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Analysis of mentors' psychological needs

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ABSTRACT

In the field of mentoring the psychological needs of mentors have been given little attention in previous research. The aim of this study is to analyse mentors' psychological needs within a corporate environment. The research approach is exploratory and was conducted within a qualitative framework. A sample of 5 mentors within the corporate environment was drawn and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Thematic content analysis was applied to report and summarise the data and Covey's (1989) four dimensions of human functioning (mental, social-emotional, physical and spiritual) was used to categorise mentor needs.

The key findings of the study from a mental perspective indicate that mentors identified continuous and experiential learning as a method for continual mental growth. Further mentor training was recommended by the mentors to assist in addressing their mental needs and help them to improve their time-management skills. Mentors' social-emotional needs focused around the need for a supportive social network from significant others to maintain a state of well-being. The ability to be understanding, to be good listeners and the ability to set appropriate boundaries within the mentoring relationship were identified by mentors as emotional skills (needs) that they would like to improve. From a physical needs perspective, all the mentors revealed an awareness of the need to stay healthy in various ways. Every mentor stated that he/she was affected by stress and that it manifested in different ways, however, the mentors were satisfied with the resources provided by their organisation for their health and well-being. From a spiritual perspective, mentors experienced satisfaction from assisting in others' growth, suggesting a need for engaging with and learning from others.

Keywords: mentor, mentorship, psychological needs, career development, motivation, experiential learning