



**An exploratory study of mentorship for black female academics: Evidence
from the University of the Witwatersrand**

A research report submitted by

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ABSTRACT

Mentorship is an important aspect for career progression, particularly for young academics who are new to the workplace and unaccustomed to the expectations and demands of this industry. The purpose of this paper is to study the importance of mentorship in academia, particularly the impact of mentorship for African South African female academics at the University of the Witwatersrand. The data used in the report was mainly qualitative, based on in-depth interviews. The research revealed that there are several mentoring programmes being utilised throughout the university, however, it lacks a structured programme which is inclusive for all staff members. Most importantly, structured mentoring programmes are not being utilised to their full potential by the University of the Witwatersrand, particularly for 'disenfranchised groups' such as black women. The study revealed that at all academic levels black women apparently have similar experiences when it comes to mentorship. The results in the study indicate that mentorship programmes for African female South African academics is necessary in supporting and promoting Black females on their professional path.

DECLARATION

I, Tebogo Rakhudu, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signed at

On the day of 20.....

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1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to Agumba & Fester (2010), the objective of mentoring is to enhance the mentees' psychosocial and career development. Mentorship is connected with career advancement and organisational influence as well as improvement in organisations (Stoessel, 2006; Ntombekhaya, 2015; Hansman, 1998). It gives credence to the fact that mentorship is employed as a tool to smooth the progress of young professionals and trainees to progress in their respective careers. Kahle-Piasecki (2011) posits that the rationale behind mentoring relations in institutions is to intensify the efficiency and knowledge of the mentee while improving their performance at work. According to Du Plessis (2013), the relationship in mentorship is frequently between a more knowledgeable individual (mentor) and a less experienced employee (mentee). Mentoring is fundamental to the career development of women (Palmer & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; 1990; Ragins, 1999).

Statistics over the past few years show that the South African education sector has slowly managed to transform, and women have been able to ascend to middle and senior university management positions. However, the Executive Director of the Centre for Academic Development at the Vaal University of Technology, Dr Pauline Machika (2014), insists that the inclusion of more women in academia has not necessarily resulted in substantial gender diversity; as a result, a noticeable gender inequality gap in the higher education sector still remains. According to Tuitt (2010), Bertrand Jones and Osborne-Lampkin (2013), young black professionals more often than not have limited access to essential networks and mentoring in their various fields of learning. Also worth noting is that black women, in particular, have limited access to critical networks and mentoring (Patterson & Davis, 2015).

From a South African legal perspective, the provision of the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, placed exacting requirements on rectifying the demographic disparity at workplaces. Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2002) observed that there was the need for organisations in South Africa to observe the development of a historically deprived workforce that completely excluded women, as a main priority.

The execution of mentoring has proven to be a valuable means to improve organisational diversity through the development of female staff members to certify legislative requirements and to redress past inequalities (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2001). The gender inequality gap at higher education institutions is still prevalent and many theorists argue that to mitigate this, mentorship is one of the critical enablers to redress the problem.

According to Chesterman (2001), mentoring is one way women can increase their visibility in the workplace as it is essential they try to establish themselves as employees on an equal basis with men. In discussions on mentoring, Stoessel (2006) believes mentoring is a useful tool to advance women in their careers in the workplace. It was observed from the existing literature that many studies have been conducted on mentorship and development in municipalities and private organisations, but limited studies have focused particularly on the exploration of mentorship on the development of black female academics in South African higher institutions. The need to fill that void in the academic literature, while improving upon the numbers of black female mentors in high institutions, has necessitated this study. The study as conducted at the University of the Witwatersrand, tested the research questions to see whether mentorship has an influence on the development of Black female academics.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to examine the influence of mentorship on the development of African South African female academics at the University of the Witwatersrand.

1.2 Research Questions

There were four research questions

1. What is the understanding of mentorship and the University of the Witwatersrand's role in the development of African South African female academics?
2. How do constructs of gender and race influence the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics?
3. How does the socio-economic status of the mentor-mentee influence the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics?
4. Are there recommendations that could be taken from the study's results towards the improvement of mentorship programmes for African South African female academics in South African universities?

1.3 Context of the study

The University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter referred to as Wits) is an internationally celebrated, research-intensive university situated in the financial hub of Gauteng (Johannesburg). The university has a solid reputation, internationally and nationally, based on its academic and research excellence. Wits University has five faculties, namely, Humanities, Engineering, Commerce, Law, Management, Sciences and Health (Wits, 2016). Within the five faculties, it encompasses 33 schools and over 3000 course offerings (Wits, 2016). The institution is a social agent that reiterates the critical role of higher education in transforming society. The University has embarked on a transformation trajectory that is devoted to employment equity as an approach to fulfil its objectives. To realise this commitment, as defined in the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998, as amended), the University seeks to promote both the diversification of the University's staff profile, and attain equitable representation from designated groups, particularly black females (Transformation and Employment Equity Office Employment Equity Plan 2015 – 2019). The university has developed an Employment Equity Plan, which sets out steps to reform both its academic ranks and professional levels. The Equity plan

was necessitated by the fact that there is still an under-representation of African and Coloured staff members in the academic ranks of the University (Transformation and Employment Equity Office Employment Equity Plan 2015–2019). The disparity is particularly apparent with African and Coloured South African females who remain underrepresented, with the largest gap being in senior management (Transformation and Employment Equity Office Employment Equity Plan 2015 – 2019).

One of the identified barriers in the Wits Employment Equity Plan was the inadequacy of a structured programme to develop academics from designated groups. In light of this, it is presumed that an effective mentorship programme is expected to increase the number of black females. The role of a mentorship programme specific to African South African female academics in the university would be to coach African female academics to acquaint themselves with the intricacies of academic life and to offer guidance and skills in becoming successful academics. The mentorship programme would particularly be useful in the Associate Lecturer track to develop emerging black female academics and to accelerate appointment into more senior positions (Transformation and Employment Equity Office Employment Equity Plan 2015 – 2019).

1.3.1 Staff Demographics at Wits University

WITS University has a shortage of African South African female academics despite efforts of transformation by the university and various stakeholders like the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Table 1: Profile of Academic staff only (by academic description)

Note: A= Africans C=Colored I=Indian= W=White

										Total Females	Foreign Nationals		Total
Occupational Levels	Male				Total Males	Female					Male	Female	
	A	C	I	W		A	C	I	W				
Heads of Schools	2	1	2	11	16	0	2	1	6	9	5	0	30
Professor	9	3	10	78	100	1	1	3	43	48	60	6	214
Associate Professor	9	1	9	69	88	9	5	6	61	81	53	28	250
Senior Lecturer	15	3	8	65	91	16	6	15	92	129	71	35	326
Lecturer	43	13	22	118	196	73	26	47	145	291	64	48	599
Associate Lecturer	32	4	18	35	89	45	8	24	68	145	25	19	278
GRAND TOTAL	108	24	67	365	564	144	46	95	409	694	273	136	1667

Source: University of the Witwatersrand Employment Equity Plan 1/01/2016-31/12/2020

Table 1 above clearly highlights the under-representation of African South African females in the Professoriate, Associate Professoriate and Senior Lecturer levels. It is evident that greater attention needs to be paid to redefining how the university will approach these occupational roles in order to grow the number of African, South African women in these positions. The growth and presence of Black women in the professoriate is inexorably linked to the access, entry, and retention of Black women in doctoral programmes (Mabokela, 2001; Jones, 2013).

Table 2: Academic staff demographic profile

Population	2010	2016	2017 Target
African	10%	15%	17%
Coloured	3%	4%	5%
Indian	9%	10%	10%
White	55%	46%	45%
International	24%	25%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: (University of the Witwatersrand Employment Equity Plan 1/01/2016-31/12/2020)

Table 2 indicates the Academic staff demographic profile; there is a large over-representation of White and International population in the staff demographic profile of the university. A more rigorous approach towards demographic transformation needs to be adopted by the university. The University of the Witwatersrand has policies in place to change demographics among academic staff, however, the biggest challenge may be implementation.

Table 3: Occupational levels based on Gender and Race

Occupational Levels	Male				Total Males	Female				Total Females	Foreign Nationals		Total
	A	C	I	W		A	C	I	W		Male	Female	
Top management (01-02)	2	1	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	6
Snr management (03--04)	4	1	3	19	27	1	2	2	11	16	7	0	50
Mid management (05-08)	142	37	93	391	663	203	70	139	452	864	272	134	1933
Jnr management (09-12)	322	22	43	74	461	539	130	119	210	998	56	54	1569
Semi-skilled (13-15)	292	6	6	4	308	162	10	7	8	187	5	3	503
Unskilled (16-17)	23	0	0	0	23	31	0	0	1	32	0	0	55
TOTAL PERMANENT	785	67	146	488	1486	936	212	267	683	2098	341	191	4116
Temporary employees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	785	67	146	488	1486	936	212	267	683	2098	341	191	4116

Source: (University of the Witwatersrand Employment Equity Plan 1/01/2016-31/12/2020)

Table 3 above indicates the occupational levels based on gender and race. The university has improved their numbers in the junior and middle management levels, however, there is still a challenge when it comes to leadership roles. Currently, there are no African females in top management, and there is only one African female in senior management. Morley (2003) argues that women's under-representation in top management and senior decision making roles is intellectual and material oppression.

Table 4: Depicts the total number of terminations in each occupational level

Note: A= Africans C=Colored I=Indian= W=White

Occupational Levels	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total
	A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	Male	Female	
Top management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senior management	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management	9	0	3	17	11	2	2	24	12	6	86
Academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors,	23	0	4	1	27	3	10	13	4	6	91
Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making	6	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	15
Unskilled and defined decision making	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
TOTAL PERMANENT	41	2	8	18	43	5	14	38	17	13	199
Temporary employees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	41	2	8	18	43	5	14	38	17	13	199

Source: ("University of the Witwatersrand Employment Equity Plan 2016 Report," 01/01/2016-31/12/2016)

Based on Table 4 statistics, the number of African female leaving the university is alarmingly high. In the period of 01/01/2016-31/12/2016, 22% of all terminations in the university were from African females. The highest termination rate lies within the academically qualified workers, junior management and skilled technical and supervisory level. The University of the Witwatersrand has a moderately high employee turnover which may imply that its employees leave their jobs at a relatively high rate and this may signal a bigger issue at hand. This table demonstrates that the University may have a challenge of retaining African female staff.

1.3.2 Transformation & Employment Equity Trajectory of Wits University

A number of laws have been introduced and legalised to maintain and ensure workplace equity, the primary one being the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA). Section 20 of the law requires that a designated employer formulates and implements an Employment Equity Plan in an effort to attain equitable progress towards employment equity. The legislation connected to Employment Equity was “recently amended to define only black and women South Africans as ‘designated groups’ that may be the beneficiaries of employment equity” (Badat, 2010, p. 28). In an effort to meet its Employment Equity Plan objectives, Wits University has developed a strategic plan to accelerate Transformation and ensure an inclusive and competitive institution. The university has made many developments for instance they have created a Transformation and Employment Equity office. This office works closely with various stakeholder groups, related divisions within Human Resources and the wider University community. The mandate of the Transformation and Employment Equity office is to advance the development of policies, strategies, processes and programmes that will support the University’s mandate to achieve its commitment to equity and transformation (University of the Witwatersrand, 2016).

Moreover, the office reports to various bodies comprising the Human Resources Committee, Transformation Forum, Institutional Forum, Senate and Council. The Transformation and Employment Equity office also monitors compliance of University policy and legislation. With regards to ‘Transformation Governance’ the university has formed two committees to advance policy development, implementation and oversight. The first Transformation Committee’s mandate is to administer the employment of African and Coloured South African staff. Additionally, the committee will oversee the administration of grants to current African and Coloured staff in support of job creation and a conducive environment that will enable attainment of prescribed criteria that is required for promotion (University of the Witwatersrand, 2016). The Committee will further assume responsibility for the “Vice Chancellor’s Equity Fund” which is intended to appoint staff from specified designated groups.

The second Committee is an 'expanded Transformation Steering Committee' which is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, HR and Transformation. The Committee's mandate is to review, provide oversight and advice on Transformation policies and matters at the University. This committee has representation from all the relevant University constituencies.

Following engagements with various stakeholders within the University, R45 million was pledged in an effort to accelerate transformation at the University. This money was intended for the diversifying of the Academic Profile of the university in which R35 million was assigned to attract new South African, African and Coloured scholars (University of the Witwatersrand, 2016). The remaining R10 million was set aside for grants for academics within the same demographic group who were already part of the Wits constituency. It is envisioned that these grants will support designated staff members in accelerating their academic careers. The university must be credited for introducing a number of interventions to increase the representation of people from designated groups across all of its academic and professional ranks.

However, overall, the University's demographic profile does not mirror that of the South African society. There is still an under-representation of African staff members in the academic ranks of the University. The under-representation is predominant in senior management positions which encompass the Deputy Vice Chancellors, Executive Directors and Deans of Faculty and Heads of Schools levels. It is clear that the university is still grappling with equity and gender issues despite the legislation that has been put into place.

1.3.3 Academic mentorship at Wits University

Currently, there is no compulsory university-wide mentorship programme that is active for staff members. However, the Wits Centre for Learning and Teaching Development (CLTD) and the University Research office jointly run an annual programme called the Early Career Academic Development (ECAD) Programme. The aim of the programme is to help career academics (pre PHD or round about five

to eight years of being a PhD holder) to develop their abilities to become more impactful and independent academics. The programme takes a maximum of 35 people annually to partake in the programme. The activities included in the programme are meetings, workshops, communities of practice, writing retreats and limited mentorship. In addition, the university introduced the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning (PGDip) qualification, the purpose of the programme is to develop and strengthen academic knowledge in teaching and learning; furthermore, the programme offers university academics the prospect of enhancing their teaching practice in respect of implementing a more scholarly method towards their teaching. The PGDip also provides a structured mentorship programme supported by faculty/school mentors.

Around the year 2005 until 2012, the University, through the guidance of the Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) managed the Carnegie Equity Scholar programme which was funded by the “Carnegie Corporation of New York, United States of America. Wits University and the Carnegie Corporation pledged a grant of R22,287,530 to attract, train and retain a new group of academics who would contribute to the transformation agenda of the country’s higher education sector” (University of the Witwatersrand, 2016). The fund managed to provide research funding to 105 emerging researchers from both South African and other SADC regions. Out of the 105 group, 16 of the participants were South African Black females. The “Vice Chancellor’s Employment Equity Fund” was also created to improve the representation of academics from designated groups. The aim of the fund was to pay suitable and qualified academics from designated groups for a period of three years; within that three year period the School/Faculty is required to create permanent positions in order to retain these groups of academics (University of the Witwatersrand, 2016). One of the successes of the fund since its establishment in the year 2000, is the employment of fifty qualified academics from designated groups in all Faculties. The table below gives a detailed numerical description of the appointments:

Figure 1: Numerical description of the appointments for the “Vice Chancellor’s Employment Equity Fund”

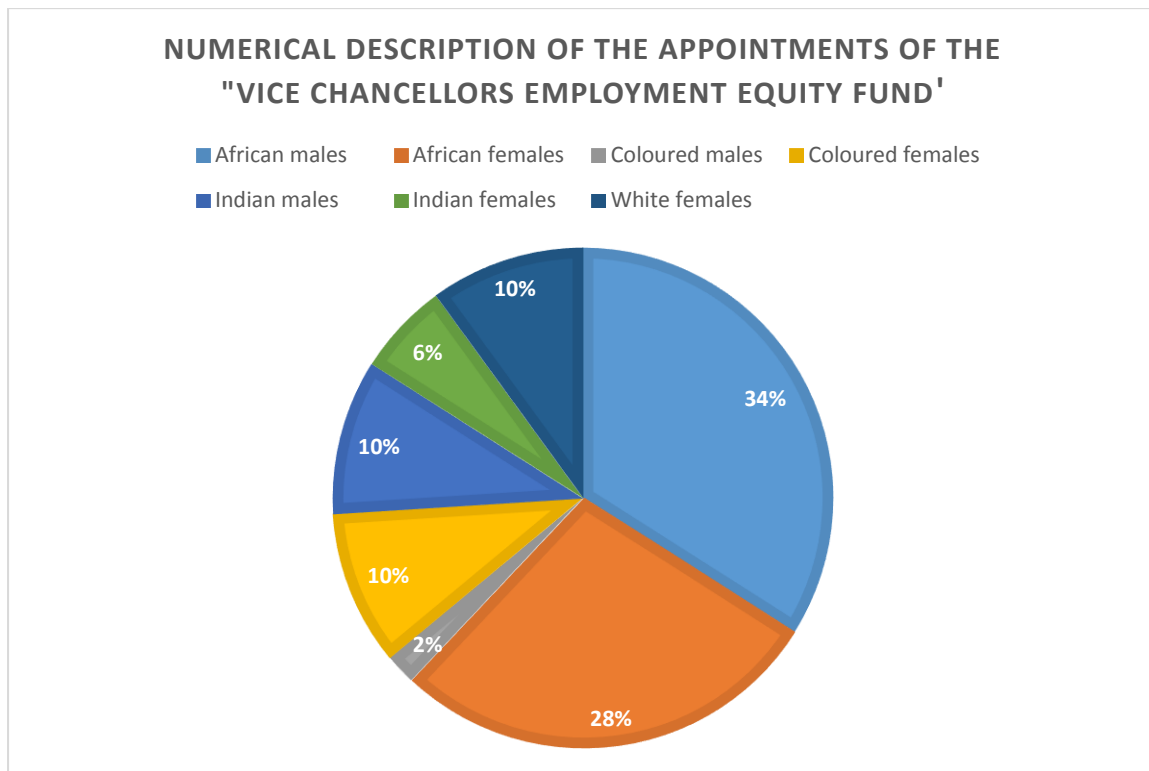


Figure 2: Numerical description of the appointments for the “Vice Chancellor’s Employment Equity Fund”

Source: (University of the Witwatersrand Employment Equity Plan 1/01/2016-31/12/2020)

Figure 1 illustrates the numerical description of the appointments for the Vice Chancellor’s Employment Equity Fund. Black males have immensely benefited from the programme, constituting 34% of the appointments followed by African Females with 28% of the appointments.

Although this programme’s intended aims were achieved at the time, by the end of 2014, 30% of the academics appointed through the Vice Chancellor’s EE fund have resigned from the University. This signals a bigger issue at hand as it demonstrates that the university has a challenge in retaining staff that have been classified as

'previously disadvantaged'. Other projects which the university has introduced to help women academics include 'The Project Developing Young Research Leadership' which allows undergraduate students to observe and participate in research projects. In previous years, Wits University had a programme called the "Dr TW Kambule Growing our own Timber Mentoring programme" that was established with donor funding to "recruit, develop and retain a more diverse academic staff from the year 2000 to 2005 (Geber, 2013, p.217). The intention of the programme was to empower black postgraduates who aspired to be academics to complete their studies and to acquaint them with the academic workplace (Geber, 2013).

For instance, a mentor was appointed for the aspiring academics for three years to support and guide each participant to become an independent and qualified professional by the end of the three-year period (Geber, 2013). The consequence of this programme was the improved retention rate of 50% of the Faculty which surpassed the retention rate of any other programme at the University of the Witwatersrand that took place between 1996 to 2005 (Geber, 2013). The Dr TW Kambule "Growing our own Timber Mentoring programme" is further supported by Gardiner et al. (2007); Geber (2006) cited in Geber (2013) who report that there is evidence in South Africa and Australia which supports mentoring as an effective tool in the retention of Faculty. Nonetheless, currently Wits University has no mentorship programme that is specifically aimed at black female academics. All things considered, the current social composition of the academic labour force and employment equity at the University of the Witwatersrand indicates the urgency of developing female South African academics to equitably transform the university.

1.3.4 Government Interventions

There has been a proposal for a national programme to develop the next generation of academics, particularly black and women academics for the South African Higher Education sector (Higher Education South Africa HESA, 2011). One of the ways identified to accelerate this process was through a mentorship programme. Through the mentorship programme mentors would provide guidance, based upon their

knowledge, into what signifies effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, the mentorship programme would provide insight into what constitutes appropriate assessment in the respective disciplines, establishing a research career, and gaining knowledge of institutional and departmental structures. The New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) programme was created to address the challenge of inequality of representation amongst existing staff members in the higher education sector. Some of the factors identified leading to this programme were a weak postgraduate pipeline; ageing academic staff; difficulty in recruiting staff, particularly in some disciplines; low throughput rates and expertise and qualifications of existing staff complement in the higher education sector. The rationale for universities to apply for the nGap programme is on the grounds of equity (transformation), sustainability and need. The nGap programme creates nGap permanent academic posts that include an inclusive induction and development programme intended to maximise retention and success for the nGAP post holders.

The review group of the programme is managed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) who make the final decisions on which posts to allocate and these posts are externally advertised. Thereafter, nGAP applicants are selected by the respective universities at which they will work and the DHET has an observer status. The nGAP posts are funded on a sliding scale over a six-year period, thereafter, from the 7th year; the universities bear the full costs. It was envisaged that the nGap programme would be a viable mechanism to attract staff from designated groups. It is worth noting that there are Wits staff members who are part of the nGAP programme, particularly at an associate lecture level. Even though there has been significant progress in the representation of African women in higher education, nonetheless inequities still exist across all institutions; black women are still under-represented in academia. Given this current high profile discussion, government and institutions of higher learning need to design interventions that will ensure improvements in representation of black women.

1.4 Problem statement

1.4.1 Main problem

During apartheid, racism in South Africa was very institutionalised and higher education reflected that racially divided backdrop (Naicker, 2013). Patriarchy and racism were salient aspects of Apartheid in South Africa that manifested themselves in the social sphere affecting the higher education sector (HESA report, 2011). Racial and gender groupings under the policy of apartheid profoundly shaped South African society and resulted in rampant inequalities (Naicker, 2013). According to the HESA report (2011), the consequence of these features on the academic workforce was a creation of a “racialisation and gendering system” which resulted in a predominantly male and white South African academic labour force.

This was highlighted by the fact that a small number of women entered the working environment and it was more often than not, white women. This made it difficult for black women to gain relevant work experience in particular areas. Mentorship opportunities for black women are limited in many countries across the globe (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Another critical factor was the difficulty for women to access mentors in male-dominated organisations (Hansman, 1998). Although there are a number of women in mentorship programmes in South Africa, they still receive less mentorship than their male counterparts (Ntombekhaya, 2015). Although there are studies centred around the influence/impact of mentorship on academics, the current study focuses on mentorship development targeted specifically at black female academics at Wits University. Based on the available research, there are insufficient black female academics to trickle down mentorship to junior academics.

1.5 Significance of the study

The research examined and evaluated the influence of mentorship on the development of African South African female academics at Wits University. In addition, it aimed to provide solutions on how to improve the mentorship for African South African female academics in the institution. The findings provide guidance to

African South African female academics on how they can progress quickly in their careers and how to access promotions. The study also contributes to the theoretical debates in the understanding of challenges that specifically affect black women in academia. In addition, it was expected that the findings of the study would provide recommendations that will assist Wits CLTD Unit and Human Resource practitioners in proposing new systems and mentoring strategies. The research benefits Wits University, black female mentors and mentees and finally, the higher education sector. The purpose is not to focus on the challenges of African South African female academics, instead it is to bring attention to a critical issue of mentoring, which can enhance or limit the success of this designated group in academia.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This research study does not include the viewpoints of groups other than that of African South African female academics. The research carried out is limited to Wits University and this may restrict the generalisability of the research findings. In some departments, there are no African South African female academics. The researcher is a member of staff thus susceptible to suspicions of bias. The following interventions were applied to mitigate these biases:

- Permission was obtained from the participants to record the interview process
- The researcher's role was confined to that of being a listener

1.7 Definition of terms

Academic - A teacher/scholar/ faculty member at a university or an institution of higher learning

Black – According to the broad-based black economic empowerment BBBE act "Black people", "black persons", or "blacks" are generic terms which mean Africans, Coloureds and Indians who are South African citizens by birth or who have obtained citizenship prior to 27 April 1994 E(Republic of South Africa, 2003). For the purpose of this study, 'black' refers to African South African individuals.

Glass ceiling- A subtle and obscure barrier that prevents women and groups of minorities from moving up the corporate ladder

Gender - culturally and socially constructed characteristics of being a man or a woman

Mentee/protégée – A mentee is mentored and has less experience and fewer skills than the mentor has in the organisation.

Mentor - A mentor is a more experienced individual who professionally assists the career development of another (mentee), outside the normal manager / subordinate relationship.

Mentoring – Is to provide people with the chance to share their professional and personal skills and experience and to grow and develop in the process.

Psychosocial mentoring – A process where the mentor develops the professional skills and welfare of the mentee (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

Race - the classification of a group of people based on genetics and ancestry, culture or social relations

1.8 Assumptions

There is insufficient mentorship for black female academics at Wits University. The successful mentorship of black female academics faces many challenges. As a result, these challenges are the reason black female academics progress more slowly in their careers as compared to their non-black counterparts. Furthermore, they are more prone to underperform in the work place due to lack of mentorship and guidance.

1.9 Conclusions

Chapter one provided an introduction and purpose of the study. This was followed by the research questions, context of the study and problem statement. Chapter one

also highlighted the study's significance, limitations, definition of terms and assumptions.

1.10 Structure of the report

Chapter two provides the theoretical underpinnings of the study. It comprises a literature review which focuses on the definition of mentorship, theories of mentoring, different types of mentoring. Furthermore, the chapter looks at the impact of race and gender in the mentor-mentee relationship.

Chapter three describes the research philosophy, research paradigm, research design, the study's population and sample. Moreover, the chapter discusses the procedure for data collection and analysis used to address the study's objectives. In addition, it focuses on the study's limitations, validity and reliability.

Chapter four presents the results of the study

Chapter five discusses the results obtained from the study

Chapter six comprises the conclusion and recommendations. It highlights the implications and contribution of the study and lastly, makes suggestions for future research emerging from the findings of the study.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided the introduction and background to the research topic. In addition, central themes such as the mentorship and development of black female academics in South Africa were explored briefly. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review.

2.2 Definition of Mentorship

There is often a lack of consensus with the definition of mentorship, the relationship between a mentor and mentee is quite a complex exchange that has yet to be clearly defined. Mentoring is generally defined as a relationship comprised of development, guidance and teaching, both formally and informally, between individuals with differing degrees of experience (Adams 1998; Colwell 1998; Rowley 1999, cited in Jordan-Zachery 2004). According to Chesterman (2001); Allen, Finkelstein and Poteet (2011), mentorship is characterised by a two-person relationship, in other words, it is a relationship where someone more experienced and knowledgeable gives guidance to a less experienced co-worker. By the same token, mentoring is a professional and personal commitment made between two or more people (Griffin & Toldson, 2012). Mentoring is a collaborative learning process, in other words, “learning is the fundamental process, purpose and product of mentoring” (Zachary, 2006, p. 3).

Correspondingly, Bierema (1996); Mullen (2000); Thomas (2001) cited in Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) define mentorship as a relationship between someone in a position of power who can guide the career of a junior employee. It could also be said that mentoring is “a dynamic, shared personal relationship in which a more experienced person acts as an adviser, guide and role model for someone who has less experience in a particular field, the mentee” (Steinmann, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, mentoring is a professional and personal commitment made between two or more

people. Kram (1985) posits that mentoring is linked to a variety of activities which include job shadowing; networking; role modelling and provision of academic, career and personal advice. Zacary (2011) notes that mentoring is more often than not process driven, rather than service driven, as it focuses on the intangible matters. It was argued by Agumba and Fester (2010); Kram (1985) cited in Ragins and Cotton (1999) that the objective of mentoring is to develop the mentees' psychosocial and career development. Allen, et al. (2011) further emphasise that the focus of mentorship is the growth and development of the mentee. It is argued by Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) that mentoring relationships can considerably impact an individual's career development and advancement, with both the mentor and the mentee benefiting from the relationship. Fletcher and Mullen (2012) view mentoring as an investment in the younger generation to promote learning, socialisation and identity growth.

Geber et al. (2013) suggest that it is appropriate for mentees to establish a network of developmental relationships to accomplish success in their careers. It is worth noting that, in most of the literature, mentorship is defined in terms of its functions. On the whole, the common thread with regards to the definition of mentorship is that it emphasises support, guidance, knowledge transfer, motivation and experience. Straus, Johnson, Marquez and Feldman (2013) stated several traits of successful mentors in academia. Firstly, mentors are to be altruistic, meaning that the mentor should not do what he or she feels the mentee would want, but do what is in the best interested of the mentee (Straus et al., 2013). In addition, Straus et al. (2013) mentioned that honesty, being trustworthy and active listeners is also crucial characteristics of an effective academic mentor.

2.3 Other South African studies on Mentorship

In prior literature, mentorship in academia has been researched within a South African context, for example, Lalloo, Bobat, Pillay and Wassenaar (2014) who studied academic mentorship of teachers in the health care sector. The study by Lalloo, et al. (2014) was conducted at South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Additionally, Amde, Sanders and Lehmann (2014) also conducted research on mentorship of the health care workforce within a South African context at the University of the Western Cape. Du Plessis (2013) conducted a study that was representative of all South African provinces in which they studied the mentorship challenges faced by teachers. Furthermore, Du Plessis (2013) focused on the experiences that were encountered by long distance learning students of the University of South Africa (Unisa). Naicke (2013) also researched black female academics and established that the development of a conducive work environment within the South African higher education system was still an enormous challenge. He identified factors such as exploitation, discrimination, racism, classism and sexism within the academy and the endemic structures as barriers that marginalised women (Naicke, 2013).

A study was done on mentorship and sustainable research output at the University of Johannesburg; the study revealed the challenges for both the mentors and mentee's and poses actions that aid mentorship programmes to make sustainable contributions towards research capacity (Nundulall & Dorasamy, 2012). Geber, Nänniand and Claremont (2013) conducted a study in the Biodiversity industry, which was characterised by a limited number of trained and experienced Biodiversity professionals. Based on the fact that South Africa is still plagued by the legacy of Apartheid, this has resulted in under-development of young scientists from disenfranchised communities (Geber et al., 2013). The ramifications of Apartheid are that most experienced scientists are white, middle-aged and often, men (Geber et al., 2013). Consequently, a mentoring programme for young scientists was developed to address the "effective management of the country's rich resources and combating the impact of invasive alien species" (Geber et al., 2013, p.1).

The biodiversity programme has enabled employment for many less experienced workers. In addition, the programme was able to provide access to established networks of experienced scientists in invasion biology and environmental sciences in order to transform and diversify the demographics in these fields (Geber et al.,

2013). Sadler and Erasmus (2003) also commissioned a study in the accounting and finance industry. One of the factors that was revealed by the study was that black trainee accountants recommended a forum should be established which would allow accounting students to interact with seasoned accounting professionals through workshops. Additionally, it was recommended that there should be a network association of professional black mentors in the accounting sector (Sadler & Erasmus, 2003). Based on the findings from the Sadler and Erasmus (2003) study, respondents identified the career barriers that they experienced. Table 5 lists the various types of career barriers experienced by Black Professionals.

Table 5: Types of Career Barriers experienced Black Professionals

	% of respondents* who indicate the barrier
Restriction on type of work given, thereby limiting experience	64,65
Lack of black mentors in firm	61,95
Perceived racial bias on the part of supervisors	45,45
Lack of recognition and respect for work completed	45,12
Cultural differences	39,39
Lack of opportunity for professional development	36,70
Ethnic preconceptions	28,96
Lack of role models in the management of the firm	28,96
Resistance on the part of clients of the auditing firm	22,90
Lack of opportunity to interact socially with colleagues	19,19
Lack of co-operation of peers	16,84
Inadequate educational background	16,16
Other barriers	12,46

* 297 respondents replied to the questions on career barriers.

Source: Sadler & Erasmus (2003)

Based on Table 5, it has been identified that the lack of black mentors in the accounting firm is 61, 95%, which is the second highest barrier experienced by black professionals. However, it was noted that larger organisations have more human and financial resources at their disposable that allow them to assign mentors to black trainees (Sadler & Erasmus, 2003). Although the statement is partly true, research shows that many larger organisations are still faced with the challenge of having insufficient black professional mentors. A study was also conducted on the

mentoring of women in two South African information technology (IT) organisations, which revealed the main barriers to mentoring for women in these organisations. The study identified the following barriers: “lack of opportunities to obtain mentors, lack of management support, exclusion from male-dominated networks, poor representation of women in top management, prejudice or discrimination against women, misinterpretation of sexual boundaries in cross-gender relationships, pressure to adapt traditional male managerial attitudes and values, lack of suitable female mentors, legacy sex-role expectations, difficulty relating to male role models, issues of intimacy and sexual tension in cross-gender relationships, lack of experience in forming and sustaining mentoring relationships, and lack of willingness among senior females to mentor their junior counterparts” (Stone, 2005, p. 36).

Ngoepe (2014) also conducted a study in which mathematics student teachers were examined after receiving training. It was observed, in Ngoepe (2014), that mentors were crucial in identifying teaching material for class preparation. In addition, mentors played a pivotal in providing useful feedback and instructions on how to teach. The Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa known as (CARTA) an extensive mentoring programme, was implemented in 2011 for health care academics and administrators in African universities (Geber, 2003). The CARTA programme deals with the challenging African issue of the brain drain and utilises a mentoring approach to support the academics in the programme (Geber, 2003). Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000); Verwey (2007) and Ntombekhaya (2015) also revealed factors, such as lack of emotional and career mentoring support, stereotyping, gender bias and favouritism against female mentees in the mentorship of women in the workplace of the South African construction industry. However, the present research is specific to the mentorship development of black female academics at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

2.4 Theories of Mentoring

The inherent definitional challenge in mentoring is partly due to the failure to ground mentoring in an appropriate theory, as mentoring is multi-disciplinary and draws from various theoretical perspectives. For the purpose of the study, discussions of challenges facing black females are discussed under the Intersectionality and Black Feminist Theory theoretical frameworks. In addition, the Human Capital Theory is discussed. Each of these theoretical positions make an important contribution to our understanding of challenges faced by black female academics.

2.4.1 Intersectionality

Discussions of challenges facing black females have occurred within the Intersectionality theoretical framework. It is observed that experiences of Black women and the space in which they work are characterised as resulting from an intersection (Crenshaw, 2000). Shields (2008) further notes that the ideas around gender and race are subsumed under the construct of intersectionality. That is to say that Black women's experiences are often determined not only by their gender and race, but also by their socio-economic status (Crenshaw, 2000). Gianettoni and Roux (2010) point out that there are parallels and intersections between racism and sexism, that is to say, classification based on criteria of race and gender results in the division and hierarchization of the groups. Research findings point to the fact that people of colour have different experiences in comparison to their White counterparts. Evidently, the intersectionality of race coupled with gender issues creates an even more difficult experience for black female academics (Cumings Mansfield, Welton, Lee, & Young, 2010). By the same token, black women, like other women of colour, encounter both sexist and racist stereotypes that hinder their progress to leadership roles in higher education (Wilson, 2012).

Certainly, there is no shortage of agreement that the intersectional perspective places emphasises on the classification of difference such as gender and race as they converge and influence each other, therefore these ought to not be separately analysed (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). In addition, these processes of categorisation,

division, and hierarchisation's end results are racist and sexist attitudes (Gianettoni & Roux, 2010). Correspondingly, Gregory (1995) as well as Tack and Patitu (1992), cited in Jordan-Zachery (2004), point out significant aspects of marginalisation from this group emanating from factors such as "feeling of isolation, experiences of prejudice and discrimination, lower salaries, low professional ranks, and lack of tenured status" (Jordan-Zachery, 2004, p. 875).

In response to this marginalisation, the trend is that Black women try to find what Bell Hooks (1989) terms "home place". A 'home place' is defined as a space that can likely reduce the marginality of black women and allow them to centre their experiences in academia. Jordan-Zachery (2004) emphasises that mentoring relationships can contribute in this regard by offering Black women a "home place", meaning a safe space where they can discuss both their professional and personal lives. Certainly, there is no shortage of agreement that a lack of mentoring can make the professional progress of Blacks "unnecessarily traumatic" (Jordan-Zachery, 2004). As a consequence, Crenshaw (2000) posits that the mentoring process for Black women, like other underrepresented groups, requires different levels of mentoring. Amongst many other theorists, such as Gianettoni and Roux (2010), there appears then to be a trend towards an intersectional perspective which is anchored in Black feminism and postcolonial studies which takes into account the way systems of race and gender are linked to black women development challenges.

2.4.2 Black feminist theory

To be able to understand the interconnectedness of race and gender, it is vital to understand black feminist theory as the two concepts are aligned. Bell and Nkomo (2010) point out that Black feminist theory "emerged as a response to the exclusion of the lives and issues of women of colour in both western and non-western societies in feminist analyses" (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010, p. 7). "Black feminist thought is concerned with developing a standpoint and theoretical framework that accurately captures the true and real experiences of Black womanhood with Black women at the centre of analysis" (Jones, Wilder, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013, p. 330). In an

attempt to avoid universalising rationales of women's experiences, Black feminist theorists considered ways of understanding both race and gender. Black feminist theory in particular, contends that race and gender are defined as "interlocking categories," as "intersecting systems," as "interdependent systems," as "indivisible categories," or as "interrelated axes of social structure " (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010, p. 8). Different scholars have argued that with intersectionality, race and gender are not experienced as single concepts but they are connected and synchronised. Additionally, in Black feminist theory, power is a key element which is essential for the empowerment of Black women and thus this underpins the black feminist theoretical lens. Black female academics and graduate students face a distinctive set of obstacles directly linked to their race and gender that can be injurious to their success and longevity in academia (Hooks, 1989; Mabokela, 2001; Jones, Wilder, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Therefore, theorists suggest that any study of gender should integrate race since the relevance of our identities and experiences are shaped by both. By the same token, McCall (2005) is of the view that at an individual level, people develop their identities and life experience along race and gender, even in dominant and subordinate groups or both. Black feminist theory postulates that historically, Black womanhood was typecast by negative images that prevented the "intellect, value, and position of Black women from being recognized as legitimate and valid" (Jones et al., 2013, p. 330). It goes without saying that women from other races have been affected by racism; however, African women carried the burden of racism and sexism which led to their considerable underdevelopment. In the South African context, the racial and gender hierarchy still prevails in many sectors. It also said that, the Black woman is often silenced and "longing or yearning for critical voice and empowerment" (Carter & Hart, 2010, p. 382).

2.5 Institutional Culture

The institutional culture is a significant barrier faced by black female academics, as research indicates that those who understood the culture fared much better than those who tried 'to fit in'. With that being said, black female academics had to first understand the established language spoken and nuances that go with the academic

environment. Badat (2010) points out that institutional cultures at historically white institutions may compromise fairness of opportunity and outcomes. This point is also sustained by the work of (Naicker, 2013) that proclaims that universities around the world are a product of their national and societal contexts. As a consequence, the general educational and social experience of marginalised groups may be unpleasant. Furthermore, Badat (2010) emphasises that the reproduction and inadequate destruction of class based racialized and gendered institutional cultures hinder the forging of better social cohesion.

Most compellingly, du Toit (2000, p. 103) cited in Badat (2010) notably states ‘that the enemy’ in the forms of colonial and racial discourses ‘has been within the gates all the time’, and endangers ‘empowering intellectual discourse communities’. Constant transformation of the institutional culture is thus an essential condition of academic freedom (Badat, 2016). Though apartheid ended in 1994 and a newly elected democratic government was established which was followed by the introduction of radical employment equity legislation in 1998, however the current labour force statistics demonstrates that a race and gender hierarchy is still evident (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). Black female academics who are part of the education system feel there is resistance to change; despite the various policies that have been put into place, they are expected to ‘fit in’ the institutional culture or leave the institution.

2.5.1 Glass Ceiling

The “glass ceiling” concept has been defined as an artificial barrier that inhibits qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organisation into high-ranking positions (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010, p. 560). It is often argued that a “glass ceiling” prevents a lot of women from obtaining leadership positions in higher education (Mansfield et al., 2010). Correspondingly, statistics indicate favourable progress for women’s advancement at lower levels in organisations but less progress at the top level (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). When analysing ‘Gender stereotyping’, Schein (2001, 2007); Eagly and Carly (2003a) are of the view that

managerial positions are a possible categorisation for the 'proverbial glass ceiling' that women come across in their career mobility to managerial levels (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). This argument is supported by evidence from Schein's (Schein 1973, 1979, 2001, 2007) hypothesis termed as the "think manager, think-male maxim" that is to say, the managerial position is viewed as "male" in gender-type as the characteristics necessary for success are viewed as ordinarily held by men than by women (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

2.6 Mentorship and the development of academics

Mentorship is a prevalent theme in human resource management and it serves multiple purposes, such as employee development, affirmative action and performance intervention. Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) insist that mentoring is an effective management strategy that benefits both the mentor and the mentee. Geber (2013) further acknowledges that mentoring has been an effective development process for young professionals and academics and the workplaces that employ them. Mentoring programmes are one of the recommended practices for contemporary leadership development (Chun, Sosik, & Yun, 2012). Sadler and Erasmus (1999) propose that junior staff in the higher education sector can benefit from having numerous experienced staff as mentors for teaching, research and administration skills. Furthermore, the purpose of mentoring relationships in organisations improves the performance of the mentee, resulting in increased knowledge and productivity (Kahle-Piasecki, 2011). Chesterman (2001) emphasises that mentoring has been an effective way of providing guidance, advice and counsel to ambitious leaders and this has played itself out in both business and higher education.

Mentoring may lessen feelings of isolation and disaffection in early academic career experiences (Zellers, Howard & Barcic, 2008, in Patterson & Davis, 2015). The lack of mentoring in academia make it difficult for academics to comprehend and overcome the challenges that are in academia and to make better choices towards tenure (Luna, Medina, & Gorman, 2010). Undoubtedly, the lack of mentoring makes

it even more difficult for black female academics to overcome barriers that they are faced with in higher education institutions. Chesterman (2001) notes that the higher education sector around the world reveals the wider society in representing the long-term effects of social and systemic barriers to women's advancement to senior positions. Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) and Gardiner et al. (2007) posit that effective role modelling and mentoring, facilitated by experienced researchers, has a positive effect on the retention and promotion of early career academics.

According to Chesterman (2001), in the traditional academic model, a professor who is adept in a particular subject area, may act as a guide to younger co-workers to encourage their development. Furthermore, the professor may motivate the mentee to write articles, pursue research, or contribute in books with "joint attribution or to become research assistants on large projects" (Chesterman, 2001). In Jordan-Zachery's (2004) view, within and outside the walls of academia, the mentoring process is acknowledged as a significant element in the advancement of a successful career. Steiner (2014) posited that it is paramount for organisational leaders and individual academic mentors to allocate time, space, learning resources and equipment, as well as adequate funding, to support the mentorship process.

In the higher education sector, Black females still face limited opportunities and daily challenges, thus are an 'at-risk population' (Carter & Hart, 2010). Black women experience exclusion and disaffection in many academic departments in many countries (Davis, 2008; Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011; McCray, 2011). Black women in academia are unable to fully benefit from mentoring relationships (Jordan-Zachery, 2004). Geber (2013) insists that an indigenous African model is essential in view of organisational and social transformation. Geber (2013, p. 216) further reports that in various studies, mentoring is presented as being effective in "supporting African academics in their career development and pursuit of higher degrees and research".

2.7 Informal and Formal Mentoring

Literature distinguishes two types of mentoring, formal and informal. Jean-Marie and Lloyd-Jones (2011) suggest that supportive networks, formal and informal mentoring can enhance socialisation. According to Liang and Gong (2012), formal and informal mentoring may co-exist in organisations. Another point to note is that professional development typically includes formal and informal opportunities for professional growth. Black females are often uninformed of professional opportunities due to limited access to formal and informal networks that are in most professions and disciplines and as such, lack of access may ultimately compromise their professional success (Jones, 2013, p. 60). It has been revealed that limited access to the formal and informal networks that exist in many professions often cause Black people to miss out on opportunities to partake in research and other professional activities, ultimately compromising their professional success (Mansfield et al., 2010). All things considered, what matters is not whether the mentorships are informal or formal, but whether the quality of relationships is high or low (Chun et al., 2012).

2.7.1 Formal Mentoring

Theorists have often defined a formal mentoring relationship “ as an organizationally established and sponsored developmental relationship in which a more experienced senior mentor and a less experienced junior protégé are matched for the purposes of sharing organizational knowledge and advancing the protégé’s career for a specified period” (Chun et al., 2012, p. 1073). In recent years, formal mentoring has been cultivated as a staff development strategy. Moreover, many organisations often encourage mentoring through formal programmes. It is for that reason that a formal mentoring occurs when an institution develops a mentoring structure which has formal recognition. Chesterman (2001, p. 8) insists that formal mentoring programmes have a “clear rationale; measurable goals and outcomes; mechanisms for assessment and selection of both mentors and mentees in place and accountability, since results are monitored”. Chesterman (2001) observed that many higher education institutions develop a structured and more formal mentoring

programme, with the intention of inclusivity to ensure equal opportunity for participation. Gordon and Lowrey (2016) observe that the process of appropriately pairing mentors and mentees is the most critical element of formal or planned mentoring. It is also suggested that formal mentoring may lead to a more collegial supportive and harmonious work environment.

Research shows that if a formal experience has been good for a mentee and mentor, it is likely they will also mentor other people. Gordon and Lowrey (2016) further point out that in formal mentoring relationships, the assigned mentors initiate more formal contact with the mentee through scheduled meetings and tend to discuss factors, such as professional goals and the development of the mentee. Given these points, the most significant factor for successful mentorship lies in the quality. According to Gordon and Lowrey (2016), methods such as interviews, surveys and consultations ensure a proper fit for the mentor and mentee. Successful formal mentoring programmes require proper understanding, planning, implementation and evaluation (Best Practices: Mentoring, 2008). In the South African context, formal mentoring programmes have become tools for the growth and development of previously disenfranchised groups.

2.7.2 Informal Mentoring

According to Chesterman (2001), informal mentoring ensues when an individual voluntarily pays attention to the well-being and progression of another person. Informal mentoring has minimal to no structure and oversight and does not necessarily have to have a clear and specific goal; anybody can mentor anyone else, for any period of time, with meetings happening either physically or virtually (Best Practices: Mentoring, 2008, September). With this in mind, informal mentoring has long been a fundamental factor in many work environments. It is well documented in mentoring research that women have limited access to informal mentoring networks. Research done also proposes that mentoring relationships are most effective when they are informal (Palmer & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). Liang and Gong (2012) advise that informal mentoring develops naturally and is sustained on a

voluntary basis. Fyn (2013) believes that because informal mentorship is inherent flexible, it may be better suited than formal mentorship to meet mentees' needs. Ragins and Cotton (1999), cited in Chesterman (2001), contend that informal mentoring is more suitable for mentees rather than formal as it yields better results. However, the contrary view is that participation in informal networks is more difficult for those without "tickets," and even harder for those with major responsibilities outside of the organisation. This particularly affects women with family commitments as women often "lack time for the social activities that could generate collegial support and client contacts" (Mansfield et al., 2010, p. 728)

Moreover, Chesterman (2001) argues that for persons who have been excluded from informal networks and power dynamics, it was likely that they would not benefit from being an informal mentee. Equally important, there are no explicit and clear guidelines for informal mentoring as no quality standards are in place, consequently mentees may have no recourse if challenges arise (Chesterman, 2001). Patterson and Davis (2015) found that informal mentoring was more effective when complemented by an inclusive formal structure. According to Eby, Rhodes, and Allen (2007); Liang and Gong (2012), evidence has demonstrated that informal mentoring is less likely to lead to negative mentoring experiences and that mentees with informal mentors gain greater benefits than those with formal mentors. Kang (2007) further notes that informal mentorship is more ideal for individuals who are unable to find a mentor within their organisation, moreover it is ideal as at times it is difficult to organise physical meetings on a regular basis, based on time and space. We are in a period of tight budgets and time constraints, possibly informal mentorship is more ideal. Informal mentorship requires a less committed form of mentorship where mentors are met with as-needed with no need for follow-up and thus ought to be recognised as a legitimate form of mentorship.

2.8 Impact of race and gender in the mentor-mentee relationship

Black women's experiences are influenced by not only their race, but also by their gender and, at times, by their socio-economic position. Chesterman (2001, p. 8)

states that “the hitherto unrecognized trajectories of power within workplaces have been identified, and attention drawn to those who through gender, race or other reasons may not have equal access to senior positions”. The sentiment expressed is that Black women in society experience “double jeopardy”, or marginalisation, grounded on their racial and gender status (Carter & Hart, 2010, p. 382). According to Deering (2010), the success of a mentorship programme is affected when the mentees and mentors interrelate and base their relationship on race, gender, and ethnicity. Steinmann (2006); Meyer and Fourie (2004) agree that complexities such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion and age influence the mentor-mentee relationship. The importance of the gender and race of the mentor has an influential role in the mentoring relationship as is also evident in the research of Murrell and de Zagenczyk (2006). On the contrary, some findings suggest that “same race, same gender mentoring is effective for black women” however, the small number of Black women at traditionally white institutions make mentoring partnership opportunities limited (Tillman, (2001) cited in Patterson & Davis, (2015, p.4). Historically, black women by virtue of race and sex are the most disadvantaged and exploited group of the population. The lack of senior Black women in institutions of higher learning restricts the likelihood of ‘same-race or same-gender mentoring for black women’ (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011; Turner & Gonzalez, 2015).

2.8.1 The influence of gender on the mentor-mentee relationship on a successful mentorship of women

With regards to leadership, differences in gender have been associated with how women perceive themselves and roles of leadership in higher education (Madden, 2011). Though many organisations have recognised women as valuable additions to the workforce and have instituted changes to retain them, many men have done their best to prevent women from succeeding. The “Old Boys/New Boys” network can be understood by examining men’s historical attitudes toward women (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010) According to Litmanovitz (2010), many women believed having a mentor, specifically a female that inspired and motivated them, compelled them to pursue higher leadership positions. Patterson and Davis (2015) point out that

because there are a small number of Black females in academia, this worsens the problem of insufficient socialisation and consequently, there are fewer Black female faculty role models. That being the case, researchers tend to believe that successful mentorship is affected by the gender of the mentor and mentee, and it affects the type of mentoring provided (Allen & Eby, 2004).

Based on Allen and Eby's (2004) study, male mentors tend to provide more psychosocial mentoring to female mentees than to male mentees. In addition, female mentors tend to provide more emotional support and counselling characteristics than their male mentors (Allen & Eby, 2004). In Ragins and Cotton's (2000) research, they report that senior men may make effective mentors; as an illustration, it was found that women who were mentored by senior male mentors were likely to have more career success and satisfaction. According to Kalbfleisch (2000), women and men both prefer and are comfortable to be mentored by someone of the same gender. Patterson and Davis (2015) cite Ensher and Murphy (1997) that contentment and connection increased when there were apparent similarities between the mentor and mentee.

However, Verwey (2007) revealed how complicated it was for women to get mentors in male-dominated organisations. Hansman (2002) contends that mentoring relationships are often available to men and not so much to women. Furthermore, Chesterman (2001) suggests that many demands are placed on senior women making it difficult for them to become effective mentees. In McKenzie's (1995) research, he proposes that senior women may act like 'queen bees', who are wary of supporting more junior women; however, this is not a common experience. Chesterman (2001) further notes that senior male mentors might be averse to mentoring junior women as opposed to mentoring junior men. Consequently, the lack of mentors in various positions at work has become an obstacle to female mentees' progression in their careers (Hatipkarasulu & Roff, 2011).

On the other hand, it has been found that cross gender mentoring may suffer from the anxiety that might develop in the relationship between White males and females such as the possibility of physical attraction, romantic involvement and intimacy

(Palmer & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). Chesterman (2001) posits that there are some difficulties posed by cross-gender mentoring, often an implication of gender challenges is a sexual harassment concern, which is a reason the mentors decide not to choose mentees of the opposite sex. Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) also maintain that, even though physical attraction may not be present in cross-gender mentoring relationships, challenges may arise created by firstly public image, secondly, perceptions that people have about the relationship between the female mentee and male mentor.

2.8.2 The influence of race on the mentor-mentee relationship

Blake-Beard et al. (2006) argue that race in organisations continues to be a critical factor in relationships because racism in society has a rooted phenomenon lens. Geber and Nyanjom (2009); Geber (2003), cited in Geber (2013) maintain the importance of African mentors as role models for early career African academics as highlighted in studies in several African universities. There has been a transformation in many organisations leading to a more diverse workforce. The result of this transformation means that people encounter more cross-race interactions within the organisations (Murrell & Hayes-James, 2001). However, often black women experience segregation and isolation in divisions where they are the only person of colour (Patterson & Davis, 2015). The majority of top positions are occupied by white men (Statistics South Africa, 2016). As a result, most mentees are mentored by the white race in the work place.

Dickey (1997) further notes that it is difficult for women to be involved in mentoring relationships, but for women of colour it is even worse. Bell (1990) describes this situation as being at a double disadvantage. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) state that same-race mentorships are usually successful. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002) further observed that mentees who are in a same-race mentorship relationship receive more psychosocial support and have a shorter and easier initiation phase compared to cross-race mentorship relationships. Similarly, Patterson and Davis

(2015) established that Black women preferred other Black women as mentors. Moreover, mentors who were from the same-race mentorship relationship served as excellent role models to encourage mentees to believe that it was also possible for them to succeed (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). According to Meznick, McGrath and Golaviz (1989), mentors in same-race mentorship relationships are able to handle conflicts arising between the values of mentor and mentee in culture or community. Meznick et al. (1989) also acknowledge that success is possible in same-race mentoring relationships without having to abandon cultural identity.

There is also, however, a further point to be considered of the benefits of cross-race mentorship relationships. The view from some studies is that both parties learn how to interact with other people who are from different races (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) uncovered that non-white mentees who had white mentors had the least amount of role conflict and ambiguity. Murrell and De Zagenczyk's (2006) research reveals that female mentees who are mentored by white male mentors are promoted more quickly and earn higher salaries than those who are mentored by female and minority mentors. Certainly, there is no shortage of disagreement; according to Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002), mentees who are involved in cross-race mentorship relationships tend to be unfairly treated by mentors based on perceived cultural stereotypes. Previously, Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) had postulated that white mentees with non-white mentors reported more role conflict and ambiguity as opposed to white mentees with white mentors.

2.9 Conclusion of Literature Review

This literature reviews the role of mentorship in the South African and international context. Theories of mentoring were also explored. The different types of mentoring were also discussed, including factors that contribute to the successful mentorship of women. The literature investigated the influence of gender and race of the mentor-mentee relationship on a successful mentorship of women. The research indicated that the demographics of the mentor-mentee relationship do have an effect on the success of mentorship offered to black female academics. In addition, few women

are in senior positions; therefore there are not enough black female mentors to trickle down to junior staff. Negative attitudes that were identified of mentors towards their female mentees included discrimination, stereotyping, reluctance and prejudice. The positive attitudes that were identified included enthusiasm in the field, growth in their field and motivation. Lastly, the literature indicates that mentorship programmes help women to overcome barriers such as racism, patriarchy, gender inequality and the glass ceiling.

3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The intention of this study was to explore the contribution made by mentorship on the development of African South African female academics using the University of the Witwatersrand as a case study. The chosen method for the study was Qualitative research, thus an exploratory design was utilised. This chapter presents a narrative of the research paradigm that informed the choice of research methods and research design. The chapter outlines the factors that underpin qualitative research, including the strengths and weaknesses of using this research method. The chapter gives a description of the population, sample and the research process used. The method used to gather data is addressed and a description of the method used to analyse the results is outlined. The ethical considerations adhered to in conducting the study are also discussed.

3.2 Research Philosophy

3.2.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism refers to the methods which give emphasis to the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in both cultural and social life (Elster, 2007); Walsham (1995), cited in Chowdhury (2014). Additionally, "Interpretivism is the lens most frequently influencing the choice of qualitative methods" (Trauth, 2001, p. 7). Qualitative research is often associated with Interpretivism, but alternative philosophies do exist. Interpretivism signifies that methods of research which adopt the notion that people's knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors, and so it distinctively rules out the methods of natural science (Eliaeson (2002); McIntosh (1997), cited in Chowdhury (2014). Hence to understand the subjective meanings of persons in the research study is important in the interpretive paradigm. Certainly, there is no shortage of disagreement as Perry (1998);

Eisenhardt (1989), cited in Chowdhury (2014) argue that while interpretive research is acknowledged for its significance in providing contextual depth, its results are often criticised in terms of reliability, validity, and generalisability. All things considered, the philosophy of Interpretivism aided the researcher in the understanding of the contemporary social world.

3.3 Research paradigm: Qualitative Research Method

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative research method was adopted.

3.3.1 Qualitative research

According to Anderson (2010), qualitative research encompasses the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that is not easily reduced to statistics. In addition, Anderson (2010) contends that qualitative data can be related to the social world, theories and the actions of society. Maxwell (1994) emphasises that qualitative research has long been used to conduct “exploratory” qualitative studies as this assists in designing questionnaires and identifying variables for experimental investigation. Myers (2009) contends that qualitative research is best used to study a particular subject in depth. Tracy (2010) contends that high-quality qualitative research is distinctive as it has a rich complexity of abundance in comparison to quantitative research which is generally valued because of its precision. Good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant and interesting (Tracy, 2010).

3.3.1.1 Strengths of Qualitative Research

According to Anderson (2010), the main strength of qualitative research is that a subject matter can be examined in detail and thoroughly. Furthermore, the interviews are not limited to set questions; the researcher has control on the direction of the interview. Equally important when new information is developed, the research direction can be easily revised. Some theorists believe that data centred on human experience is more influential and at times, more persuasive than quantitative data. Furthermore, findings from qualitative research can be transferable to another

setting. Additionally Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge (2009, p. 6) state qualitative research focuses on “description and interpretation and this might lead to development of new concepts or theory, or to an evaluation of an organisational process”. This demonstrates that qualitative research can incorporate real-life perspectives and take various views on board.

3.3.1.2 Limitations of Qualitative Research

Anderson (2010) observes that qualitative research is often criticised as being anecdotal, biased, small scale and lacking rigour. The data from qualitative research is generally composed from a few cases or individuals, so findings cannot be generalised to the larger population. The quantity of data that is associated with qualitative research makes analysis and interpretation time consuming. The research quality is fundamentally reliant on the skills of the researcher. Moreover, Anderson (2010) insists that qualitative research is easily altered by the researcher’s personal predispositions and traits. It is the assertion of some researchers that accuracy is more difficult to demonstrate, maintain and assess in qualitative research. Consequently, this research method is sometimes not as well accepted and understood in comparison with quantitative research in the research/scientific community.

3.4 Research Design

Grounded in the frameworks outlined in the literature review, it was decided that an exploratory qualitative approach would be undertaken as the main medium of data collection for the study. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), exploratory studies lend themselves to newly identified phenomena which are not yet understood; this also extends to patterns and meanings. The main reason for the exploratory approach was primarily because there were few previous research studies that had focused on the contribution that mentorship provided to the development of black female academics; therefore, the research was in quest of new insight into the subject of mentorship development. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), establishing a solid research design is crucial in order to interpret the research

philosophy that assists in evaluating the critical ideas around the research. Furthermore, it enables one to establish an appropriate plan so that the research results are credible.

3.4.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interview questionnaires were administered, comprising extensive open comments, including a significant number of responses to open comment items. The strength of using this method eliminates the sources of bias that are primary to social understanding. Obtaining the individuals' personal experience on the matter under investigation clarifies stereotypes, prejudice or any kind of misunderstandings the world may have on the individuals. The interviews allowed the researcher to delve deeper to assess mentorship development in academia. Myers (2009) asserts that understanding phenomena from the viewpoint of participants and their environment is mostly absent when textual data is quantified.

3.5 Population and sample

3.5.1 Population

The University of the Witwatersrand was selected as the research site for the study. The main campus is situated in Johannesburg (Braamfontein) with other campuses situated around the Johannesburg area. The choice of the research site was owing to the fact that, as a member of the university's staff profile, the researcher had strong knowledge of the institution and access to the research participants who lectured in the different faculties within the university.

3.5.2 Sample and sampling method

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), a sample is a "sub-set" of the universe. The sampling methodology used in the research was non-probability and purposive sampling. The intention was to study a quite homogenous sample in order to find out

if mentorship has an effect on the development for black female academics, using the University of the Witwatersrand as a case study. It was also important to the study that these women be interested in advancing their careers because the aim of the study was to assess whether mentorship can assist in the perceived barriers to senior positions and how they cope in their career advancement. Thus, this means that focus was not on forecasting or guaranteeing that each element of the population would be represented in the sample. Moreover, purposive sampling combined with snowballing sampling was used to select the participants.

Snowball sampling is defined as “the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects” (Babbie & Mouton, 2005, p. 167). That is to say, a researcher relies on referrals and takes advantage of informal networks that might ordinarily be difficult to access. The criteria for the sample of this study were that they had to be African, South African, female academics and interested in advancing their careers or were already attempting to advance their careers. Given the time and resource limitations, a small sample of 14 academics from the University of the Witwatersrand were interviewed for the purpose of the study.

Table 6: Sample profile of African South African female academics based on rank

Rank	Number
Associate Professor	1
Senior Lecturer	2
Lecturer	5
Associate lecturer	3
Associate Researcher	1
Academic Trainee	2
Total	14

Table 7: Sample profile of African South African female academic based on the age range

Age range	Number
21-30	5
30-39	4
40-49	3
50-59	2
Total	14

Table 6 and 7 indicated the sample profile African South African academics who were interviewed. In this regard, 14 black women participated in the study; the participants were from the different faculties within the University of the Witwatersrand. The details describing the sample are provided below. The lowest educational qualification amongst the participants was a degree and the highest a doctoral degree. All the women were academics as defined earlier in the study and are of South African descent. The academics lecture, coordinate or research in a school/faculty.

Participants were sent an e-mail inviting them to join the study. The e-mail included an introduction about the researcher, the purpose of the study, who recommended them to participate in the study (if applicable) and a request for an interview. The interviews were conducted at various locations on the university's campus. Permission was granted to interview each faculty member after reading and signing the Informed Consent form approved by the Wits Business School ethics committee. The researcher stated the intention to protect the participants of the study because of the sample size, gender and ethnicity identifiers. Therefore, in order to protect the identity of the participants and maintain confidentiality, the researcher has chosen to omit personal details that may identify any of the participants.

3.6 The research instrument

The study used "semi-structured" interviews; this included a number of open-ended questions centred on the topic of mentorship. This also provided an opportunity for the interviewer and participants to discuss the topic in more detail. The researcher,

with the interviewees' consent, recorded the interviews. Participants signed a formal consent form before partaking in the study.

3.7 Procedure for data collection

The data was collected verbally by means of personal interviews; this was also done through Skype or phone, depending on the availability of research participants. During the interviews, notes were taken of everything the participants said. The interviews were also recorded.

3.8 Data analysis and interpretation

After interviews had been recorded, the researcher transcribed them into notes that were later interpreted and reported. In order to analyse the research data, content thematic analysis was utilised, in which common themes were identified and grouped in order to make inferences from them. The findings were summarised and interpreted; this included the analyses of the association among the various themes and how they correlated with participants' accounts and concerns raised. This enabled the researcher to gather valuable information that added on to the research focus.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The study expected to provide significant contributions, however it goes without saying that all research has its limits in its design. The following limitations applied to the study:

- The data analyses was based on the researcher's interpretations and understanding
- The research was limited to the University of the Witwatersrand and only African South African female academics were interviewed for this study

- As the researcher is the one directly involved and in control of the interview, there is a potential of display bias in the collection and the analyses of the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012)
- The findings cannot be generalised as representative of the views of the South African Higher Education sector – since views were elicited from respondents at Wits University only.
- Finally, it was expected that it would be challenging interviewing black female academics as their numbers are low and in turn, they usually do not participate in mentorship programmes.

3.10 Ethical Statement

The names of people who participated in this research were not recorded unless permission was given to do so. Therefore, all personal details of participants remain anonymous throughout the research dissertation. Participation in the research was voluntary and no payment was given to people who participated in the study. Participants participated of their own free and informed consent from each research participant was obtained in writing. Moreover, participants were fully informed regarding the procedures of the research project and any potential risks. Quality assurance procedures were put in place with respect to the following aspects: Interviews were recorded using a quality recorder. The interviews were transcribed by two people - the researcher, along with an editor, to ensure quality of data capturing and to verify that all the information was recorded.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

According to Anderson (2010), validity refers to the authenticity and rectitude of the research data, whereas reliability refers to the replication and reliability of the data. Data reliability refers to the consistency in the collection and analyses of the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Thus, to ensure the standardisation of the interview process and guidelines, the researcher intended to achieve greater data reliability in the collection and analyses process. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012) 'Data

Validity' is the level to which methods employed measure the planned unit of analysis and that the results are trustworthy. Reliability and Validity are crucial criteria for quality in quantitative research, even though the study adopted the qualitative research method, the researcher factored these two concepts in when designing the study, analysing the results and lastly, judging the quality of the study.

3.12 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 has discussed the research philosophy, research design and research instrument in detail. Furthermore, the ethical statement, population and sample size reliability and validity are discussed.

4 CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 3) explored the research methodology of the study. This chapter (Chapter 4) presents the findings of the study. After interviews with key respondents were conducted a “thematic and content analysis” was conducted in which common themes were identified and grouped. Thereafter, informed inferences were made from the findings of that data. The qualitative aspect is presented in a series of interviews. Data saturation was arrived at from 14 interviews during which similar responses were observed numerous times. This chapter presents the results of the study consistent with research questions proposed in Chapter 1.

A typical interview lasted around 30 minutes. The interview was followed by two hours of content analysis by reviewing the recordings and the transcribed notes captured by the researcher. The content analysis was done on an excel spreadsheet. Each concept which was identified on the transcribed notes was captured in relation to the research questions. A frequency analysis was also done; for every concept identified, the number of mentions was captured. With the frequency analysis, the concept was ranked from most mentioned to least mentioned. The results from the sample group were compared and analysed.

4.2 What is the understanding of mentorship and the University of the Witwatersrand’s role in the development of African South African female academics?

The research question wanted to ascertain the understanding of what constitutes mentoring for African South African female academics and how they perceived the role of the University in their development as black female academics. Table 8 indicates the aggregate results of the sample group to the interview question on what the participants’ understanding of mentorship was. Under the construct column, the

most prevalent concepts were captured and ranked, while the frequency shows the number of times the construct was mentioned by participants.

Table 8: Understanding of mentorship constructs

Understanding of mentorship		
Rank	Construct	Frequency
1	Guidance	10
2	Support	9
3	Advisory	7
4	Career Development	4
5	Research support	3

One interviewee stated that “mentorship is that you are under the guidance of an older almost senior lecturer and they kind of show you the way things are done and how things could be done”. One of the participants noted that “Mentorship is about having someone who can support you towards successful career development, someone who can advise you and to help you reach your goals”. Another interviewee expressed “a mentor will be somebody who you will be able to share opinions, ask for advice, someone who you will be able to get to know; things that you are not familiar with such as research, someone to share your fears with in all aspects really in terms of your academic, career or your personal life”.

The second part of the research question was to find out the views of the participants with regard to Wits University’s role in the development of African South African female academics. One of the interviewees stated that there is intention at the university to provide mentorship and support to emerging academics. The respondent added to suggest that even plans are in place to provide the necessary support but the challenge is in the implementation in the schools and organisational departments. One interviewee commented that “There is written policy in terms of what will happen on paper but my question has always been when it comes to application, what is on paper is not the reality of what is happening”. A respondent echoed that same sentiment that policy changes are needed in that African female support staff are left disadvantaged as proposals for programmes that could help

them are continuously rejected. Additionally, the interviewee then said that the policies and systems ought to change as they do not provide room for the development of black South Africans, especially black South African women as they become restricted only to administrative roles in the university. Another participant remarked “the university is doing very little to support black female academics; my personal feeling is that there isn’t a strong hold on it. It seems like we are here but we are non-existent, it’s almost like we are decorative objects”.

4.3 How does gender and the race of the mentor/mentee influence on the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics

The research question wanted to establish whether gender and race influence a mentoring relationship. The first section focuses on race and the second section on gender.

Table 9 indicates the aggregate results of the sample group on the interview question whether participants thought race has an influence in a mentorship relationship.

Table 9: Impact of race on a mentorship programme

Would the race of the mentor be a significant factor	
Yes	8
No	5
Neutral	1
TOTAL	14

It should be noted that one of the new academics explicitly pointed out that she would prefer a mentor of the same race as she believed that a mentor of the same race would understand her better. Another interview mentioned that race matters, “I would prefer somebody who actually understands where I am coming from, I don’t think like a white or any other race besides a Black, especially a Black woman, understands the kind of struggles that I am facing as a Black woman who is trying to

be an academic in this space”, she emphasised. Another respondent postulated that mentors with the same race as the mentee tend to have a very good synchronisation. This is because the mentor would understand the struggles of that mentee since they are faced by the same challenges due to historical injustices that plagued South Africa. Another participant stated “I would like a Black mentor and I think that goes to say that I want my mentor to understand me before I even start talking in terms of just who I am”. Another participant indicated that in South Africa there is a race challenge “So I always think it is tough to have a mentor who doesn’t fully understand where you are coming from, what you are going through”.

Table 10 indicates the aggregate results of the sample group on the interview question whether participants thought gender has an influence in a mentorship relationship.

Table 10: Impact of gender in a mentorship programme

Would the gender of the mentor be a significant factor?	
Responses	Number of participants
Yes	10
No	3
Neutral	1
TOTAL	14

The impact of gender in mentoring received varied reviews from the interviewees, some suggesting that it indeed mattered with some positing that it had no bearing. However, most participants agreed that gender is a significant factor to the success of a mentorship programme. An academic cited that having the same gender mentor would be beneficial to her as men might fail to understand some of the experiences that women face. An interviewee stated “I would want a Black female someone that I can see myself in and you know they understand where I am coming from”. Whilst another participant proclaimed “I have this assumption that just because someone is the same gender as you they kind of get you and you feel more comfortable asking any question without feeling silly”. Another participant stated “When the genders are

different it is easy to overlook certain challenges that are faced by a particular gender. When you are unable to meet the deadline and your mentor is of a different gender they will just assume that you are negligent but if your mentor is of the same gender they will want to know why you missed the deadline, one is able to easily negotiate”

On the contrary, one of the interviewees stated initially she believed gender mattered in mentoring, but later on discovered that it did not and what actually mattered was alignment between her and the mentor. Another interviewee also indicated that the gender does not really matter as long as if there are proper boundaries set. Another participant noted that, for her, gender did not matter as the mentoring relationship should be knowledge based. One of the interviewees was neutral on the matter stating that she believes that there are pros and cons in both same gender mentoring and cross gender mentoring. In as much as gender views differed, it could be generalised that it was a central theme all around which definitely deserved mention, based on the interviews.

4.4 How does the socio-economic status of the mentor-mentee influence the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics

The research question wanted to establish whether the socio-economic status of the mentor/mentee has an influence in a mentoring relationship.

Table 11 indicates the aggregate results of the sample group on the interview question whether the socio-economic background of the mentor would be a significant factor:

Table 11: Impact of socio-economic status of mentor/mentee

Would the socio-economic background of the mentor be a significant factor	
Responses	Number of participants
Yes	7
No	3
Neutral	4
TOTAL	14

It emerged from the series of interviews conducted that the same socio-economic background was indeed a factor that could determine the quality or rather the success of mentorship. An interviewee posited “I think it helps a lot. In a sense that it is easier to relate to someone who shares a similar past with you, we are both from Soweto so we can relate better to each other”; she further added “it is easy for me to talk about my weaknesses with her than with other people”. Whilst another commented “I think it’s always inspiring to see somebody you know from the same kind of background or grassroots background having progressed and you always are intrigued to find how they made it”. An interviewee believed that mentorship relationship between people of a similar socio-economic background would probably work. An interviewee also said a mentor of the same socio-economic class as the mentee would definitely connect with the mentee and vice versa.

However, some of the criticism, as stated by one of the participants, was that “Someone who is mentoring you and they are from the same socio-economic background can’t really open doors adequately for you because they are having the same struggles as you”. Another participant believes that when the mentor and mentee come from the same socio-economic background, it does not mirror what mentorship is about. The participant further calls this “Broerskap where people cling together it serves to be like your brother’s club or an all boy’s club, I don’t know what they are teaching each other”. Some of the participants were neutral on the matter, highlighting that the socio-economic background presents both challenges and advantages.

4.5 Are there recommendations that could be taken from the study's results towards the improvement of mentorship programmes at Wits University

The research question wanted to establish whether recommendations could be taken from the study's findings. A participant argued that mentorship should be embedded in the institutional culture of the university. Another participant believed that mentors and mentees should be given an option with regards to who they want to mentor or be mentored by and also to negotiate the contact around the mentoring relationship. One of the participants posits that negotiating a mentorship contract on how you are going to work is also very important so that at the end of the day no one is blaming the other party. An interviewee stated that "When you give someone the role of being a mentor you also need to look at their workload because sometimes people agree that they will be a mentor but as time goes by they realise that they do not have the time to mentor or putting in time to make sure the mentee actually develops". Another respondent believed that the Heads of Schools have a crucial role to play in encouraging mentorship for new recruits. A senior academic insinuated that mentorship programmes help define where an academic should be after a certain period of time being in academia. There should not be any vagueness surrounding promotion from junior academics to senior roles. A respondent also stated that the university mentorship programme should focus on research exposure as many black female academics are not actively publishing.

Another interviewee implied that mentorship should be made compulsory and become a key performance indicator (KPI). She then added that if mentorship is formally put in writing for the new employees, it could help emphasise its importance. Race, age and gender had to be factored in when university management considers implementing support structures. Another participant postulates that "networking is essential in that it would help if your mentor could introduce you to people outside of the university". Notably, a participant noted that mentorship programmes require funding as it takes a lot of your time as the mentor. So it needs funding for the mentor, furthermore the programme needs to be monitored to determine whether it succeeds or not.

4.6 Summary of the results

The results from the interviews questions show support for the literature on mentorship development for African South African female academics. Furthermore, the research questions have provided useful insight into the factors that promote and inhibit successful mentorship. Chapter 5 comprehensively discusses the results.

5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in depth and relates back to the context of the study and the literature review. The chapter provides insight from the data collected through the in-depth interview questions. The data was obtained from four research questions and gathered through a process of 14 semi-structured interviews. This information assisted in providing insights to mentorship development for African, South African female academics.

The following are the research objectives that the researcher hoped to achieve via the study, and which also provided a guideline to keep the propositions and research analysis concise:

5.1.1 Research objectives

1. Explore the influence that the mentorship function has on the development of African, South African female academics at Wits University.
2. Investigate whether the gender of the mentor-mentee relationship has an effect on African, South African female academics at Wits University.
3. Investigate whether the race of the mentor-mentee relationship has an effect on African, South African female academics at Wits University.
4. Investigate whether the socio-economic status of the mentor-mentee relationship has an effect on African, South African female academics at Wits University.

5.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Fourteen (14) African South African female academics from the University of the Witwatersrand were interviewed. The demographics of the group comprised of the following academic levels:

Table 12: Sample of African South African female academics interviewed

Rank	Number
Associate Professor	1
Senior Lecturer	2
Lecturer	5
Associate lecturer	3
Associate Researcher	1
Academic Trainee	2
Total	14

5.3 What is the understanding of mentorship and the University of the Witwatersrand role in the development of African South African female academics?

What was prevalent from the study was that participants understood mentorship as encompassing patterns of guidance, support, advice, career development and research support. The above statement is corroborated by Kram (1985), who posits that mentoring is linked to a variety of activities which include job shadowing; networking; role modelling and provision of academic, career and personal advice. Many of the participants stated that they would like to be part of a mentorship programme as they needed support and guidance to become successful academics. Lentz and Allen (2009); Chun et al. (2012) found that those with experience as mentors reported higher job satisfaction and organisation satisfaction. More often than not, black female academics do not realise their full potential and mentoring ultimately draws out hidden talents, particularly for Black scholars (Griffin & Toldson, 2012).

Based on the study's findings, many academics believed that the institution was simply not doing enough to nurture and support new academics. Moreover, most of the participants stated they were not aware of any mentorship programmes available to them and if there were mentorship programmes at the university, they were not visible and information was not readily available. Thus, this led to a lot of African South African females not forming part of a formal mentorship structure. Given the

challenges identified in the literature, marginalisation and lack of mentoring can increase the black female academic's chances of being less familiar with the tenure and promotion process (Gregory, 2001). Tillman (2001) acknowledged three major factors that created barriers for successful promotion and tenure: firstly, a lack of socialisation to faculty life, secondly, the absence of meaningful mentoring, and lastly, an inability to articulate a feasible and sustainable research agenda. This highlights the need for Black female academics to be mentored as mentoring can provide access to the necessary networks and professional opportunities that help mitigate the challenges mentioned in the research literature. Recent research found that individuals providing greater mentoring functions reported higher levels of subjective career success and more promotions (Chun et al., 2012). During the course of the research many interviewees stated that they were not part of a formal mentorship programme but expressed interest in mentoring upcoming academics. The mentoring process for Black women, as is the case of other underrepresented groups, requires "different levels of mentoring".

5.4 How do constructs of gender and race influence the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics

It goes without saying that the intersectionality of race and gender add additional layers to the already complex environment for these black female academics. Based on the findings, the student demographics is more diverse than the academic staff. Most mentees expressed that there is still a lot of cultural and racial tension that exists within the university. Mentorship programmes need to pay attention to the intersection of race and gender and how these constructs have a direct link in the mentorship experience. Therefore, people who are appointed as mentors need to be trained in diversity. If a mentor is not immersed in the culture of diversity, it can be a traumatic experience for the mentee. At times, mentees believe that if a mentor has not gone through diversity training, it may put the mentee in a vulnerable position as the mentor may trivialise some of the issues that the mentee faces

5.4.1.1 Gender

The overall consensus from the findings was that gender played a significant role in how respondents interacted in the mentorship relationship. This probably suggested that making all academics comfortable could probably improve how new academics connect with established academics. The research findings point to the fact that it would possibly be of benefit to both mentor and mentee if they were of the same gender as when the genders are different, it is easy to overlook certain challenges that are faced by a particular gender. In addition, Black women possess a unique perspective of their experiences and that there are commonalities shared by Black women as a group (Mansfield et al., 2010). There is a shared understanding of life experiences and a connection to other Black women who have similar experiences and this can aid the understanding of the challenges Black women face in academia (Mansfield et al., 2010). The findings however, point to two challenges in gendered mentoring relationship for black female academics. The first is that there are not enough black female senior academic staff members who can become mentors to the younger female academics. Chesterman (2001) further adds that mentees' selections may be restricted by the smaller number of senior women in most institutions and organisations.

This challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that with the few black females that are in senior positions, they tend to be over-committed and therefore unavailable to offer mentorship functions. On the other hand, findings indicated disappointment from some participants that half of all senior management staff were white males, suggesting that the other half was shared between white women, black men and black women. The statement above is supported by Tables 1, 2, 3; as a result, same gender mentoring would be hampered as there are few women to mentor young academics and consequently, the mentoring is likely to be done by men. The challenge in cross gender mentoring is the inherent sexual problems between the male mentor and female protégé relationship (Merriam, 1983). The literature review indicates that mentoring of women by men may be problematic; this argument is supported by evidence from Geber's (2003) study at Wits University.

5.4.1.2 Race

Overall, the general consensus was that race was definitely a factor regarding the success of the mentorship programme. It would possibly be of benefit to both mentor and mentee if they were of the same racial background. Blackwell (1988); Griffin and Toldson (2012) suggest that Black academics are in a unique position to help other Black scholars to overcome the environmental challenges that often lead to weakened and poor performance. Findings indicate that for the majority of the participants, there is a belief that no other race besides a Black person, particularly Black women, understands the kind of struggles that they face as Black women trying to carve their space in academic. However, there is very few black female academics in the university and those who are already in the system are already overburdened. This statement is supported by Griffin (2012), who notes that Black academics are often described as carrying heavier advising and mentoring loads than their peers.

This is not unique to Wits University; around the world, there are few Black female academics who are willing or able to provide supportive advising and mentoring networks (Jones et al., 2013). This is especially prevalent at historically White and male institutions and disciplines, where Black women are poorly represented at faculty and within graduate levels (Jones et al., 2013). Steinmann (2006) remarks that white mentors need to show greater sensitivity to the challenges faced by mentees from different race groups as they often encounter issues of work alignment and may struggle to acquire the adeptness needed within the institutions.

5.5 How does the socio-economic status of the mentor-mentee influence the mentoring relationship of African South African female academics?

Palmer and Johnson-Bailey (2008) acknowledge that in the mentoring process, the relationship works to the benefit of individuals with similar backgrounds, cultural beliefs and values. Participants' responses to the significance of the socio-economic class of the mentor differed on how they experienced informal and formal mentorship

relationships. The findings in the research demonstrate that the advantage of having a mentor with a higher socio-economic background would result in more access to key/ influential individuals as the mentor has higher social capital. However, some of the participants argue that if you have a mentor who comes from the same socio-economic background they cannot really open new networks for you adequately because they are having the same struggles as you. Therefore there is potential that you will be stagnant in your academic profession. The study reveals that it is more beneficial for upcoming academics to be mentored by an academic who is more advanced.

5.6 Are there recommendations that could be taken from the study's results towards the improvement of mentorship programmes for African South African female academics in South African universities?

In considering the best practices for mentoring African South African female academics, it is important to move beyond a generic approach of mentorship programmes; it is recommended that a thoughtful integration of diversity within the programme needs to be adopted. The mentorship programme should build on the core features of Intersectionality and Black feminist thought. Based on the findings, it was identified that there is a need for policy change regarding support/mentorship for African female academics. Participants believed that in order for mentorship to work, it needed to be formalised; furthermore, the provision of mentorship to incumbents should form part of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) of the senior academic staff members.

In this regard, the Heads of Schools have a pivotal role to play in ensuring that there are mentorship structures in place in the schools, particularly for new incumbents who are unfamiliar with the process, nuances and rules that govern the academic environment. This means it is an opportunity for the development of a structured programme where people are fully accountable by means of a contract/signed forms. Furthermore, mentorship should form part of a performance development plan for any academic staff member. Higher education institutions can utilise mentoring as a

tool to develop novice academics professionally and to provide them with the knowledge to be capable researchers (Schulze, 2010). Johnson-Bailey (2004) postulates that mentorship contributes to the recruitment and retention of faculty. An argument is also put forward that there needs to be a safe space for Black women to convene as a collective and to offer diverse forms of support that is crucial for retention and advancement (Mansfield et al., 2010).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the main findings of the study compared to the reviewed literature. It is clear that the factors influencing the successful mentorship of women are in combination with factors identified in the literature review. The study revealed that constructs of race, gender, connectedness, diversity and socio-economic class have a bearing on the mentoring function offered to black female mentees. Thus, as a result, these constructs influence the success of the mentorship of female mentees. Furthermore, the indicators of successful mentorship include career advancement and retention of black women in academia.

The research objectives as posed by the five research questions in Chapter 1 have therefore been met and contribute to the current literature on mentorship development for black female academics.

6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The study was divided into six chapters covering the introduction of the research topic to the conclusion. Chapter 6 explores the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for future research emerging from the findings of the interviews. The sections that follows present the recommendations of the study.

6.2 Conclusions of the study

In conclusion, the empirical data highlights the fact that an enabling environment for female academics, particularly black women in South African institutions of higher education, is still an enormous challenge. Furthermore the study shows that mentorship is pivotal in the advancement and development of African South African female academics. Results from the study are important theoretically as they provide new input to the black female mentorship perspective and by proposing an 'intersectional' approach when structuring mentoring programmes. The results on the study based on qualitative data are complementary to the greater number of qualitative researches done within this perspective. The analysis could also contribute to the improvement or rather the creation of a mentorship programme for black female academics, which should take into account the interlocking constructs of gender, race and socio-economic status pertaining to mentorship relationships. On a more applied perspective, the results contribute to the debate about the link between intersectionality and transformation struggles by showing that the connections between them are essential to attract and retain African South African female academics.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Proper design and development of a mentorship programme

The University of the Witwatersrand needs to ensure they develop and implement a mentorship programme that is aligned with the needs of the participants. Thus, it is important to get organisational commitment from all levels. Based on the research from Klassen and Clutterback (2002), mentoring programmes tend to fail based on the factors mentioned below, but are not limited to:

- Poor planning
- Inadequate clarity on roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee relationship
- Lack of support from the top

Many scholars suggest that poor planning and ambiguous goals are the primary reason mentoring fails. Thus the mentoring programme for African South African black female academics needs to clearly outline the key principles and values of the programme. A detailed guidance on how the programme will operate and the role and responsibilities of both the mentor and mentee should be drafted. Lastly, there should be an evaluation and monitoring strategy to ensure that the programme is run effectively and efficiently, as formal programmes tend to be easier to measure and evaluate

6.3.2 Encouraging participation in mentorship programmes

Granted that individuals should take personal responsibility for their career success, it is in the interest of Wits University as an employer to provide an enabling environment for such success to be achieved. What emerged from the study's findings is that Wits University needs to make mentorship much more inclusive, furthermore the university needs to encourage participation in mentorship as a

support and development mechanism. It could be recommended that universities and their management make mentorship part of their institutional culture. Another thing to consider is to make mentorship development a key feature of a new academic's job specification. This desired result/outcome would be that a new employee is not only conducting/ completing a job requirement but is also working towards career development.

Related to these statements is that new academics could benefit from incentives linked to them receiving mentorship. Incentives in academia could include changes of status (that is from a junior lecturer to a senior lecturer) or access to more research funds and opportunities within and outside the university. In most organisations, there is a small pool of mentors based on a number of factors; perhaps prospective mentees would be best assisted by finding a formal mentor outside of their institution, particularly if they are not comfortable recruiting from within, rather than obligating an in-house mentor forced upon them by a formal structure. This argument is supported by Mansfield et al (2010) who posist that black women may need to pursue professional support from outside their institutions of higher education in an effort to achieve and activate social capital which is necessary for becoming a successful academic.

6.3.3 Encouraging same-race mentorship

After critical analysis of one of the key themes that emerged from the study, it could be established that same race mentorship actually has to be considered. This suggests that the University should consider placing mentees with mentors of the same race, however, it should be emphasised that this was based on this study's outcome and might not apply across the board. This study therefore cannot be generalised in that possibly same race might not be a factor for other individuals. Same race mentorship potential arose as a key theme possibly due to South Africa's racial past, as the same social and economic disparities between South Africa's racial populations during apartheid is still present today, thus producing disengagement between the two races. Twenty two years of democratic rule have

dismally failed to uproot racism, resulting in a lot of racial tension in the country. Therefore, mentee-mentor relationships at times work best when its people of the same colour as their structural and material conditions are similar.

6.3.4 More inclusiveness and transformation

The recommendation for universities to bring about change through inclusiveness and transformation was brought out by most of the participants. Participants cited that, in order for black professionals in academia to prosper, they should be afforded the same instruments that all other professionals in academia receive. Furthermore, there is a sentiment that there is an organised effort to keep black South Africans out of academic roles, such as senior lecturing and professorships. This then makes the case for universities and their management to implement programmes that allow black female South Africans to reach those levels in academia.

6.3.5 Policy changes and flexibility from university management

It was observed from the findings of the study that it is imperative to introduce policies that are aimed at the development of new academics, especially those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds such as black female academics. This is a recommendation for university management with the support of government. In terms of flexibility, it was established that university authorities need to be more tolerant and more open minded to suggestions that could potentially help in supporting African academics.

6.3.6 Increased incentives for black female academics

The challenge of attracting and retaining African, South African females can be located in the remuneration packages offered to academics. Some female academics work and study at the same time and then they realise that this is not feasible as there is a lack of support to juggle the two. As a result, they end up going

to the private sector which offers a much more attractive package. Given these points, providing funding for full time students is critical and making sure that the support is available not only in terms of warm bodies but also in terms of finances, taking care of the academics' well-being and availability of information on how to access important resources in the university. The authorities that comprise university management and government alike should view academia just as any other career path. This therefore, deserves their attention and pro-activeness in providing attractive financial incentives that would help absorb more black females in academia. One of the senior academics noted that banks had special packages that helped retain black females in their organisations, but universities seemed not to make any effort. Another recommendation that also arose from the same conversation was that the South African state and its universities should make access to funds easier so as to encourage black females who might seek to pursue a post-graduate qualification such as a PhD, and potentially pursue academia as a career. It has also been revealed that the university is not able to match what industry offers so a lot of people are not motivated to work for academia. Several participants who come through the nGAP programme have witnessed an exodus of fellow colleagues who were part of the programme who leave the university as a result of the low remuneration earned through that programme. As a result, the ones that remain in the university are here as a last resort, instead of being at home and unemployed. Remuneration packages of academics needs to be urgently scrutinised, as the education sector may be faced with a 'brain drain' in the next few years.

6.3.7 Improved Diversity

Mansfield et al. (2010) maintain that academia can be a daunting and intimidating space with limited policies and practices in place to address the diverse needs of faculty. As demonstrated in the study, there is an under-representation of black female staff; therefore the consequence is that if a mentee wants to be mentored by a black female, it is extremely difficult to get an active and willing mentor who is not overloaded, as the pool of black female mentors is minute. As a consequence, the

lack of senior Black male and female faculty limits the chances for same-race or same-gender mentoring for black female scholars (Jean-Marie & Brooks, 2011). This has a bearing in the mentee-mentor mentorship relationship as mentees are not awarded the necessary support and time to enable them to obtain any gains in the mentoring relationship. It is revealed that there is a need for accelerated diversity in the academic staff complement so mentees have an option of which mentor to approach or rather be allocated to. As observed in the interviews, diversity appeared to be a very personal issue to the black female academics who were interviewed. The interviewees clearly stated that it is not enough what universities are doing in terms of diversity as it is not visible throughout the university structures.

6.4 Implications and Contribution of the study

This study has implications for staff policies at Wits University. Furthermore, it has been established that for black female academics to feel included in the university system, they also have to have their frustrations heard. The study potentially provided a contribution that could be viewed as education for both university management, government and most importantly, black female academics on mentorship development. If Wits University wishes to endorse career development of black South African female academics, then a conscious mentorship programme may facilitate the success of black females and the attainment of gender equity targets.

6.5 The overall finding and Conclusion

It could be concluded, based on the assimilation of all the interviews that were conducted, that there was generally a sense of unhappiness from African South African female academics as they believed that there is not enough support and developmental structures allocated to them. The study exposed or rather sought to understand ingrained institutional structures that were deemed uncondusive by black female academics.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

This study suggests that there is potential for both university management and African South African female academics to cooperate and produce an outcome that satisfies both parties. Future research could start by addressing some of the limitations of this study. First of all, as much as the study was grounded and based on African South African female academics, a male's perspective on the same research topic could be add more richness to the study. This study essentially relied on one academic institution; future researchers could possibly consider using a more diversified sample including other institutions. Using other institutions could eliminate the potential bias caused by the use of one institution, with problems, structures and policies unique to itself. Comparative studies with samples of black female academics and female academics of other races could also be encouraged. Another possible direction for future research may be to conduct the present study in different contexts, such as corporate, government, business and non-government organisations.

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APPENDIX A – CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION



Consent Form for Research Interview Participation

I, _____, acknowledge that I have full comprehension of the research and that all necessary information pertaining to the research was explained to me. I also fully acknowledge and agree that the information I provide in this interview will be used for purposes of the study.

I further acknowledge that the researcher has promised me the following:

- That my participation in this research is voluntary
- That my personal details will remain anonymous throughout the research study as well as in the research dissertation
- That I can decline to answer any questions which I feel uncomfortable with

I hereby provide full consent to participating in this research study, *"An exploratory study of mentorship on the development for black female academics: Evidence from the University of the Witwatersrand"*

I agree / I do not agree to the full participation in the interview

I agree / I do not agree to the full recording of the interview

Researcher

Tebogo Rakhudu 295420

295420@students.wits.ac.za

Participant

Date Signed _____

APPENDIX B – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Participant Information Sheet

Good day,

My name is Tebogo Rakhudu student number 295420 and I am currently completing my Master of Business Administration at the Wits Business School. My research is titled **“An exploratory study of mentorship for black female academics: Evidence from the University of the Witwatersrand”**.

Through my research, I aim to explore views on mentorship on the development of African South African female academics at the University of the Witwatersrand. You have been selected to take part in this study as your views will be paramount to the successful completion of the research. The findings of this study will contribute to the literature in academic mentorship of black females in academia. I am inviting you to be a participant in my current research study.

With your permission, I ask that you participate in this interview. It should not take more than 30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and confidential I can guarantee that your personal details will remain anonymous throughout this research study as well as in the final research dissertation. You as the participant may decline to answer any questions which you feel uncomfortable with and may also feel free to withdraw from this study at any time. By being a participant in this research you will not receive payment of any form and the information you disclose will be used in the research report.

This research will be written into a Master of Business Administration Dissertation and will be available through the University's website. Should you require a summary of the research; the researcher can make it available to you.

Should you have any further questions or queries you are welcome to contact the researcher or the Supervisor, Dr Zanele Ndaba at any time at the contact details provided below.

Researcher

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295420@students.wits.ac.za
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Supervisors

Dr Zanele Ndaba
Zanele. Ndaba @wits.ac.za
011 717 3591

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW GUIDE



An exploratory study of mentorship for black female academics: Evidence from the University of the Witwatersrand

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your understanding of mentorship?

2. What is your overall opinion regarding the university's development of African South African female academics?

3. Are you a mentor or mentee?

4. Are you part of a formal or informal mentorship programme within the University?

If yes please elaborate.....

If no, would you consider being part of a mentorship programme?

.....

5. Please provide details of the kind of activities that are conducted in your mentoring programme? If you are not in a mentoring programme please outline activities you feel should be part of a mentoring programme. (Please be as detailed as possible)

6. Do you think race has an influence in a mentoring relationship/programme?

7. Do you think gender has an influence in a mentoring relationship/programme?

8. Do you think the socio-economic background of a mentor/mentee has an influence in a mentoring relationship/programme?

9. Do you believe if you had a mentor earlier in your career, that it would have made a difference in your career progression?

10. If Wits were to introduce a mentoring programme specifically for African, South African female academics, what do you think is essential for the success of the programme?

11. What kind of support would you like the University to provide to academics?

12. The university has been having a challenge to attract and retain African South African female academics what do you think are some of the contributing factors to this?

APPENDIX D- Sample profile

Sample Profile

AGE CATEGORY				
21-30	30-39	40-49	50-59	Prefer not to say

GENDER	
Female	
Prefer not to say	

RACE	
Black	
Prefer not to say	

ACADEMIC POSITIONS	
Associate Lecturer	
Lecturer	
Senior Lecturer	
Professor	
Academic Trainee	
Academic Researcher	
Senior Tutor	

YEARS IN A MENTORSHIP ROLE	
Less than 1 year	
2 to 3 years	
4 to 5 years	
More than five years	