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MENTORING IN FAMILY FIRMS:

A REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF

SENIOR EXECUTIVES'

PERCEPTIONS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the

University of North Texas in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

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Denton, Texas

May, 1998

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This study is a reflective analysis of the perceptions of senior executives in family businesses that relate to their personal experiences of having been mentored. The study presents an overview of the topic of mentoring, defines key terms, and identifies questions addressed in the research. The rationale for this study rested on two facts. First, mentoring in non-family businesses constitutes the majority of the literature. That literature supports the importance of mentoring. Secondly, mentoring in family businesses has not been researched.

A thorough review of research literature related to mentoring constitutes the second chapter. With the absence of research relating specifically to mentoring in family businesses, this was a worthy topic to explore, and will make a significant contribution to the mentoring literature. It also provides family businesses with a practical tool for the selection of appropriate mentoring methodologies.

The third chapter identifies the specific qualitative research methodology, that was used to complete the study. Central to this methodology were 76 personal interviews of senior executives who had been mentored. A pilot study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the interview questions. The interviews were conducted with

executives selected from an existing data base at Baylor University's Institute for Family Business.

The findings from this research reveal that those who have experienced mentoring believe it is a vital tool for success. The data indicated a strong belief that the selection of the mentoring technique should be dependent on the parties to be involved, and the situation surrounding the mentoring. This selection includes examining whether the mentoring should be done formally or informally, and whether it should be accomplished by a family member or a non-family member.

There are six recommended topics for further research on mentoring in family businesses presented in the final chapter. Along with these recommendations, the author gives some insight into the practical application of the data that has been compiled.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The successful use of mentoring in business is well documented in the literature, and its multifaceted benefits extolled by many researchers (Jacoby, 1989; Kram, 1983 & 1985; Noe 1988; White, 1990). Many studies have shown that businesses, mentors, and protégés have perceptible benefits from the use of various methodological approaches to mentoring (Kram 1985). These methodologies run the gamut from formally established programs to simple informal encounters (Kizilos, 1990; Murray 1991; Reid, 1994). Yet, some mentoring techniques have received criticism (Rubow & Jansen, 1990; Shea, 1991b).

Unfortunately, there is an absence of published literature relating to the mentoring process as it might be specifically applied in a family business setting. Family businesses possess unique characteristics and nuances that require different approaches to the use of mentoring than those typically found in a non-family business situation.

The purpose of this research was to determine family business senior executives' perceptions of the mentoring process based on their personal experiences of having been mentored, and their sense of mentoring applicability in the family business environment. What little is written on family business mentoring (Davis, 1988; Levinson 1988; Simurda 1995) is anecdotal and does not address its effectiveness in family businesses.

This research investigated the perceived strengths and weaknesses of formal versus informal mentoring in family businesses as directed by either family members or non-family members.

Statement of the Problem

This research determined what approaches to mentoring have been perceived by family business senior executives' personal experiences, as successful, as well as those perceived as not successful. Having personally gone through the experience of having been mentored, these senior executives provided useful insight into the process.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. Is mentoring a valid practice in family businesses?
2. Should mentoring be done by family members or non-family members?
3. Should mentoring take place in a formal or informal manner?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

There is a plethora of articles that provide insight into the effectiveness of mentoring in organizational life. Models of mentoring have been created for businesses and educational institutions; however, they were developed outside the constraints found in the family business environment (Kram, 1983; Murray, 1991; Zey 1984). These models are prescriptive in nature. They outline the manner in which a business should conduct mentoring programs. The final outcome of this study was to determine perceived

strengths and weaknesses of mentoring approaches in family businesses as a function of family or non-family member mentors and formal or informal processes. Results form a matrix (see Appendix F).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The recognized limitations of this study relate to the willingness of those who were interviewed to share their reflective perceptions of their experience of having been mentored. By using organizations that are a part of Baylor University's Institute for Family Business, it was not a problem; however, there were no guarantees that everyone who was contacted would cooperate either in part or totally. The Institute was formed in 1988 to assist family owned or controlled businesses by providing a forum for discussion of the critical issues of such businesses.

Additionally, it was recognized that the sampling was a convenience sample and would therefore have a potential bias due to sensitivity found relating to family issues. This sensitivity might not be found with family businesses that have not aligned themselves with schools as a source of information and/or assistance.

Another limitation that could have impact on the findings of this study was the presence of the Halo Effect: Good experiences could have colored all mentoring reflections, or the opposite. Care was taken to insure that the interviewer did not solicit desired responses from those who were interviewed in order to minimize interviewer bias.

The study was delimited by the author selecting only a sample of the population of family business organizations that constitute the data base. There has been no attempt to generalize the results to the population of family businesses (Rudestam, 1992). Additionally, no more than two individuals from each participating organization were interviewed. Enough qualitative data were gathered to permit valid inferences regarding beneficial mentoring processes for family businesses.

Definition of Terms

Senior executive is an individual with key responsibilities for the management of the organization.

Formal mentoring takes place in an organized and planned manner as part of organizational policy, and includes such elements as assignments of mentors.

Halo Effect is present when a perception is formed from a single characteristic.

Informal mentoring includes all mentoring that is not established and complied with as a part of formal organizational policy.

Mentor is one who takes personal interest in guiding, influencing, and supporting another employee's career while that person is a member of the organization.

Mentoring can be any interpersonal relationship that guides, influences, and supports one's career progress. It can be done in either a formal or informal manner.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Defining Business Mentoring and Its History

The topic of mentoring has been part of literature for decades, but its beginnings have roots that go back to the ancient Greeks. It is now the focus of attention in business management circles where effectiveness and efficiency are of primary importance. In this section a definition of the term mentoring and a brief history is presented. Finally, some of the contemporary issues that have been addressed in recent mentoring literature are discussed.

Definition

Horgan and Simeon (1990) mentioned that variations in the definitions of a mentor had resulted in studies being plagued with questionable findings. They defined a mentor as:

A mentor is an experienced, well established member of your profession who has taken a personal interest in your career and facilitated your career advancement by providing crucial information, making important introductions, serving as a role model, providing support and encouragement, encouraging

your participation in making decisions, or in any other way has made significant contribution to your career (p. 68).

Murray (1991) presented two generic positions taken in terms of what mentoring is. She stated that mentoring is able to "...be structured or facilitated; the other is the belief that it can only happen" (p. 5). Murray defined mentoring as "...a structure and series of processes designed to create effective monitoring relationships, guide the desired behavior change of those involved, and evaluate the results for the protégé, the mentors, and the organization" (p. 5). She made a distinction between the words sponsor and role model that are often used synonymously with the term mentor. Her position was that the term mentor incorporates in part or all of that which a sponsor or role model does and more. Zey (1984) simply referred to mentoring as the process of overseeing the career development of the person being mentored. Shea (1991a) defined mentoring as "...going above and beyond...it could be called an attitude" (p. 3).

History

The history books are filled with references to mentors. Rogers (1992) and Rubow and Jansen (1990) mentioned such classics as Homer's The Odyssey serving as a good example of the mentoring process. Roche (1979) used King Arthur being counseled by Merlyn the Magician as reference to authors from centuries gone by who wrote of mentoring. Kizilos (1990) referenced the apprentice relationship found in ancient times as showing the inherent value of mentoring.

Family Business Mentoring

Writing on family business mentoring, Nelton (1986) included reference to Peter Davis, Director of Executive Education at the Wharton School of Business, who said “Get a mentor” (p. 36). His point underscored the importance of getting support for the long run in one’s career. Levinson (1988) identified the fact that family business problems are made more difficult because of the family relationships involved in them, and these problems can be emotional. In such cases he suggested that non-family members be used in mentoring.

Simurda (1995) wrote about mentoring in a family owned business, Monsen Engineering. He showed how this firm was using the Merlyn the Magician technique (King Arthur’s mentor) to mentor the heir to the leadership of the company. He stated that, “The purpose of the Merlin [sic] project is to recognize the differences between father and son, preparing the latter to have the skills and people in place he will need in 10 years for a successful transition” (p. 28). Simurda pointed out that some of the results of this mentoring process had been unexpectedly beneficial to the organization. The mentoring of the future leader of the organization by other members of the organization led them to recognize that they had “...a financial stake in seeing that he is prepared for a successful transition” (p. 27). Davis (1988) also wrote about the value inherent in using non-family business personnel for the purpose of mentoring family members who will eventually lead the organization.

Other Issues

Gender difference in mentoring constitutes a significant portion of the literature. Noe (1988), Kizilos (1990), Burke, McKeen, and McKenna (1993), Ragins and Cotton (1993), and others have made significant contributions to the mentoring literature as it relates to issues such as career development and sex role stereotyping. Work done by Whitely, Dougherty and Dreher (1991) in the area of mentoring as it relates to socioeconomic origins indicated that a significant correlation exists between socioeconomic origins and the benefits one receives from the mentoring process. Zey (1988) stated "...several major social and economic trends may influence corporations to use [mentoring] programs to deal with a greater number of problems" (p. 47). It was his contention that, through the use of mentoring, organizations would be in a position to better cope with these trends.

The Mentoring Processes

A large body of literature exists that presents the various processes of mentoring. In this section of the review the key techniques will be referenced. Additionally, a comparison of formal versus informal mentoring will be noted.

Role of the Mentor

Stevens (1993), in his book on career development, made the observation that "...the role of the mentor is...not to be taken lightly" because of the significant impact that it has in the lives of the mentor, the person being mentored, and the organization (p.104). Stevens stated that there will be an element of timing for any given mentoring

relationship. He spelled out this timing element in a five phase format. The five stages are: career awareness, career preparation, career orientation, career expansion, and career advancement.

According to Stevens (1993), the mentor's role is one of helping others in their careers and requires a high degree of trust between the mentor and the person being mentored. Stevens identified a series of seven ways, shown in Table 1, in which a mentor is able to help another person. He made the point that, "A good mentor is not there to provide the answers but to assist an individual to develop their skills at resolving career-related complications" (p. 98).

Table 1

A Mentor Helps Another Person:

- Assess the reality of their career potential.
- Test out plans and strategies before they take action.
- Make use of information networks and resources.
- Initiate appropriate career actions.
- During a crisis period or turning point in their career.
- By providing a confidential refuge for discussing career relate dilemmas
- By committing to advise with sensitivity.

Note. From Career Development Support in Organizations (p. 91), by Paul Stevens, 1993, Sydney, Australia: Center for Worklife Counseling.

Formal Mentoring Process and Programs

Kram (1983) presented a four phase relationship in the mentoring process. She stated that the mentor progresses through four phases from the initiation of the mentoring process to cultivation, separation, and finally to a redefinition phase. In her book, Mentoring at Work, Kram (1985) identified specific functions of mentors.

Lawrie (1987) stated that mentors need not have a complex program to guide them. He strongly indicated that mentoring does not operate in a random fashion, but requires guidance. He presented three steps in the process of mentoring. The first step has the mentor determining what the individual knows and does not know. The second step directs the mentor to tell the person being mentored what to expect from the process by specifying that, "The learner needs to be ready" (p. 26). The third step requires the mentor and the person being mentored to work together in the development of "behavioral milestones" (p. 26) for the trainee. Lawrie presented five major roles that should be undertaken by those responsible for a mentoring program as the mentor-apprentice relationships are undertaken. They entail going from the recognition of where mentoring is appropriate as the first step, to selection and training of the mentor, guidance of those to be mentored, controlling the quality of the process, and finally to an assessment of the program. Matthes (1991) identified nine keys for success in mentoring within the corporation. These are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

The Keys to Success

-
- Voluntary participation
 - Skilled-level and cross-functional pairing
 - Flexible duration
 - One-on-one mentoring
 - No-fault conclusion
 - Integration with total development effort
 - High priority evaluation
 - Creation and communication of policies and procedures
 - Promotional campaign
-

Note. From Corporate mentoring: Beyond the blind date (p. 23), by Karen Matthes, 1991, HR Focus, 68.

Shea (1991a) looked at mentoring in a new light and recorded what he believed to be the critical elements in the mentoring process of the 1990s. His concern targeted the need for the mentor and protégé to "...work together to discover and develop the mentee's latent abilities....The mentor serves as an effective tutor, counselor, friend, and foil" (p. 2). Table 3 presents a listing of what Shea saw as points of difference between the old and new mentoring.

Table 3

New Mentoring In a Nut Shell:

- It is more democratic.
- It is more sophisticated.
- It is more personal.
- It is more honest.
- It is more demanding.
- It is more versatile.
- It is seen as a life-long set of experiences.
- It is not constrained by organizational or geographic boundaries.
- It brings the organization together.
- It is more introspective.
- It is more situational.
- It is the art of making the most of a given situation.

Note. From Mentoring: New scripts for a timeless relationship (p. 3), by Gordon Shea, 1991, Management Review, 80.

In 1992, Rogers wrote of a new approach to mentoring, offering an alternative to the traditional mentoring found in organizations. She presented the concept of mentoring circles: "The circles take a different approach from many corporate sponsored mentoring

programs because they were established independently and are not designed to educate or be a tool of upper management. Instead, thrust is on the personal benefits for the protégé as well as the mentor” (p. 49).

One of the more contemporary approaches to mentoring in business, and seemingly a natural follow-on to the mentoring circle process, has been the shift from mentoring as a one-on-one process to mentoring in groups. Kaye and Jacobson (1995) wrote of mentoring as a partnership within groups rather than the traditional patriarchal system of a parent-child relationship. “This new model substitutes interactive mentoring groups for the isolated twosomes of traditional mentoring relationships” (p. 24). The advantages pointed to by the authors included the avoidance of potential dependency relationships. Further, they indicated using group mentoring allows for early defusing of a “...personal-chemistry mismatch...” (p. 24). The authors included a checklist to assist in the operation of a group mentoring program. One of the important points made by Kaye and Jacobson was that the mentors must learn where they fit in the process, and further that they need both practice and encouragement. In summary, the literature indicates that formal mentoring is seen as a viable tool for use in organizations; however, an informal process of mentoring is also an alternative for consideration.

Informal Mentoring

Matthes (1991) expressed her concern for the effectiveness of formally established mentoring programs. She stated that the informal approach to the mentoring process is superior. Her reasoning was that with the formal process there was a forced

relationship. While it may work, she contended that often those involved in arranging such relationships fail "...to consider personal chemistry when matching mentors with protégés" (p.23). Noe (1988) concluded from a study that organizations "...should not expect protégés to obtain the same type of benefits [positive] from an assigned mentoring relationship" (p. 473). He expressed his concern for possible negative reactions of participants to a formally administered mentoring program.

Chao, Gardner, and Walz (1992) made the observation that if formal mentoring programs were more like informal mentoring that naturally occurs in organizations, then "perhaps ...their outcomes would be more positive" (p. 633). They specifically identified the absence of career-related support in formal mentoring that is found with the informal process. Kizilos (1990) noted that several major corporations have withdrawn their support of formal mentoring programs; however, many organizations are still loyal to the process. In his endorsement of informal mentoring programs, Kizilos stated, "Forced coupling can fuel discontent, anger, resentment and suspicion....Not all managers are psychologically prepared to take on a protégé" (p. 50).

Rubow and Jansen (1990) reported studies indicating that individuals involved in the organizational training function "...tend to favor a highly structured approach" (p. 52). However, they went on to cite surveys that suggest that the formal mentoring process can be self-destructive. They found that protégés who were involved in a formal mentoring relationship received less career support than those in the informal setting.

Kram (1985) cautioned organizations in the use of formalized mentoring programs. She supported the use of the informal approach to mentoring. She held to the position that the mentor and protégé established a better relationship with the informal process. Kaye and Jacobson (1995) wrote about the values of certain subtleties, such as personal chemistry, that are found in the informal process of mentoring which cannot be forced through a formal program.

The literature illumined various approaches to the mentoring process. The choice of the appropriate process is one that needs to be made with careful consideration of many organizational and personal factors. One of the outcomes of this author's research will be to, in summary format, indicate possible "best fit" scenarios for mentoring in family businesses.

Assessment of Mentoring Benefits and Challenges

There is a wealth of literature that extols the need for, the benefits of, and the potential problems with mentoring programs in organizational life. These points are critical to establish if any consideration is to be given by family businesses to the incorporation of a mentoring program. This section of the literature review will be devoted to examining what has been written about these critical points of mentoring.

Need for Mentoring

Rubow and Jansen (1990) made the observation that, "Survival in the 1990s means attracting and retaining competent employees. To meet this challenge, progressive companies have turned to mentoring" (p. 50). They spoke of mentoring as addressing

“...our basic need to believe in ourselves and have others believe in us [which] boosts morale” (p. 51).

Kaye and Jacobson (1995) wrote about the need for mentoring in terms of “...the benefits firms and individuals can reap from close interaction between organizational newcomers and veterans” (p. 24). White (1990) said that mentoring is a contributor to the development of managers and is useful in the passing on of an organization’s culture to employees. He wrote of the need to share the values and beliefs with the workforce, and this can be done through a mentoring process.

Benefits of Mentoring

Murray (1991) noted that the benefits from mentoring programs improve organizations in numerous way. The mentoring benefits she addressed are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mentoring Benefits to Organization

- Increased Productivity
- Cost Effectiveness
- Improved Recruitment Efforts
- Increased Organizational Communication and Understanding
- Maintenance of the Motivation of Senior People

- Enhancement of Services Offered by the Organization
- Improvement in Strategic and Succession Planning

Note. From Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring (pp. 32-36), by Margo Murray.

Zey (1984) summarized the following benefits of mentoring: “Integration of individual, reduction in turnover, organizational communication, management development, managerial succession, productivity, and socialization to power” (p. 193). Wright and Wright (1987) broke down the benefits of mentoring by protégé and mentor. For both they said the benefits accrue to “career advancement, networking, personal identity, and professional development” (p. 204-205). Roche (1979) also cited the benefits to careers as a result of mentoring. He did so by addressing the idea that mentoring can accelerate “...the learning curve of young executives” (p. 28). Horgan and Simeon (1990) concluded their study by commenting, “Mentoring was apparently a very positive experience: all respondents who had been mentored reported the relationship to have a positive influence on their career development...and on their personal development” (p.76-77).

Lawrie (1987) wrote about the results of an effective mentoring program. These included the benefits of growth for both the mentor and protégé, the encouragement of teamwork, and an increased visibility of the organization’s training function. These were viewed by Lawrie as being the significant benefits of the mentoring process. Ragins and Cotton (1993) agreed with Lawrie in seeing mentoring as a beneficial tool for career

development through the various stages of one's career. Stevens (1993) outlined a hierarchy of career stages where the mentoring process was beneficial. He identified the following stages: "Career Awareness Stage, Career Preparation Stage, Career Orientation Stage, Career Expansion Stage, and the Career Advancement Stage" (pp. 100-102).

Blunt's (1995) support for mentoring programs and what he saw as an inherent benefit in them was shown when he said, "My enthusiasm for mentoring has come from hearing other people's accounts of how valuable it has been to them" (p. 38). Jacoby equated the rewards to an organization of having an operative and maintained mentoring program to the rewards of long-term financial investments. Roche's (1979) study showed that, "Executives who have had a mentor also derive somewhat greater pleasure from their work than executives who have not" (28).

Drawbacks of Mentoring

Murray (1991) identified five areas of mentoring that are challenges and potential drawbacks to the organization. Among these was the potential for frustration if the program did not lead to upward movement of those being mentored. She wrote of the commitment level being vital for a mentoring program to work. Without the commitment on the part of upper management, it will not work. The issue of program coordination also was addressed. Without the coordination there was potential for difficulties. She pointed out that mentoring was "...hard to sell" (p. 39), and the challenge was in justifying the program. Finally, she addressed the complicated nature of mentoring and the difficulty of administering mentoring programs.

An anonymous author (1996) observed some of the problems associated with mentoring were related to the possibility of personality incompatibilities. Additionally, it was suggested that protégés can sense a certain obligation on the part of the mentor. This obligation included guarantees of future promotions.

Implementation of the Mentoring

The process of implementing mentoring programs is the focus of this section of the literature review. In it the issues of culture, selection, and evaluation will be reviewed.

Mentoring and Organizational Culture

The link between culture and mentoring is clearly defined in the literature by Kram and Hall (1989). They wrote that mentoring done by organizations has to fit the culture of the organization or there could be “...obstacles to mentoring” (p. 495). White (1990) created a mentoring framework showing the relationship that mentoring has to organizational culture. He called this framework a “SELF Framework Model” and with it indicated that management “...can use mentoring to help cultivate desired norms and values in their organization” (p. 45). White stated that, “Mentoring allows managers to acquire an intimate knowledge needed about employees’ goals to encourage desired behavior” (p. 47). These are the issues White said will give senior management the best opportunity to maximize the return on their investment in human capital.

Rubow and Jansen (1990) developed a “Power Pyramid” that showed the relationship between mentoring and company culture. This pyramid was made up of

three levels. Custom Installation formed the base, followed by a second tier labeled Communication, and topped by Mentoring. They stated that, “Good mentoring programs rest on a foundation of communication skills and installation in the company culture” (p. 52).

Selection of Mentors and Protégés

Zey (1984) wrote that mentors look for certain characteristics in future protégés. He also noted certain strategies that those wishing to be mentored should use in the process of attracting a mentor. Some of the strategies included, “... possessing and demonstrating competence; achieving visibility; getting key assignments; and, showing a desire to learn” (p.175).

Rothman (1993) addressed the mentor selection process by saying that it is “...looking for talent” (p. 66). According to Rothman, those selected to become mentors are traditionally from the senior ranks of the organization. Those selected are paired with younger members of the organization who show potential for leadership.

Ragins and Cotton (1993) wrote that the willingness to mentor is a major issue. In particular, they noted the gender difference in willingness to mentor. Their study showed that women face difficulties that men do not, and therefore are found to be less willing to mentor than their male counterparts. However, they noted that the women “...expressed equivalent intentions to mentor as men, even though they anticipated more potential drawbacks and negative aspects of assuming a mentoring role” (p. 106).

Another factor related to willingness, described by Ragins and Cotton, was the strong relationship between past experience in mentoring and current willingness to mentor.

Horgan and Simeon (1990) cited the value of prior experience as a mentor or as a protégé. With the prior experience, the mentoring "...will be more participative" (p. 69). Their conclusion was that the more participative the mentoring processes the more successful it would be.

Lawrie (1987) described several attitudinal requirements for those who are to mentor others. He included the need to "...like teaching, guiding, and training" (p. 26). Further, those who wish to mentor need to be able to relate their own experiences to others. Finally, the potential mentor must have "...a strong positive attitude toward the mentor-apprentice concept" (p. 26).

Chao, Gardner, and Walz (1992) warned that the selection of those who are to mentor, as well as those who will be mentored, should not be done at random. Their contention was that if selection is done on a random basis it is "...analogous to blind dates; there would be a small probability that the match would be successful" (p. 634).

Evaluation of Mentors

Noe (1988) indicated that the measurement issue of mentoring is in need of study beyond what others have done (Olian, Giannantonio, and Carroll, 1985). He stated that quantitative measures should be developed relating to what transpires between mentor and protégé.

Jacoby (1989) developed a quantitative evaluation form to be used in mentoring assessment. This form included the assessment of all those who have been a part of the mentoring program. Phillips (1991) indicated that the training and development functions of organizations were being held accountable for the measured value of any training program. Writing about the changes that were occurring in human resource management, Phillips pointed out that, "The entire human resource management function is responding to demands to measure its impact....A new and persistent trend toward measurement is the requirement from chief executives" (p. 19). He stated that there can be difficulty in doing the measurement, but that it should be considered as an important part of any training program. Mentoring clearly falls into this category.

Geiger (1992) pointed out that, "It's easy to measure the number of mentor relationships in your company. But it's not so easy to measure the expectations of people in those relationships" (p. 26). He suggested that those responsible for the measurement of mentoring programs should use a questionnaire to evaluate both the mentor and the protégé. Geiger was of the opinion that, "The evaluation method is as much a learning tool as it is a measurement tool. It provides a framework for the mentor and mentee to discuss the importance of performance improvement" (p. 66).

Evaluation of Literature

In general the research on mentoring is abundant. Much of the literature has had positive things to say about formal mentoring. There also has been significant research that points to the great value of informal mentoring. The issue of who does the mentoring

best has also garnered attention of researchers. This author sees a need to focus on these areas in family businesses. The literature, to date, offers little to those who are interested in doing mentoring research in the area of family businesses.

Contributions of Study to the Literature

This study provides data on family business senior executives' perceptions of mentoring founded on their personal experience of having been mentored. This sample information should be valuable as a source of data for further study in the area of mentoring, and perhaps enable the data to be quantified and generalized to the population of family businesses. Further, the results of the study, hopefully making a unique contribution to the literature, should be publishable in both academic and trade journals.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study of perceptions of the mentoring process by family business senior executives was accomplished by reflective analysis of data collected from personal interviews. The interviews were conducted with a sample of the population from Baylor University's family business data base. The results of the study provide insight that addresses the research questions of whether mentoring is a valid practice in family businesses; should the mentoring be conducted by family members or non-family members; and, should the mentoring be done formally or informally?

Research Population Sample

The Institute for Family Business at Baylor University has a comprehensive data base of 7,000 family businesses that are located primarily in Texas. In the initial phase of the research, 1,029 of these companies were selected. Senior executives from these firms were asked to complete a one page questionnaire (see Appendix B) in order to determine who had been mentored and was willing to be interviewed.

In the second phase of the research, senior executives who indicated they had been mentored were interviewed in depth. There were 76 participants interviewed, with a desired minimum of 10 surveyed executives in each quadrant of the Basic Nature of Family Business Mentoring matrix (see Appendix C). With those participants identified,

the in depth interviews (see Appendix D for interview questions) were conducted. The interview data was used to complete the tables found in Chapter IV.

Research Methodology

The researcher identified the family businesses from which senior executives were selected to participate in the study. Those senior executives involved were interviewed to identify their perceptions of the mentoring process from the perspective of those who have been mentored. The interview questions probed for specific perceptions relating to experience with, and beliefs relative to, the strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring process as it applies to the family business environment. The data gathered from the interviews were recorded in a series of tables. The results provided answers to the research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation.

Specific Procedures

This study utilized reflective analysis, a form of case study, as the primary research technique. Reflective analysis is a qualitative research methodology that requires a careful analysis in which "...the researcher relies primarily on intuition and judgment in order to portray or evaluate the phenomena being studied" (Gall et al., 1996, p. 570).

Permission to conduct interviews involving human subjects was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Texas. The researcher complied with all the tenets of the regulations pertaining to the use of human subjects in research. This compliance included having all participating CEOs sign Informed Consent Letters

(see Appendix A). Additionally, permission was obtained, from each person being interviewed, to tape record the interview.

1,029 individuals were initially selected as the study's sample from the population of family businesses that make up the Baylor University's Institute for Family Business data base. The key factors in the selection of those included in the study were that each individual had to be a senior executive in the family business, and had to have been mentored. After the selection of the senior executives for the interview process was made, telephone calls were made to arrange for the interviews. All interviews were tape recorded. When the interviews were completed, the data were tabulated and included in the appropriate tables.

Instrumentation

Interview questions probing for senior executives' perceptions of their experience of having been mentored were created with the assistance of a focus group. This focus group was made up of members of a family business located in the Waco area. Their input was invaluable in the development of the questions used in the interviews.

The validation requirement of questions was not of concern in this study because the questions were made up of open ended items that would not be predictive in nature. However, some of those who assisted in the creation of the questions were subject matter experts. Content validity was judged by these experts. The focus groups addressed the issue of face validity.

Having secured valid interview questions, a pilot study was conducted to further determine whether the interviews would be able to achieve what they were designed to do. The pilot study was conducted with family business senior executives who simulated those to be included in the full study. Through the use of a pilot study, problems with the proposed interview questions or the process used in interviewing were corrected. Additionally, the pilot study provided an opportunity to calculate the time required to perform the interview. This information was shared with those involved in the actual study. The question order was randomized to minimize the potential for bias introduced by question sequencing. From the results of the pilot study, the final set of interview questions was created, and a fixed sequence of the questions was established.

The initial questionnaire included a cover letter that identified several key things. First, it stated the purpose of the proposed study. It then explained, in detail, what was required of the participants if they chose to respond. If an individual agreed to be a part of the study, he or she was asked to read and sign a statement of "Informed Consent" (see Appendix A). This statement outlined the implications of participating in the study. Those who elected to participate were asked to sign the statement and return it by mail to the researcher within a specified time frame.

Treatment of Data

The completed questionnaire was analyzed to determine whether the individual qualified for the interview phase of the study. Those senior executives who had been mentored, and were willing to participate further, were then personally interviewed. Each

interviewee signed a release form giving permission to tape the interview (see Appendix E). Upon completion of the interview, the researcher incorporated the resulting data into tables representing the type of mentoring that the participant experienced. There were four categories of mentoring (Formal by Family Member; Informal by Family Member; Formal by Non-family Member; Informal by Non-family Member). The results of the interviews were assessed in relation to the research questions for this study.

The answers to the interview questions were analyzed for placement in either the strength or weakness box in the matrix under the appropriate category. Due to the open ended nature of the interview questions, the responses were synthesized into a few descriptive statements reflecting the perception of the respondent. This process provided a series of brief statements identifying the senior executives' perceived potential effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the given mentoring process. The statements were placed in an appropriate table. These results are incorporated and fully articulated in the fourth chapter of the dissertation. To ensure rater reliability in the appropriate categorization and wording, three subject matter experts reviewed them. Conclusions and recommendations for additional study are addressed in the final chapter of the dissertation.

Summary

This study assessed the perceptions of the mentoring practices held by senior executives of family business firms. It is based on the reflective perceptions of family business senior executives recorded from interviews held with a convenience sample of

the population. The ultimate value of the research lies in the contribution that it can make to the current sparse existence of literature on the topic of mentoring in family businesses. The matrix that incorporates the results of the study could be used by organizations seeking information on the value of mentoring in family businesses seen from the eyes of top ranking family business executives.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first relates to the quantifiable results of the study. The second section assesses the four categories of mentoring identified for of this study: formal mentoring by family member; informal mentoring by family member; formal mentoring by non-family member; and, informal mentoring by non-family member. The third section makes a comparison of the findings. The fourth section presents an issue of mentoring brought up by the interviewees that relates to what is found in the literature concerning gender bias. The final section summarizes the answers to the research questions cited below.

Research Questions

1. Is mentoring a valid practice in family businesses?
2. Should mentoring be done by family members or non-family members?
3. Should mentoring take place in a formal or informal manner?

Quantitative Profile and Overview of Findings

Of the study's 1,029 questionnaires, 52 could not to be delivered due to address problems. This made the population of possible participants 977. Of this number, 249 (25.5%) responded by returning the questionnaire. The returns contained 64 individuals who declined participation in the study. One of the qualifications for participation was

that the individual must have been mentored. The returns contained 106 who had never been mentored (57.3%). There were 79 people, from 73 firms, both willing and qualified to participate (42.7%). These results are presented in Table 5.

Telephone calls were made to each of the 79 individuals who indicated a willingness to participate in the study. After several attempts to contact all of the individuals to schedule interview times, 76 were actually able to be interviewed (96.2%). More than eight attempted contacts were made to each of the three people who were not interviewed.

Mentoring Categories of Sample

Table 5 presents the breakdown of the 76 participants into the four categories of mentoring experienced. The largest group (61.8%) comprised those mentored in an informal setting by a family member. The second largest group (21.1%) consisted of those who had been informally mentored by a non-family member. The third largest category (14.5%) was the group who had been mentored formally by a family member. Finally, the least reported method (2.6%) of experienced mentoring came from those who had been mentored formally by a non-family member. Due to the small number in this group (n=2), this category was eliminated.

Demographic Breakdown of Sample

Demographically, the gender breakdown included 65 male participants (83.1%), and 11 female participants (16.9%). The size of the organizations willing to participate ranged from a two person operation to one with an excess of 10,000 employees. Five

firms had more than 1,000 workers. There were 19 companies that had over 99 but under 1,000 employees, with the remaining having less than 100 members. The age of the companies also was diverse; the oldest reported being formed in 1847. Three firms started in the 1800s. The most frequent periods of origination occurred in the 1940s and the 1970s. Three of the companies started in the 1990s.

Table 5

Sample Overview

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Distributed	1,029	100%
Undeliverable	52	5.1%
Population	977	94.9%
Returns	249	25.5%
Decline	64	25.7%
Non-mentored	106	57.3%
Interview N	76	42.7%
Formal, Family Member n	11	14.5%
Informal, Family Member n	47	61.8%
Formal, Non-family Member n	2	2.6%
Informal, Non-family Member n	16	21.1%
Unable to interview (N = 79)	3	3.8%

Individual Group Findings

Formal Mentoring by Family Member

There were 11 interviews of senior executives in this category. It was their perception that the mentoring they received had clearly identifiable strengths. They felt they were able to obtain key inside information from their mentor. It provided an opportunity to learn from someone experienced in the business and made for effective communication. Part of that communication came in the form of strong feedback from the mentor. Another strength mentioned was that the mentors could pass along the value system and culture of the organization. Additionally, respondents foresaw long term benefits as a result of the mentoring. Table 6 highlights an overview of strengths and weaknesses received from interviewees in this study.

One key weakness perceived by the participants related to mentoring by someone who lacked the skills to mentor. Another concern was that mentors might not have a balanced perspective on key issues. Along this line it was stated that family member mentors could possess different attitudes that might be detrimental to the process. Jealousy between family members was seen as a potential weakness with this form of mentoring. It would also be possible to create a prejudice that had not existed prior to the mentoring. Attitudes, jealousy, and prejudice were also seen as characteristics that could elicit emotions that would undermine the mentoring process. The formalized method of mentoring has the potential of being inflexible and very regimented, thus disallowing for possible valuable creativity.

Of the 11 participants interviewed who had been formally mentored by a family member, only 3 (27.3%) believed that the mentor ideally should be a family member. The remaining 8 (72.7%) were of the persuasion that the choice of mentor should depend on two factors. The first would be the situation itself. Issues like whether the individual to mentored was seen as the future successor to the firm could have a major bearing the mentor selection. The closeness of any family relationship involved should be considered. The second factor is the individuals who would be involved in the mentoring. The “chemistry” between the two should be appropriate. None of these respondents thought that the mentoring should be done by a non-family member.

Table 6

Formal Mentoring by Family Member

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time efficient • Long term results • Strong feedback • Knowledge of key inside information • Depth of experience • Exposure to values and culture • Good communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skill knowledge • Non-balanced perspective • Attitudinal differences • Prejudice • Lacks flexibility • Can be overly emotional • Jealousy between relatives

Informal Mentoring by Family Member

Table 7 shows the responses of the 47 individuals regarding their perceptions of the strengths and weakness of informal family mentoring. The strengths provided by the participants were consistent. One expressed key strength was the flexibility afforded by an informal mentoring approach. It was seen as giving the person being mentored the freedom of an unstructured and unforced experience. With this freedom it was perceived that the recipient would be given a sense of independence. This process was also seen as providing a forum for open and non-threatening communication.

It was also noted that this kind of mentoring allowed for learning through the experience of others, thus equipping the person being mentored to perform essential job functions. This was seen as aiding in the establishment of caring relationships, which in turn would help in the socialization process of the individual being mentored. All this was sensed as being an on-going process of education for the person being mentored. The respondents related that this mentoring process provided a way in which mistakes could be avoided through the shared experience of the mentor, and through this sharing a heightened level of confidence could be forged.

The weaknesses perceived by those interviewed also had a high degree of consistency. The absence of objectives or an agenda was thought to be a major weakness of the informal approach to mentoring. Emotions were mentioned as a factor that could limit mentoring effectiveness. It was perceived that emotions shared within a family can have impact on business performance outside the family relationship; not always a good

situation. It was also felt that the person being mentored might not always be willing to listen, rendering the mentoring ineffective.

With this lack of structure, respondents expressed concern that a lower level of productivity could result due to things being left undone. With informal mentoring it was perceived that there was always the possibility that an appropriate level of continuity would not be achieved. Additionally, the concern was expressed that with the informality, there would be no measurement of results and thus awareness of goal achievement would not be possible.

Other perceptions voiced included the concern that mentors of the owning family might demonstrate a built-in family bias. This was seen as not always being in the best interest of the mentoring process. Several of the participants made the observation that using an outsider to mentor would possibly be more valid. It was also felt that the non-family member would be less likely to have unrealistic expectations of the person being mentored.

Whether the mentoring should be done by a family member or non-family member was one of the key interview questions. Eight of the 47 (17%) informally mentored responded that mentoring should be accomplished by a family member. Non-family members should be the mentors according to 13 (27.7%) of the participants in this category. The remaining 26 respondents (55.3%) felt that the choice should be determined in accordance with the situation and those who would be involved in the mentoring experience.

Table 7

Informal Mentoring by Family Member

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Unstructured and unforced • Instills values, ethics, and culture • Open communication, non-threatening • Defines goals, an equipping process • Learn through experience of others • Caring relationships established • On-going process of education • Avoid mistakes, builds confidence • Fosters socialization • Provides freedom and independence • Not time intensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives may not be established • Not always willing to listen • Tend to be emotional • Built-in family bias • Things may not get done • No measurement of results • Expectations may be unrealistic • Outside advice may be more valid • Possible personality conflicts • Lack of time to accomplish • Lack of continuity

Informal Mentoring by Non-family Member

Table 8 shows that 16 of the participants indicated they were mentored on an informal basis by a non-family member. There was a consistency of perceptions expressed by the participants in this category of both the strengths and weaknesses, as true of the other two categories.

The strength mentioned most often was the building of confidence of the person being mentored as a result of this mentoring process. Another frequently verbalized trait was that of a sense of independence on the part of the persons being mentored. They felt

that it stimulated creativity. Independence provided a good degree of flexibility according to these respondents.

Being mentored by a non-family member, according to many responses, kept undesirable emotions to a minimum. As a result of the minimized inappropriate emotions, a good climate for communication was created. With the good communication came the opportunity to have the mentor pass on his/her knowledge of the business as well as instilling in the person being mentored key values and principles shared within the organization. Additionally, the good communication opened the door for the mentor to aid in problem solving.

Other strengths shared included the conviction that informal mentoring by a non-family member eliminated family bias. It was perceived that when family members do the mentoring they bring with them natural built-in family biases that weaken the mentoring effectiveness. It was shared that valued employees could be better retained through this informal approach to mentoring. Several of the interviewees felt this enhanced the overall credibility of the mentoring process.

Weaknesses identified in the interviews mirrored the strengths in many cases. For instance, it was perceived that informal mentoring may inhibit or enhance prospects of productivity. There was also concern about the time the informal process would take. Being informal, it was felt that closure of the process was up in the air. A concern of those being mentored in this fashion was that there might be no point of closure. Also,

being informal and without structure it would not be difficult to get off track and waste valuable time.

The issue of sharing values was brought up as a possible weakness because of the concern that the wrong values would be shared. There were shared instances where the mentors passed on methods of job performance that included ethical and moral impropriety. Another related concern was that these values might not be given the same level of importance that would be given if the mentoring had been accomplished by a family member. However, there was some concern expressed that in the sharing of values, non-family members could become overly aggressive.

Several other weaknesses were identified. Jealousy, occurring with those employees who were not mentored, was determined to be a possible result of informal mentoring. The mentor and the person being mentored might have a personality conflict that disallows for effective mentoring. Finally, the mentoring might be rejected completely by the person who was being mentored..

Of the 16 participants, none of them felt that the mentoring should be accomplished by a family member. The majority (11 or 68.8%) felt that it should be done by a non-family member. The remaining 5 (31.2%) indicated that the choice between family member and non-family member would depend on the situation and on who would be doing the mentoring, as well as who would be mentored.

Table 8

Informal Mentoring by Non-family Member

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence building • Non-emotional • Instills values and principles • Family bias not involved • Sense of independence • Good communication • Flexible and creative • Retain valued employees • Open door for problem discussions • Credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be overly aggressive • Wrong values mentored • Lack of structure • May be rejected • Can create jealousy • Time consuming • Bad chemistry existing • Can get side tracked

Comparison of Mentoring Categories

In comparing the three categories studied in this research, several important findings were uncovered related to research questions. The two categories classified as informal mentoring had very similar strength and weakness comments made by the participants. Comparing their perceptions of informal mentoring to the existing literature, one finds that they closely follow each other (i.e., Matthes, 1991). Comments relating to flexibility and freedom also appear common to both family business and non-family businesses.

Whether the mentor should be a family member or non-family member was an issue of contention, and had been presented as a research question. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the largest number of respondents felt that the choice should be dependent on the situation as well as the characteristics of those who would be involved in the mentoring process. The responses to the interview questions relating to this issue were mirror images of each other when examining the respective strengths and weakness of having a family member or non-family member doing the mentoring.

Two matrices were developed to show these similarities of the groups in terms of there strengths and weaknesses. The first matrix, Table 9, presents a comparison of the items given as strengths of the groups. The second matrix, Table 10, gives the weaknesses comparison by groups. By using the two tables the reader is able to compare the groups according to these characteristics.

Table 9

Comparison Matrix of Perceived Strengths

<u>Item</u>	<u>Formal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Non-family</u>
Time efficient	X		
Communication	X	X	X
Experience	X		
Inside information	X		
Values	X	X	X

<u>Item</u>	<u>Formal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Non-family</u>
Non-family bias			X
Credibility			X
Non-emotional			X
Confidence		X	X
Flexible		X	X

Table 10

Comparison Matrix of Perceived Weaknesses

<u>Item</u>	<u>Formal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Family</u>	<u>Informal - Non-family</u>
Lack of skill	X		
Imbalance perspective	X		
Bad chemistry	X		X
Lack continuity		X	X
Emotional	X	X	
Family bias	X	X	
Lack flexibility	X		
Time consuming		X	X

Answers to Research Questions

The first research question asked whether mentoring was a valid practice in family businesses. This study found, through the interview of 76 individuals who were senior executives in family businesses, that 100% believed it was a valid practice. Thus the answer to the first research question is yes.

The second question asks whether the mentoring should be done by a family member or non-family member. The responses to this specific question asked in the interview process were split. Eleven participants (14.9 %) felt that mentoring should be accomplished by a family member. Twenty-five (32.4 %) stated it should be done by a non-family member. The largest number of participants, 40 (52.7 %) felt the choice of a mentor should depend on two things. First, choosing a family or non-family member as the mentor should depend on the situation or circumstance. Second concern was important to insure that there was an appropriate match of mentor to the person being mentored, regardless of whether the mentor was a family member or not.

The third research question asked whether the mentoring should be done formally or informally. The breakdown of those who were mentored formally versus those who were mentored informally indicates what occurred. There were 63 (82.9%) participants who were subject to informal mentoring, and 11 (17.1%) who were formally mentored. The responses to the interview questions revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of formal as opposed to informal mentoring.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of this study there are several very clear conclusions that this author has drawn. First, the perception of mentoring held by those interviewed is that it is a vital process that should be experienced by all. Affirmative comments like, "Oh, absolutely," "Of course," and "Definitely," were typical when respondents were asked if mentoring is something to recommend to others. The very future of the family businesses, some said, rests in the results of mentoring. However, as the tables outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the different mentoring techniques show, there are perceived right and wrong ways to mentor.

The selection of the appropriate method to use was seen by the largest majority of respondents to rest in the situation itself. An example of this could be where a family is dealing with succession planning. This circumstance could create high levels of emotion. In that case using a family member to mentor could jeopardize the process. A non-family member, who is distanced from the issue, might be the better selection. On the other hand, if the desire is to pass on the ethical value system of the firm, a family member would be an appropriate choice due to his or her closeness to the culture of the organization, having perhaps grown up with it. Several respondents perceived that family

member mentors will have a greater vested interest in the success of the business.

However, there were those who felt that a non-family member mentor would have greater credibility than a family member.

Another example of where it would be crucial to select the mentor carefully would be when the job to be done is one that requires a high level of skill. If the only skilled mentor available is a non-family member, then the choice should not be an issue. Since all three research groups indicated the value of experience gained from the mentoring, this becomes particularly true.

The choice of the individual to be the mentor also includes the need to assess who it is that will be mentored. The compatibility of the two people involved has a bearing on the result of the effort. Personality assessment needs to play a role in the mentor/mentee selection. Many of the participants responded to this as being an important dimension. The emotions that can build with improper matching can disrupt an otherwise well thought through plan.

The decision to use formal over informal mentoring was an overarching concern of the participants. The 11 formally mentored respondents felt informal mentoring was probably preferable. Those informally mentored were of the opinion that communication was better because of the sense of freedom that informality affords. One of the respondents, referring to communication that goes on with informal mentoring, said, "...you can listen to all the advice that you seek and receive, but you don't really have to do it..." (Tape 3B2). Formality would stifle a free flowing dialogue. There would be a

feeling of obligation, a forced choice. Yet, concern was expressed by several participants that, with informality, the risk of getting off track was accentuated. This concern parallels what Kram (1985) and Matthes (1991) said about the distinctions between the two.

Many spoke of informal mentoring fostering flexibility, and formality limiting creativity. If things are cut and dry, chances are that the new and different will be left out. The freedom of informality, said some, would allow for greater possibilities. However, even those who had been informally mentored commented on the possibility of things not getting accomplished due to the informality. Measurement of results might be disregarded in the informal approach, where with a formal system it would be an integral part.

The three research questions were answered as a result of the study and provide good insight to family business mentoring. With the unanimous agreement on the value of mentoring, it is the belief of this author that additional study of family businesses would continue to reveal this affirmative posture towards mentoring. The split in opinion over family versus non-family member mentors was not surprising. It did demonstrate, through the strengths and weakness identified relating to family and non-family mentors, that care should be exercised when making the selection. Formality and informality issues are reflective of the current literature. The participants stated their perceptions of the strengths and weakness of both formality and informality. Like the issue of family

versus non-family member mentors, it should depend on the situation and those involved in the mentoring.

Limitations

This study had certain recognized limitations. Those who participated came from a convenience sample. The results cannot be given as a reflection of the entire population of family businesses. However, the sample did contain a good cross section of family businesses in terms of size, participant age, and gender. Additionally, if the three group sizes were larger, it would make this research even stronger than it is at this point. Conducting telephone interviews was a limitation that was not foreseen. The participants were busy business people, and at best were giving up very precious time. One can wonder if, in another setting, the responses might have been different, or perhaps given in greater depth.

Special Issue

Special concern about the mentoring experience was expressed by the females included in this study. They felt they did not receive the same opportunities in the mentoring process as their male counterparts. This is reflective of what was found in the literature review by Noe (1988), Kizilos (1990), Burke (1993), and others. Their research indicates the existence of sex role stereotyping. This researcher found the issue of sex role stereotyping to be present, even in family businesses.

Recommendations

Perhaps nothing will illustrate the importance of mentoring in family businesses better than the following quotation from a note received some days after this individual was interviewed. "I greatly enjoyed our visit during the phone interview you conducted on mentors. This is a subject I feel very strongly about and appreciate you contacting me and giving me the opportunity to get involved" (Personal letter). Further study of mentoring is clearly called for in the area of family businesses.

Additionally, there are practical applications that should prove of value to executive decision makers in family businesses. The two matrices that compare the strengths and weaknesses of the three identified groups (see Tables 9 and 10) can be useful in deciding on the appropriate mentoring methodology. By selecting the approach, according to identified strengths, that best fits the situation and those who will be involved in the mentoring, the family business can avoid the pitfalls of an inappropriate methodology. This practical aid, though not a guarantee, should be serve the practitioner well.

This author see six areas that would provide rich opportunity for further study. First, it would be interesting to develop and validate a survey that would allow for a quantitative view of mentoring in family businesses. Through some form of quasi-experimental methodology even greater insight to the process of mentoring could be attained.

A second possibility for future study would be in correlating the size of organizations to the type of mentoring techniques used, and the resulting level of effectiveness. There may be a relationship of formality and informality relating to the number of employees in an organization. Size also may be a factor in the use of non-family members as mentors because there are not enough family members to go around.

A third study would be to do a follow-up on the 106 individuals who returned the questionnaire stating that they had not been mentored. The follow-up could ask for their perceptions of mentoring. With those results one could compare them with the perceptions found with this study.

A fourth possible study might compare family member with non-family members who had been mentored within the same industry and determine some form of performance indicators. Are there factors that would make one group more effective than the other? Or, is the effectiveness of a given process a function of the type of industry?

The fifth recommendation would be to conduct a longitudinal study of the two groups that were formed in the present research: 76 family business employees who had been mentored, and 106 who had not. Over a period of time, perhaps three to five years, compare the performance of the individuals and their organizations to see if there is any significant difference that can be attributed to the presence or absence of mentoring.

Finally, it is recommended that a study be conducted to determine the level and impact of gender bias found in family businesses. Several of the participants in this study indicated that they had been treated differently than their male counterparts in the

mentoring process. The research should examine just how extensive the bias is, and propose methods of changing that practice.

Summary

Family business mentoring was perceived as being very meaningful. The method to be used was seen as being related to the people involved and the situation at hand. This was stated in terms of both the use of family members and non-family members as mentors, and the process being conducted formally or informally. These perceptions have yielded a strong case for further research relating to mentoring in family firms. Further, this research has been enlightening, challenging, and inspiring. From the results of the study, and the opportunity for further study, it would appear that numerous publishable journal articles and industry presentations can be produced. With family business constituting at least 70% of all businesses in this country, mentoring has a secure place as a rich field of research opportunity.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

June 19, 1997

Dear <ABC>:

Your name has selected from Baylor University's Institute for Family Business data base as a senior executive of <XYZ>. I am a Research Fellow with the Institute doing a doctoral dissertation study relating to mentoring in family businesses. The goal of the study is to identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses, held by leaders such as yourself, of having family members or non-family member as mentors in either a formal or informal setting.

Enclosed is a single sheet questionnaire that will take no more than two to three minutes of your time to complete. Be assured that names of companies or their employees, provided as a part of this survey, will not be made public in the study. I do feel that your participation would be of immense help to the Institute as we seek to add to the literature on this very important topic.

Thank you for your time and effort in the completion of this survey. If you do complete it, please use the stamped envelope to return it to us. Also, please sign in the space provided below indicating your understanding of this project. The project will present no personal risk to you or your organization. You may elect to withdraw from it at any time you wish. If you have any questions about the research and/or your participation in it please call me at (254)-710-3771. Again, thank you for your assistance in this research project.

Sincerely,

John H. Boyd
Research Associate
Enclosure

Date Signature of willing participant

This project has been reviewed by The University of North Texas Committee for the protection of human subjects.

APPENDIX B

MENTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

**Family Business
Senior Executive's
Mentoring Questionnaire**

Name: _____ Date: _____

Company Phone
Address: _____ Number: _____

_____ Fax Number: _____

_____ E-mail
Address: _____

Date of Company Founding: _____ Number of Employees: _____

Are you, in any way, related to the owning family? _____
(Yes/No)

Do you have a mentoring program in your organization? _____
(Yes/No)

Were you ever mentored by a member of the firm while you were working in the company?

(Yes/No)

Mentoring can be any interpersonal relationship that could have had an influence on your career progress.

If you answered NO to the previous question, you have completed this questionnaire. Please return it in the envelope provided. If your response was yes, then please complete the following three questions, and then return it.

Was this mentor a member of the owning family? _____
(Yes/No)

Was the mentoring that you received formal or informal (Please circle).

Formal mentoring is one that takes place in an organized and planned manner as part of organizational policy, and includes such elements as assignments of mentors.

Informal mentoring includes all mentoring that is not established and complied with as a part of a formal policy of the organization.

Would you be willing to participate in an interview (requiring no more than twenty minutes of your time) relating to your mentoring experience that will provide other family businesses with valuable information regarding the mentoring process? _____
(Yes/No)

Date _____ Signature of willing participant _____

This project has been reviewed by The University of North Texas Committee for the protection of human subjects.

APPENDIX C

BASIC NATURE OF FAMILY BUSINESS MENTORING

Basic Nature of Family Business Mentoring

	Formal Mentoring	Informal Mentoring
Family Member Mentor	11	47
Non-Family Member Mentor	2	16

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. In your opinion, is assigning a non-family member or family member as a mentor in the best interest of your organization? Why?
2. What do you see as being the functions to be performed by mentors?
3. Have you been a mentor? If you have, what brought about you becoming a mentor? If not, why have you not mentored someone?
4. What were the beneficial aspects of having been mentored?
5. What were the downsides or pitfalls of having been mentored?
6. What do you perceive as being the strengths and/or weaknesses of formal versus informal mentoring?
7. If you were formally mentored, was it done as part of company policy, or through an outside entity?
8. Can you relate a story that illustrates a really good experience and a bad experience of having been mentored?
9. Would you prescribe mentoring to someone else? Why or why not?
10. In your opinion, did your mentoring provide benefits to the organization (Yes or No)? What were they?
11. Where there any drawbacks to the organization from the mentoring process?
12. In your opinion should an executive be mentored by a family or non-family member? Why?

APPENDIX E

TAPED INTERVIEW RELEASE FORM

I, _____, hereby give permission for John Boyd to use my oral responses to his dissertation research questions so long as my name and/or my organization's name is not used. I understand and allow for the recording of my answers to these questions on audio tape.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF MENTORING IN FAMILY BUSINESSES

Perceived Effects of Mentoring in Family Businesses

	Formal Mentoring Strengths	Formal Mentoring Weaknesses	Informal Mentoring Strengths	Informal Mentoring Weaknesses
Family Member Mentor	See Table 6	See Table 6	See Table 7	See Table 7
Non- Family Member Mentor			See Table 8	See Table 8

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