiences from the feminist perspective as all the participants of this study were female lawyers.

The findings of this research are the participants' perceptions that reconfirmed Kram's earlier findings mentoring programmes supported the participants career progression in law and as a result some of the participants moved to a more senior position on the completion of their mentoring programme. Further findings also reconfirmed Kanter's earlier findings that having a mentor is an advantageous position for the mentee that have also been found during my research. With the support of a mentor,

female lawyer participants found to gain additional support and developed further confidence and motivation to help with their progression.

Each participating law firm offered different type of support varied from a formal or an informal programme and either for a specific period of time or indefinitely, or both. This study further revealed that there was a lack of consistency in mentoring support available to the participating mentees and a lack of monitoring of the programmes has been identified. Due to the lack of monitoring, there were limited opportunities to draw any further conclusions or outcomes of the mentoring support received by the participants and to learn about each process thoroughly. Despite this lack of monitoring, both formal and informal types of mentoring offered an indefinite support to the participating mentees and further opportunities to further their career progression.

The empirical evidence gained from this research provided an additional assistance and support for the participating law firms and other, including generating a deeper understanding of mentoring programmes available and the effects of mentoring on female lawyers' career progression. Development of a successful career in law remains a long and tireless journey where mentoring can offer substantial support particularly to female lawyers. Particular contribution to the knowledge refers to the multi-mentor support revealed by some of the participants of this study who stated that this would create more advantageous position from their perspective on mentoring. The participants felt that the multi-mentor model can substantially support female lawyers' career progression and provide additional opportunities. Having the support from a number of diverse mentors, variety of advice and assistance during mentoring can potentially present opportunities to build greater networking connections and access a wider range of experiences. Furthermore, networking plays a significant role in building and strengthening mentees' confidence which was another essential factor during the participants' career progression.

Following the above discussion of the main key findings of my research, I move onto the conclusive Chapter 6 of my study where I demonstrate the originality of my findings and the contribution to knowledge through filling the gaps within the existing literature around the lack of empirical data around mentoring in law firms. I outline the potentials for future research proposals in Section 6.2 before exploring practical implications and potential recommendations for law firms' future mentoring programmes. I will conclude this thesis by including my reflective diary including main themes arising from my doctoral learning and developmental journey as well as how this research set a platform for my future research and further career growth.

Chapter 6 Conclusive Summary of the Research

6.1 *Originality and contribution to knowledge*

The main purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of the effects of mentoring opportunities in law firms with a particular focus on female lawyers' career progression. In Chapter 2, the thesis began with an overview of mentoring followed by a discussion of the formal and informal types of mentoring that may be available to individuals in organisations, before addressing organisations' concerted moves to the formal advancement of such initiatives and their rationale.⁴⁵⁴ Having recognised a gap in the existing body of literature around mentoring within law firms, my research focused on gaining qualitative data from female lawyers participants who offered empirically based evidence on their individual experiences of mentoring support which added an original contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 further explored the broad definition and remit of mentoring schemes, as well as providing a critique of mentoring schemes from an international perspective, outlining the effects of cultural and organisational norms on such schemes' development and implementation. The chapter continued by discussing mentoring schemes from different sectoral perspectives (including education,⁴⁵⁵ business,⁴⁵⁶ in addition to the legal sector, specifically law firms). First, it has been recognised that mentoring in education has become progressively paramount as a mode of professional development

⁴⁵⁴ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁴⁵⁵ Andrew J. Hobson, Patricia Castanheira and Kerry Doyle, 'Mentoring and Coaching Across the Professions' (2016) Research and Enterprise, University of Brighton <<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/groups/education/research-projects/mentoring-and-coaching-across-the-professions.aspx>> accessed 26 September 2019.

⁴⁵⁶ Leandro Galli, 'Demand for Mentoring Among SMEs' (2013) Department for Business Innovation and Skills <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263226/demand_for_mentoring_among_SMEs.pdf> accessed 26 September 2019.

and an investment in early career lawyers.⁴⁵⁷ From the education policy aspect, mandatory mentoring is an oxymoron signalling a hidden curriculum where teachers are required to mentor and make documented gains.⁴⁵⁸ Mentoring in education forms a part of the teacher's job role and, as Kirkham⁴⁵⁹ revealed, mentoring is an important element in the process of job introduction. Further, mentoring provides an additional support from the early stages of newly qualified teachers which helps mentees with settling in the new job and assists with future career progression. Further finding of D'Abate⁴⁶⁰ confirmed that a high level of mentoring support is regularly being shared between faculty and peer mentors consequently resulting in better practice and support for their students. The aspect of cross-departmental mentoring where mentees could have multiple mentors from a range of departments, known as the multi-mentor model was also found during my research (Section 4.4). Mentoring in education has been used in practice for many years now and Odell's research⁴⁶¹ confirmed that teachers who undertook mentoring support during their careers, were still in the profession and teaching. Moreover, the most valued aspect of the mentoring experience was the emotional support which helped the junior teachers through the challenging stages of the profession. Mentoring still remains an important element of teachers' career progression and their ongoing on-job support. It is evident from the findings of my research that mentoring support received by the participants of my study also provided an emotional support (Section 4.6) which continuously helped in dealing with issues more constructively and confidently (Section 4.8). Mentoring support in education proves to be an important stage during teachers' career progression whether is being implemented during an early or a later stage of their careers. Further, the research of Sorcinelli and Yun⁴⁶² revealed that

⁴⁵⁷ Sarah J. Fletcher and Carol A. Mullen, *Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Sage Publications Ltd 2012).

⁴⁵⁸ Carol A. Mullen *Mentoring: An Overview* (Sage Publications Ltd 2005).

⁴⁵⁹ D. Kirkham, *The Nature and Conditions of Good Mentoring Practice* (Kogan Page Limited 1992).

⁴⁶⁰ Caroline D'Abate, 'Defining Mentoring in the First Year Experience: One Institution's Approach to Clarifying the Meaning of Mentoring First Year Students' (2009) 21(1) *Journal of the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* 65-91.

⁴⁶¹ Sandra J. Odell and Douglas P. Ferraro, 'Teacher Mentoring and Teacher Retention' (1992) 43(3) *Journal of Teacher Education* 200-204.

⁴⁶² Mary D. Sorcinelli and Jung Yun, 'From Mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy' (2007) 39(6) *Journal Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 58-61.

mentoring is a vital contribution to a successful academic career, particularly for women as the findings from my research suggested to be the same where participating female lawyers found mentoring to be necessary contribution to their successful legal careers.

In the business sector, mentoring is also seen as a development tool⁴⁶³ which helps the individual within the organisation.⁴⁶⁴ Mentoring helps individuals to develop within the organisational framework, especially an understanding of the company's values and a realisation that the organisation helps them feel they are making a worthwhile contribution.⁴⁶⁵ While mentees gain skills and specific knowledge from their senior peers, they also develop a deeper understanding and a sharper focus on the organisation's culture which helps with their career progression.⁴⁶⁶ Mentoring in business enterprise is a common practice. Thomson and others⁴⁶⁷ found that successful businesswomen, who work together with the most experienced mentors provide a substantial influence by acting as powerful patrons and supporters. This study echoes the above-mentioned approach through the demonstration of how some of the female lawyers mentees who participated in my study have actually progressed to become mentors themselves for more junior female colleagues (Section 4.11). Having female mentors in the legal practice supports the junior female lawyers to strive for success and encourages their further career progression (Section 4.12). Further similarities were identified between mentoring in business and mentoring in law firms including employees' satisfaction (Section 4.7). Clutterbuck⁴⁶⁸ found that mentoring is one of the fastest growing aspects of people development in business and, with the successful programme of mentoring and further

⁴⁶³ Gordon F. Shea, *Mentoring, A Guide to the Basics* (Kogan Page 1992).

⁴⁶⁴ Georges Delvaux, Sandrine Devillard-Hoellinger and Mary C. Meaney, 'A Business Case for Women: Organisation' (2008) 4 *The McKinsey Quarterly* 1-7.

⁴⁶⁵ Geof Alred, Bob Garvey and Richard Smith, *The Mentoring Pocketbook* (Management Pocketbooks Limited and Stylus Publishing 1998).

⁴⁶⁶ Rajahs Ghosh and Thomas G. Reio Jr, 'Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Mentors: A Meta-Analysis' (2013) 83(1) *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 106-116.

⁴⁶⁷ Peninah Thomson, Jacey Graham and Tom Lloyd, *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom: The Roadmap* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

⁴⁶⁸ David Clutterbuck, 'Mentoring and Tutoring Partnership in Learning' (1994) 2(1) *Business Mentoring in Revolution* 19-22.

mentee's progression and satisfaction, the retention levels are likely to remain reasonably stable and reflect the success of the organisation. Further findings from Ragins⁴⁶⁹ revealed that mentoring relationships help break down the barriers in promoting the advancement of women. By understanding an organisation's culture, women are then able to align their goals to the organisation's strategic objectives which allows them to progress to a more influential senior position.

Another crucial aspect within the business profession is productivity supported by mentoring and also seen in the legal sector. Mentoring programmes provide cost-effective staff development where a mentor offers substantial help within their mentee's responsibilities which increases the motivation, productivity and performance of the mentee. Moreover, Kahle-Piasecki's⁴⁷⁰ findings confirmed that mentoring programmes in organisations can be helpful in improving and transferring knowledge, and lead to greater job satisfaction and retention on employees, resulting in higher business productivity. With employee satisfaction in mind, the following three key points of a successful mentoring programme include: first, a thorough understanding of the organisational needs and requirements for a mentoring programme; second, consideration of the appropriate type of mentoring programme available based on the organisational commitment and availability; and third, the adaptation of appropriate measures to monitor the mentoring programme and communication abilities within the team.⁴⁷¹

What is evident from the review of the literature is the broad acceptance of the benefits that mentoring schemes provide to organisations and those individuals involved.⁴⁷² Mentoring is used as a

⁴⁶⁹ Belle R. Ragins, 'Barriers to Mentoring: The Female Manager's Dilemma' (1989) 42(1) *Human Relations* 1-22.

⁴⁷⁰ Lisa Kahle-Piasecki, 'Making a Mentoring Relationship Work: What is Required for Organizational Success' (2011) 12(1) *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 46-56.

⁴⁷¹ Bonnie C McKenzie, *Friends in High Places: The Executive Woman's Guide* (Business and Professional Publishing 1995).

⁴⁷² Cliff Olsson, Andrew Cruickshank and Dave Collins, 'Making Mentoring Work: The Need for Rewiring Epistemology' (2016) 69(1) *Taylor & Francis Online Journal* 50-64.

developmental mechanism to improve forever changing environment.⁴⁷³ Such schemes are well-established and developed in the education and business sectors, yet seem to be largely missing or are only a relatively recent phenomenon in law firms.⁴⁷⁴

Chapter 2 continued by examining the gender impact of mentoring schemes on the position of women in organisations. It is broadly reported that men succeed within mentoring schemes, but less conclusive findings are available in relation to female staff.⁴⁷⁵ The chapter concluded by identifying the relative paucity of available empirically based research identifying the implications for women in the legal sector of mentoring schemes. This gap in the literature is addressed through the empirical findings presented in this thesis, underpinned by a feminist philosophy.

The empirical evidence focused solely on the female participants' perceptions of their mentoring support during career developments within the legal field. The data reflects various outcomes of the participants' mentoring experiences during different stages of their careers including junior, qualified and senior levels of the legal profession. The qualitative responses received from the participants of this study added originality to the current knowledge and therefore, not anecdotal. Moreover, during the last fifty years, there has been a significant growth of diversification in the legal sector and the year 2018 (from the latest statistics available up to date) has seen women solicitors outnumbering their male counterparts in practice.⁴⁷⁶ The legal field remains a demanding profession and, despite this significant change, men continue to dominate the upper levels of the legal profession.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ Lesley Petersen, Suja Premchandran and Garry Clayton, 'Mentoring as a Mechanism for Organisational Development in a Globally Changing Environment' (2017) *Teaching and Learning with Technology* 137-147.

⁴⁷⁴ Elizabeth K. McManus, 'Intimidation and the Culture of Avoidance: Gender Issues and Mentoring in Law Firm Practice' (2005) 33(1) *Urban Law Journal* 217-231.

⁴⁷⁵ Norma T. Mertz, *Why Women Aren't Mentored* (ERIC Clearinghouse 1987).

⁴⁷⁶ The Law Society, *Annual Statistics Report 2017*

<<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/research-trends/annual-statistics-report-2017/>> accessed 21 October 2019.

⁴⁷⁷ Judith K. Pringle, Candice Harris, Katherine Ravenswood, Lynne Giddings, Irene Ryan and Sabina Jaeger, 'Women's Career Progression in Law Firms: Views from the Top, Views from Below' (2017) 24(4) *Gender, Work and Organization* 435-449.

Therefore, this study outlined the female lawyers participants' experiences and effectiveness of mentoring support they have received during their legal careers, to fill the gap of the empirical data available and further understanding of female lawyers progression.

Chapter 3 explained the methodology used for this study which was based on empirical research with the qualitative method chosen to achieve the research objective (Section 3.3). With all female based participants, it was inevitable to include the feminist theory which consequently, underpinned this study. The qualitative method provided rich data from the participants' views and experiences of the mentoring support received during their legal career progression. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and snowball sampling supported the data collection and helped the participants with their reflections. In support of the methods selected for this study, I refer to previously carried out research into mentoring in education by Leung⁴⁷⁸ who also used qualitative method of research including questionnaires and interviews as research instruments to collect necessary data. Other methodological approaches including, case studies, were also considered however, based on the chosen research question being, mentoring and perceptions of its effects on the progression of female participants' careers, the chosen methods (Sections 3.4 and 3.5) provided necessary reflection of their experiences. Furthermore, I also refer to Patton's⁴⁷⁹ approach who supported using qualitative methods of research as they provide a true reflection of a conducted examination of effectiveness, empirical data collection and thoughtful analysis which was necessary for my research.

Through a deep and thorough data analysis, the key findings were produced and are presented in Chapter 4. These included: first, a lack of consistency in mentoring support across the participating law firms with limited evidence to ascertain whether formal or informal types of mentoring programmes that provide better support for the mentees. However, the ongoing factor of mentoring

⁴⁷⁸ Mee Lee Leung, 'Characteristics of Effective Mentoring in Higher Education: Perspective of Students and Mentors' (University of Leicester 2001).

⁴⁷⁹ Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd edn, Thousand Oaks Sage Publications 1990).

provided a long-term support for the mentees participants. Second, mentoring assisted female lawyers' participants career progression (Section 4.9) which has also been established across other professions including education (Section 2.7) and business (Section 2.6). Third, there was a lack of monitoring of the mentoring support received by the participants of this study. Whether the mentoring support was of a formal and an informal type, the participants confirmed that there were no written records taken to offer detailed confirmation. This is a valuable contribution to knowledge that could further support mentoring programmes if monitoring was available.

Moreover, as female lawyers have only recently outperformed their male counterparts as mentioned earlier in this chapter and currently form the majority in practice, they still struggle to reach the senior levels of the profession. Mentoring provided opportunities to female lawyers' participants including necessary support to strive for the career progression from the junior levels of the profession. Third, it has been further found that, through mentoring, the participants gained confidence (Section 4.8) which supported them in day-to-day responsibilities including client focus and decision-making. Opportunities for developing further and wider circles of networking (Section 4.10) was found to be another outcome of mentoring in the participating law firms. Networking was found to offer support in transferring knowledge leading to a greater job satisfaction and assisting female lawyers' participants in gaining wider connections with more colleagues from different departments and offices. Having wider networks, motivation growth (Section 4.12) was found to play an important role as a result of mentoring in participants' career progression. Some participants found mentoring to be motivated and inspirational to emulate successful female figures within the firm and get involved in the self-development opportunities. Seeing other female lawyers progressing helped with the vision of success for the participants which was yet another positive aspect of mentoring support.

As explained above, mentoring provided wider opportunities for networking (Section 4.4) and the participants felt that their progression could further develop through the employment of a multi-

mentor model. The participants felt that the multi-mentor model was a helpful opportunity to share knowledge leading to a greater job satisfaction, career progression and consequently, reduction in attrition levels. The multi-mentor model is potentially more difficult to put into practice depending on the size of a law firm and particularly, with available mentors across the board. Smaller law firms may not potentially be able to offer this type of multi-support whereas the larger law firms may be able to offer support across the departments and even cross-offices. Some of the participants felt that the multi-mentor model would offer a stronger network position, especially for the more junior lawyers with so much yet to learn.

Having taken the step to research the area of mentoring and upon hearing the participants' perceptions, I feel that mentoring in law firms remains under-researched with some difficulties recruiting participants from law firms, many of whom many seemed reluctant to participate in this type of research. This aspect may be taken to be further explored in future research (Section 6.3). I would hope that my research findings will attract a wider interest within the legal profession as mentoring is becoming a more popular mechanism for training and development across the legal field and particularly, female lawyers. I hope that my study can assist law firms with furthering their mentoring vision and supporting employees' future development.

In summary, through the literature review, I demonstrated gaps in the existing body of literature - specifically of mentoring in legal practice in the UK and the perceptions of female lawyers' participants of the effectiveness of mentoring schemes. This thesis provides an original contribution to knowledge by presenting empirically based evidence of the effects of mentoring programmes and its constituent support and assistance, to those participating law firms as well as their female lawyers' experiences.

I feel that my research can contribute and provide a base line for further future research in this area of law and therefore, I propose future research recommendations in the next Section 6.2.

6.2 *Future research proposals*

It has been recognised for a number of years that the proportion of men and women in various occupations greatly differentiates.⁴⁸⁰ This difference has resulted from a large number of aspects including economic factors, individual perceptions, levels of education, and the presence of role models and mentors.

The first recommendation for future research would be to expand the study across more law firms, potentially with a central base in any particular location and mentoring programmes in place. In addition, further insights into the practice of mentoring support could be gained through follow up interviews with current participants to ascertain whether mentoring provided further opportunities for the participants and eventually developed their careers to senior positions. This would relate mainly to the participants at early career stages of the profession.

Further recommendation relates to conducting a further qualitative study exploring mentoring programmes in law firms on a wider scale and its operation to ascertain best practice which could consequently change law firms' current practice with regards to training and career developments. The length of how far this can potentially be reached is yet unknown however, crucial changes may be adopted which could then lead to the establishment of a recognised threshold standard of mentoring programmes across all law firms in the UK and the development of an associated Protocol on how law firms could facilitate improved mentoring programmes.

⁴⁸⁰ Robert M. Blackburn and Jennifer Jarman, 'Gendered Occupations: Exploring the Relationship Between Gender Segregation and Inequality' (2006) 21(2) *International Sociology* 289-315.

As a final recommendation for future research comprise to explore the study of mentoring support across other legal fields including the Bar and the judiciary. Similarly to law firms, there is limited empirical evidence available across those legal fields which proposes further areas of research potentials. Simmons' article confirmed that gender equality at the Bar is still 50 years away.⁴⁸¹ The Bar Standards Board (BSB) has revealed that if the current rate of change remains the same, then the number of female Queen's Counsel (QCs) will not match the number of male QCs for at least another 50 years. As the Bar has always been a very white male-orientated profession and despite more female QCs entering the Bar currently, the gap remains visible.⁴⁸² Some statistical data illustrates that from 0.7 percent of female QCs in 2015, the number has risen to 15.8 per cent in December 2018.⁴⁸³ The barriers faced by women barristers relate to retention and progression within the profession. Similarly to law firms, the Bar and the judiciary professions also experience inequality at the senior levels of the profession. The latest statistics from BSB further confirm that there are only 278 female QCs compared to 1,476 male QCs. With this substantial equality gap at a senior level of the barristers' profession, the Bar Council is seeking to change this through a range of long-running programmes. These include mentoring women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) barristers, providing leading equality and diversity advice to chambers, and promoting the Bar to state school students. Therefore, future research could potentially fill the empirical gap identified by exploring the extent to which those programmes are successful. Finally, I recognise a significant lack of literature in the area of mentoring in the legal field, particularly in the UK which should be addressed during any future research in this area of law.

⁴⁸¹ Richard Simmons, *Bar Standards Board: Gender Equality at the Bar Still 50 Years Away* (The Lawyer 27 January 2017).

⁴⁸² Fiona Cownie, Anthony Bradney and Mandy Burton, *English legal System in Context* (6th edn, Oxford University Press 2013) 149.

⁴⁸³ Report on Diversity at the Bar 2018 - Bar Standards Board
<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/media/1975681/diversity_at_the_bar_2018.pdf> accessed 21 October 2019.

6.3 *Practical implications*

Some of the challenges experienced during this research included organisational and societal issues. The nature of this study required the establishment of trust between the researcher and the participating law firms as well as the participants. Some of the implications included finding a common ground of reasonable trust and communication with law firms who were protective over their operational excellence and on occasion unwilling to release information about their mentoring.

Furthermore, the qualitative study was conducted among twenty-two executive women (female lawyers) in six law firms which means that the findings cannot be generalised to other law firms across the UK. Nonetheless, this research may potentially be of interest to other law firms and may help to inform the development of the future approaches. Furthermore, evidence gathered from the participants' perceptions remains original and the empirical nature of this study supports its value and new knowledge added to the existing literature in this area of research.

Other implications for not expanding the study further included lack of access to more law firms and potential participants at this particular time. However, my research provides a sustainable base for future communications with further law firms and potential participants.

6.4 *Practical recommendations for law firms offering mentoring support*

Taking into consideration the findings of my research, I feel that the following practical recommendations may be considered by the law firms who wish to offer mentoring support to their employees. The recommendations are as follows: first, to consider equal mentoring opportunities by either a formal or an informal support of the programme. Second, the multi-mentor opportunities that may be considered to support all mentees equally. Further consideration may include a reasonable system of monitoring the mentoring programmes to aid further mentees progression.

As in any profession, some employees may only wish to settle in their current position and would feel satisfied of that achievement whereas others may seek senior status during their career progression. It is therefore, inevitable to ascertain individuals' career goals and set an appropriate plan of action to help with their desires and assist through short and/or long term progression. This may be done through mentorship and monitoring the process. It can be considered that every mentee may have a varied level of confidence and therefore, may be faced with various barriers that they find difficult to overcome. It is therefore, the mentor's responsibility to establish the mentee's weaknesses in order to propose a plan to help with a development of appropriate skills to manage mentees' growth. Furthermore, networking may offer opportunities to support mentees to expand their networks and make further professional connections. With wider networks including cross-departmental, mentees could develop further confidence and self-efficacy to help their ongoing career progression.

Another aspect for law firms to consider is the appointment of potential mentors to assist mentees' career developments. A mentor should be someone of either gender who is a senior and experienced individual willing to invest their time and energy to support a junior colleague by providing valuable advice and feedback. A mentor should have an ability to listen to their mentees and establish the framework of their relationship. This would provide valuable help and support for junior mentees to

continue developing their legal careers and further progression. Although the focus remains on mentees, there are also valuable benefits for each mentor to gain from a mentorship which includes their personal development. Moreover, they can further develop their leadership skills which they use to support mentees. Potential mentors may help to assess and measure available opportunities for their mentees before deciding upon further actions.

Moreover, determining the law firms' structure of the mentoring programme is an important stage; for example, deciding first, on the management and monitoring processes and second, determining an appropriate length for the mentorship, the structure of the mentor-mentee meetings and further monitoring of their relationship. Once this stage has been thoroughly considered, communication to all employees would be recommended to offer the mentoring programme and further encouragement given equally to all employees.

Various issues need to be considered before setting up a mentoring programme and depending on the law firm and its size, the following aspects should be considered including, budgets, coordinating staff, potential sponsors and costs involved. However, mentoring programmes can be set up without significant costs if mentors were willing to provide their time and support to mentees, and organising their own place and time of meetings. This may involve their meetings taking place during mentor's lunch break, which would reduce pressures on their billing hours. However, if an organisation was to set up a formal mentoring programme, this may require the appointment of coordinating staff to take charge of the whole process which will of course add costs to the mentoring programme itself.

6.5 *Reflective diary*

‘The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.’⁴⁸⁴

The progression of this research is the most inspirational, challenging and fulfilling encounter that I have experienced in my entire life. I have always put myself in a position to strive for more. I enjoy a challenge, as it improves my motivation and eagerness to succeed. The most significant achievement gained through this doctoral journey was learning new aspects of life and seeing them from different perspectives.

On reflection, doctoral research is very challenging and certainly not an easy journey, in particular with English not being my first language. However, the continuation of learning, motivated my desires and assisted me all the way through this challenging journey. The experience has been simply supreme. I have learnt so much about myself and many aspects of life, now seen from different perspectives. I am more understanding and respectful. Doctoral journey has supported my career development and enabled me to research an area of law that I am passionate about. I hope to have made a difference, not only in my career and personal progression but also others who seek development in their careers.

I am grateful to so many people, some of whom I have already mentioned in the acknowledgement section, for making this journey possible. I am extremely passionate about doctoral studies and would like to continue with my further research journey, supporting others in a mentoring capacity who are going through challenges and difficult times often doubting their potentials. 'Never give up' is my motto.

⁴⁸⁴ The Telegraph, ‘Nelson Mandela: In His Own Words’ (London, 6 December 2013)
<<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/nelson-mandela/9734032/Nelson-Mandela-in-his-own-words.html>>

The doctoral journey has taken me through various stages of different challenges to appreciate the value of the qualification that awaits me. Looking at my continuing development during this doctoral research, I see challenge, ambition, motivation, progression and eagerness to succeed. I look forward to further doctoral journeys within the legal field to continue my zealous and tireless researcher career path.

APPENDIX 1

Ethical approval letter from the university

Our Ref AM/KW/D&S-65

1 March 2016

Edyta J. Madej

Post Graduate Researcher

Department of Law and Criminology

Sheffield Hallam University

Heart of the Campus

Collegiate Crescent Campus

Sheffield

S10

INTERNAL

Dear Edyta

Request for Ethical Approval of Research Project

Your research project entitled "**Mentoring and its Effects for the Progression of Female Solicitors' Careers**" has been submitted for ethical review to the Faculty's rapporteurs and I am pleased to confirm that they have approved the ethics relating to your project.

I wish you every success with your research project.

Yours sincerely

Professor A Macaskill

Chair

Faculty Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX 2

Date

Law firm name and address

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Edyta Madej and I am currently reading a PhD in law at the Sheffield Hallam University under the supervision of Dr. James Marson (J.Marson@shu.ac.uk).

The aim of my research is to examine the lived experiences of female solicitors and their career progression with the involvement of a mentoring programme.

In order to progress my study further, it is necessary to interview female solicitors taking part in a mentoring programme who would be willing to share their experiences which will form part of my thesis. I am writing to enquire whether you would consider to discuss my project further.

The study would involve an in-person interview, consisting of six questions which I would like to put forward to willing participants. The interview is likely to last approximately 20 minutes and would be held at the most convenient time and location for each interviewee. Please find attached my ethical approval letter and a copy of the questions I would like to ask the participants.

Finally, the outcomes of this research will be made available to all participants and to your firm which I believe will bring additional value to the mentoring programme and further development of your employees. Please note that all the data will be kept anonymous. I am very happy to provide any additional details or to discuss this project further if that would be helpful.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Edyta J. Madej

Edyta.J.Madej@student.shu.ac.uk

APPENDIX 3

Questionnaire

What is your position with the firm:

1. When and why did you commence the mentoring programme at this law firm?
2. From the career development point of view is the mentoring programme helping your career progression?
3. What is your desired outcome of the mentoring experience?
4. Do you feel that the mentoring programme has helped you to advance your legal career or achieve your desires?
5. Have you moved to a senior position following the completion of the mentoring programme?

APPENDIX 4

Doctoral Researcher:

Edyta Madej edytamadej@hotmail.co.uk and / or Edyta.J.Madej@student.shu.ac.uk

Director of Study:

Dr James Marson J.Marson@shu.ac.uk

Ethical Consent Form

"Mentoring and its Effects for the Progression of Female Solicitors' Careers"

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself.

How to withdraw: Please send an email confirming your withdrawal to the Doctoral Researcher of the study. Please note 14 days cooling off period in case of withdrawal.

I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the data set.

The data will be held by the Sheffield Hallam University, and it will be used for the purposes of this research. The data will be seen by the Doctoral Researcher, Supervisors and the Director of the Study.

I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports or journals.

I agree to take part in this study.

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