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The role of mentoring in the employee professional development and career growth

O papel da tutoria no desenvolvimento profissional e no crescimento da carreira dos trabalhadores

El papel de la tutoría en el desarrollo profesional y el crecimiento de la carrera de los empleados

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mentoring is an important tool for realizing the personal potential of specialists in various fields, but its effectiveness directly depends on a number of organizational issues and a clear definition of approaches and goals. The aim of this research is to determine the criteria for choosing alternative approaches to mentoring depending on the expected positive effects. **Methods:** The study employed SWOT analysis, questionnaire survey, and semi-structured interviews. **Results:** The analysis found that each of the proposed approaches to mentoring is effective in the context of achieving different goals. Group mentoring and peer mentoring are effective for achieving specific goals — salary increases, career advancement, and increased number of professional contacts. So, the result of these mentoring approaches is the most "visible" and can be evaluated by certain quantitative and qualitative indicators, such as the amount of salary, transition to a new position, number of new acquaintances. **Conclusions:** Peer mentoring additionally has significant advantages for the development of soft skills through equal communication with like-minded people and the sharing of experiences. Further research may focus on the development of specific mentoring programmes. The results of the study can be useful for companies in choosing an approach to mentoring in view of the desired effects.

Keywords: mentoring; mentee; group approach; individual approach; personal development; mentor roles.

RESUMO

Antecedentes: A tutoria é um instrumento importante para a realização do potencial pessoal dos especialistas em vários domínios, mas a sua eficácia depende diretamente de uma série de questões organizacionais e de uma definição clara das abordagens e dos objectivos. O objetivo desta investigação é determinar os critérios de escolha de abordagens alternativas à tutoria, em função dos efeitos positivos esperados. **Métodos:** O estudo recorreu à análise FODA, a um inquérito por questionário e a entrevistas semi-estruturadas. **Resultados:** A análise revelou que cada uma das abordagens propostas para a tutoria é eficaz no contexto da consecução de diferentes objectivos. A tutoria em grupo e a tutoria entre pares são eficazes para atingir objectivos específicos - aumentos salariais, progressão na carreira e aumento do número de contactos profissionais. Assim, o resultado destas abordagens de tutoria é o mais "visível" e pode ser avaliado por determinados indicadores quantitativos e qualitativos, tais como o montante do salário, a transição para um novo cargo, o número de novos conhecidos. **Conclusões:** Além disso, a tutoria entre pares apresenta vantagens significativas para o desenvolvimento de competências transversais através de uma comunicação equitativa com pessoas que pensam da mesma forma e da partilha de experiências. A investigação futura pode centrar-se no desenvolvimento de programas de tutoria específicos. Os resultados do estudo podem ser úteis para as empresas na escolha de uma abordagem à tutoria, tendo em conta os efeitos desejados.

Palavras-chave: mentoria; mentorado; abordagem grupal; abordagem individual; desenvolvimento pessoal; papel do mentor.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La tutoría es una herramienta importante para desarrollar el potencial personal de los especialistas en diversos campos, pero su eficacia depende directamente de una serie de cuestiones organizativas y de una definición clara de enfoques y objetivos. El objetivo de esta investigación es determinar los criterios para elegir enfoques alternativos de tutoría en función de los efectos positivos esperados. **Métodos:** El estudio empleó un análisis DAFO, una encuesta por cuestionario y entrevistas semiestructuradas. **Resultados:** El análisis reveló que cada uno de los enfoques propuestos para la tutoría es eficaz en el contexto de la consecución de diferentes objetivos. La tutoría en grupo y la tutoría entre iguales son eficaces para alcanzar objetivos específicos: aumentos salariales, promoción profesional y aumento del número de contactos profesionales. Así pues, el resultado de estos enfoques de tutoría es el más «visible» y puede evaluarse mediante determinados indicadores cuantitativos y cualitativos, como la cuantía del salario, la transición a un nuevo puesto o el número de nuevos conocidos. **Conclusiones:** La tutoría entre iguales tiene, además, ventajas significativas para el desarrollo de habilidades blandas a través de la comunicación igualitaria con personas afines y el intercambio de experiencias. Futuras investigaciones pueden centrarse en el desarrollo de programas específicos de tutoría. Los resultados del estudio pueden ser útiles para las empresas a la hora de elegir un enfoque de la tutoría en función de los efectos deseados.

Palabras clave: tutoría; tutelado; enfoque colectivo; enfoque individual; desarrollo personal; rol del tutor.

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has a long history (Davis & Jones, 2020; Ivey et al., 2022), but has undergone significant development in recent decades (Poth & Munce, 2020; Pollard & Kumar, 2021). Many new approaches and types of mentoring have emerged (van Dam et al., 2021; Lasater et al., 2021), in particular, aimed at formalizing the mentor-mentee relationship (Schwartz-Shea, 2020; Santolucito & Piskac, 2020). These approaches may involve both individual and group mentoring (Gadomska-Lila, 2020), peer mentoring (Murrell et al., 2021; Bastiansen & Wittek, 2023), mentoring among representatives of different demographic groups (Randel et al., 2021), mentoring using new technologies (Grant et al., 2020; Lazor et al., 2024). At the same time, the traditional approach to mentoring remains relevant, when informal relationships based on mutual interests naturally arise between mentor and mentee. Different circumstances and specific objectives may determine the choice of an appropriate approach, so it is important to identify the drivers for this choice and the alternatives.

Increased attention to mentoring from the academic community and practicing specialists in various organizations is explained by the generally recognized positive impact of mentoring on the employee professional efficiency and career development (Bielialov et al., 2019; Järvis et al., 2022). Mentoring has invaluable benefits for specialists in various fields, performing educational, developmental, social, and other functions (Voluiko et al., 2024). Mentoring provides an opportunity to gain important practical experience, unique knowledge and, ultimately, learn to independently build the career path and develop.

However, many studies note that the seemingly obvious benefits of mentoring do not materialize after completing the mentoring programme (Bachkirova et al., 2020). This may be explained by a number of factors that reduce the effectiveness of mentoring (Tuma et al., 2021; Hu et al., 2022). First of all, these are approaches to the implementation of mentoring that do not correspond to specific conditions, inadequate professionalism of the mentor, unsuccessfully chosen mentor roles, etc. In other words, the problem is not in the imperfection of the concept of mentoring itself, but in the incorrect definition of the necessary subjects and ways of implementation. This assumption emphasizes the importance of organizational issues, especially at the initial stage of mentoring. This stage is particularly important, as it involves the choice of the approach and types of mentoring, the mentor roles, according to which the mentoring programme in general is further planned.

This study answers the following questions:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing mentoring approaches (individual or group) depending on the specific situation?

How does choosing a mentor role affect the achievement of the goals of the mentoring programme?

What are the main issues and problematic aspects that should be taken into account in the process of preparation for mentoring?

The aim of the research is to determine the criteria for choosing alternative approaches to mentoring depending on the expected positive effects. The aim involved the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- make a classification of mentoring types and mentor roles;

- propose a roadmap for the implementation of the mentoring programme and the main problematic issues;

- conduct a comparative analysis of approaches to mentoring;

evaluate the results of implementation of various approaches to mentoring.

Literature Review

Many researchers noted the positive contribution of mentoring to the staff professional development and career growth. Pryimak et al. (2024) study the impact of mentoring on improving the workers' qualifications, developing skills to independently solve problems and fulfil tasks, improving the new workers' attitude to work, and adapting to the corporate culture established in the organization. Dirks (2021) aptly reveals the mentor role and identifies the main advantages of mentoring. These include: professional development and growth, increasing self-confidence, psychological support, and increasing resilience, career advancement. Susanto and Sawitri (2022) believe that mentoring provides mentees with guidance, role models, and acceptance. The effectiveness of mentoring depends on taking into account such goals as enhancing the employee motivation and their involvement in the work process, improving work results, and increasing the efficiency of organizational processes.

Tratsevskyi and Kubitskyi (2024) consider mentoring as a strategy for managing the company's intellectual capital. The researchers note the role of mentoring in establishing a culture of self-improvement and learning among the company's

employees. Hussey and Campbell-Meier (2021) emphasize the important role of mentoring in the professional development of specialists. The researchers note that a feature of mentoring is the long-term mentor-mentee relationship compared to other personnel technologies. Al Hilali et al. (2020) aptly identify other specific characteristics of mentoring, consisting in the achievement of a number of tasks. Such tasks include encouraging mentees to talk about the difficulties they have, reproduce their own thoughts and feelings, independently analyse and solve problems, and make decisions. An important point expressed in this study is that mentoring is aimed at identifying the mentee's core abilities and guiding them to appropriate methods and tools that will allow them to use their strengths.

The effectiveness of mentoring has been confirmed not only in theoretical studies, but also in empirical ones. Baran and Zarzycki (2021) study the mentoring process in Polish companies. The researchers found that the likelihood of career advancement and salary increases was significantly higher for employees who participated in formal mentoring programmes compared to those who did not participate in such programmes. Tynjälä et al. (2019) analyse mentoring practices in Australia, Finland, and Sweden. The main focus of the study is on the Finnish experience of peer-group mentoring. The researchers established that the Finnish environment for this type of mentoring is characterized by high trust and autonomous professionalism.

This study is based on the academic achievements of Mullen and Klimaitis (2019), who offer their own classification of mentoring types. An important achievement of the researchers is the systematization of knowledge about mentoring and the definition of basic concepts. They also cite alternative approaches to mentoring, which is especially relevant for increasing its flexibility in terms of the complexity of human dynamics. Stoeger et al. (2021) identify key issues in mentoring and played an important role in shaping the author's views. The researchers identify seven main problematic issues and offer approaches to improve the situation.

So, the effectiveness of mentoring has been proven theoretically and empirically and the main concepts have been outlined in the academic literature. However, there is a lack of comparative analysis of the effectiveness of different approaches to mentoring, both traditional and new. This issue is an important direction of research, because the comparison of different approaches to mentoring makes the process of choosing an approach more adaptive. Some approaches that have proven effective in a specific situation may turn out to fail in another. This explains the need for greater adaptability in the selection of approaches depending on the specific environment and tasks.

METHODS

Research design and sampling

The research procedure includes three stages and involves the implementation of the theoretical part (stages 1-2) and the empirical part (stage 3). The research design includes three main stages (Figure 1). The sample for the theoretical part of the study consists of theoretical and methodological approaches to the introduction of group and individual mentoring in the company. In particular, a classification was developed, containing the distribution of mentoring types according to four main categories: the degree of formalization of relations, the composition of persons, the interaction channel, and the hierarchy. Eleven possible mentor roles were considered: teacher, coach, advisor, advocate, deck, challenger, intellectual sparring partner, sponsor, resource, role model, friend. These types and roles were taken into account in the study to improve the understanding of the diversity, complexity, and variability of mentoring approaches. The studied notions and concepts provide an appropriate coverage of the theoretical and methodological context of the research, which is related to the preparatory stage for mentoring. Concept selection criteria included relevance and effectiveness noted in theoretical and empirical studies, as well as relevance to the expected results of the author's research.

The empirical part of the work involves a study of the results of the implementation of the above-mentioned approaches to mentoring for the personnel of five international companies engaged in the provision of IT services. The study was conducted during the period from 05.02.2024 to 31.05.2024 and covered specialists located in Ukraine. All participating companies belong to the segment of large corporations with more than 3,000 employees (within Ukraine) and have been operating on the market for 13 to 31 years. The experiment involved 70 company specialists, all of whom completed the proposed mentoring programmes. Two groups of 20 specialists each were formed for group mentoring. Another 20 specialists participated in the peer mentoring programme as a subtype of group mentoring. A total of 10 employees underwent individual mentoring programmes. So, all specialists can be divided into three categories: those who participated in the individual mentoring programme, those who participated in group mentoring, and those who participated in peer mentoring. Specialists were selected taking into account work experience (from 2 to 5 years), as well as position in the company (junior and middle-level specialists). All specialists who agreed to participate in the experiment were interested in gaining new experience and valuable skills, which was also an important selection criterion. Detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

A common mentoring programme adapted depending on the category of workers was applied for all categories. The following types of mentoring were used in the programme: formalized, mixed, traditional. The one-way mentoring type was used for group and individual approaches, the reciprocal mentoring type was used for peer mentoring. The mentors' behaviour mostly involved a combination of mentor, coach, challenger, and friend roles. The programme was implemented in accordance with the road map proposed in the theoretical part of the work, as well as taking into account the identified problematic aspects and relevant recommendations.

Figure 1. Stages of the study

Note. Authors' development

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Characteristics	Number of people	Percentage
Age group		
under 25 years	15	21%
25–30 years	23	33%
over 30 years	32	46%
Gender		
women	45	64%
men	25	36%
Education		
secondary	3	4%
bachelor	25	36%
master	42	60%

Note. Authors' development with the research data

An approach to the classification of mentoring types was formed using the inductive method through the study of individual categories and their subsequent unification and generalization into groups. This made it possible to identify and explain the key types of mentoring that can be used in any of the studied mentoring approaches. A descriptive method was applied to characterize the types, approaches to mentoring, mentor roles and the main problematic issues. This method made it possible to explain the author's vision of the studied categories. SWOT analysis was applied to compare the main advantages, opportunities, threats and disadvantages of the identified approaches to mentoring. This helped to explain what determines the choice of a particular approach.

The main methods for the empirical part of the research are questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire surveys and interviews were designed and validated by the author, based on the approaches proposed in the works Ng et al. (2020), Yukawa et al. (2020), and Ploj Virtič et al. (2023). The author conducted the survey by sending the questionnaires by e-mail, and the interview was conducted by the author in a telephone conversation. In the course of the questionnaire survey, the experts were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to a number of questions related to the effect that was achieved as a result of the implementation of the mentoring programme. The questions concern satisfaction with the results of mentoring and are divided into 4 parameters: satisfaction with external parameters, satisfaction with internal parameters, satisfaction with acquired hard skills, and satisfaction with acquired soft skills. According to the results of the questionnaire survey, the results were evaluated according to the following methodology: "yes" answers were evaluated at 1 point, "no" answers — at 0 points. The total number of points for each answer was divided by the number of specialists in each studied category. The evaluated parameters, the corresponding indicators and the number of "yes" or "no" answers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the questionnaire survey

Estimated parameters	Indicators	Individual mentoring		Group mentoring		Peer mentoring	
		yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
External parameters	Salary increase	6	4	26	14	8	12
	Career advancement	4	6	24	16	8	12
	Increased number of career contacts	6	4	34	6	18	2
Internal parameters	Increasing motivation	8	2	30	10	18	2
	Increasing satisfaction with career success	6	4	32	8	16	4
Hard skills	Increasing the general qualification level	4	6	30	10	18	2
	Acquiring new skills/knowledge	8	2	30	10	14	6
	Filling in the blanks	10	0	24	16	10	10
	Acquisition of unique and/or innovative knowledge	8	2	28	12	10	10
Soft skills	Improving communication skills in general	4	6	14	16	8	12
	Improving relations with colleagues	4	6	28	12	16	4
	Overcoming barriers in communication	2	8	20	20	12	8

Note. Authors' development with the research data

Using the method of semi-structured interviews, specialists were asked to outline the main advantages, opportunities, disadvantages and possible threats that they discovered in the process of mentoring. The results of the responses were divided into categories, redundant or irrelevant information was filtered out and summarized. The SWOT analysis table was built as a result of the generalization.
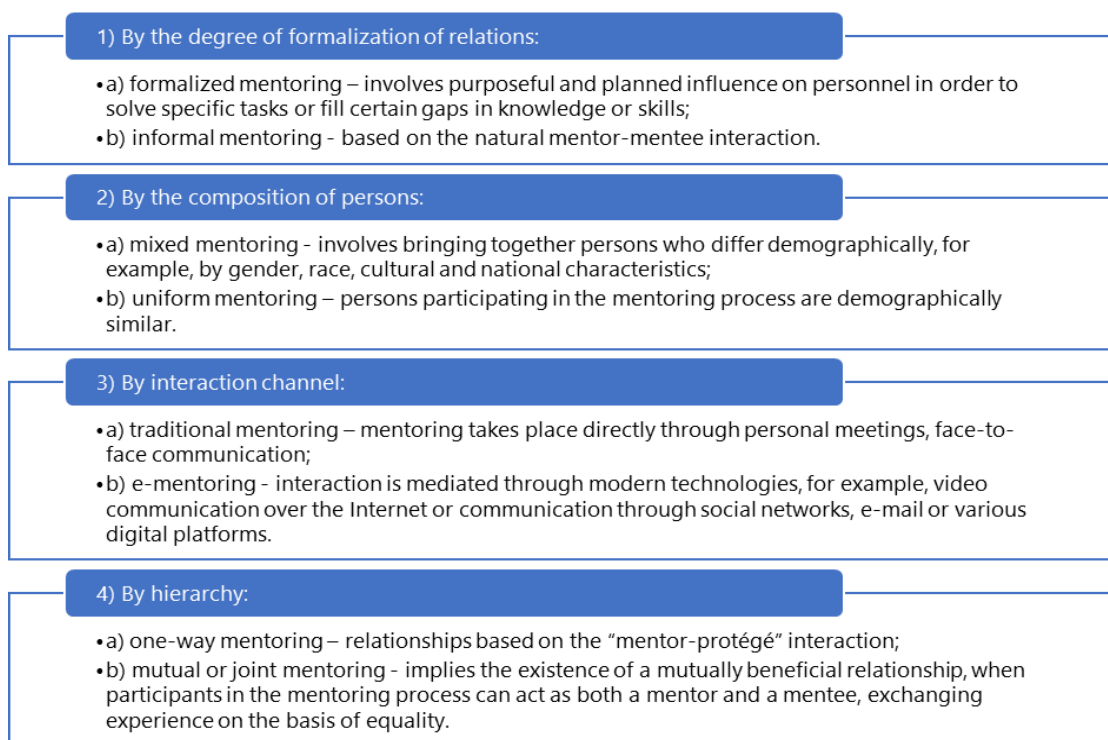
The work took into account the main ethical aspects of the use of questionnaires and interviews. Before the start of the study, all participants were familiarized with its purpose, the approach to data collection and the use of the results. Participants signed a free and informed consent form, which included the following points: voluntary participation and the right to refuse further participation at any time without any consequences; protection of personal data, which provided for storing data in an anonymized form and access to them only for the authors of the study; anonymity of data (participants' names were not recorded) and the use of responses in a generalized form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Making a classification of mentoring types and mentor roles

The development of the institution of mentoring led to the identification of a number of types of mentoring. The following classification of mentoring types can be proposed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Classification of mentoring types

1) By the degree of formalization of relations:
- a) formalized mentoring – involves purposeful and planned influence on personnel in order to solve specific tasks or fill certain gaps in knowledge or skills;
- b) informal mentoring - based on the natural mentor-mentee interaction.

2) By the composition of persons:
- a) mixed mentoring - involves bringing together persons who differ demographically, for example, by gender, race, cultural and national characteristics;
- b) uniform mentoring – persons participating in the mentoring process are demographically similar.

3) By interaction channel:
- a) traditional mentoring – mentoring takes place directly through personal meetings, face-to-face communication;
- b) e-mentoring - interaction is mediated through modern technologies, for example, video communication over the Internet or communication through social networks, e-mail or various digital platforms.

4) By hierarchy:
- a) one-way mentoring – relationships based on the "mentor-protégé" interaction;
- b) mutual or joint mentoring - implies the existence of a mutually beneficial relationship, when participants in the mentoring process can act as both a mentor and a mentee, exchanging experience on the basis of equality.

Note. Composed by the author based on Mullen and Klimaitis (2019) and Stoeger et al. (2021) and our own research results

Mentoring is a way of supporting employees in the process of achieving career success, so it is important to understand its impact on mentors and mentees. Such influence can be expressed in increased productivity, satisfaction with career achievements, etc. The key aspects of the mentor-mentee interaction are the achievement of trust, as well as a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the participants in the process. Next, the main mentor roles, the characteristics of behaviour depending on the role, as well as some examples are presented (Table 3).

A mentor can combine several roles of supporting a mentee, but they should be defined and approached in a balanced way. Unclear roles and their poor combination can lead to less effective mentoring. Also, the choice of roles should be consistent with the chosen approach and mentoring type.

**Table 3.** Mentor roles and corresponding behaviour traits

Mentor role	The main features of behaviour	Examples
Teacher	Shares experience and talks about effective application of acquired knowledge in practice	Gives examples from his/her own practice, invites to be present during the performance of certain tasks
Coach	Points out weaknesses and reveals ways to improve	Offers specific strategies for improving skills
Advisor	Provides advice useful for career development	Offers effective courses or trainings, literature or electronic resources for review
Advocate	Contributes to the improvement of communication skills, socialization	Suggests certain actions to correct behaviour in the team
Deck	Contributes to the creation of a favourable climate for the exchange of ideas and problems	Helps to express your ideas correctly
Challenger	Encourages independent problem solving, offers to test one's strength in performing tasks	Asks to offer their own options for solving the problem, provides opportunities for independent performance of the task
Intellectual sparring partner	Stimulates the mentee's creative thinking, shares ideas, provides and solicits feedback	Exchange of ideas in those areas in which each of the partners has important experience or knowledge
Sponsor	Expands professional contacts	Get to know professionals in the field
Resource	Provides valuable information	Share resources where the mentees can find important information
Role model	Using his/her own example, demonstrates potential opportunities	Suggests the application of certain methods tested on own experience, provides evidence of the effectiveness of proven ways of improvement
Friend	Contributes to the development of friendly relations and the creation of an environment of comfortable communication and exchange of ideas	Initiates informal meetings to discuss career plans and tasks

Note. Authors' development

Road map of the implementation of the mentoring programme and the main problematic issues

Mentoring programmes may differ in their content and objectives, but a general approach can be suggested for their implementation. Such an approach, divided into stages of planning, implementation/implementation and evaluation, is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Roadmap for the implementation of the mentoring programme
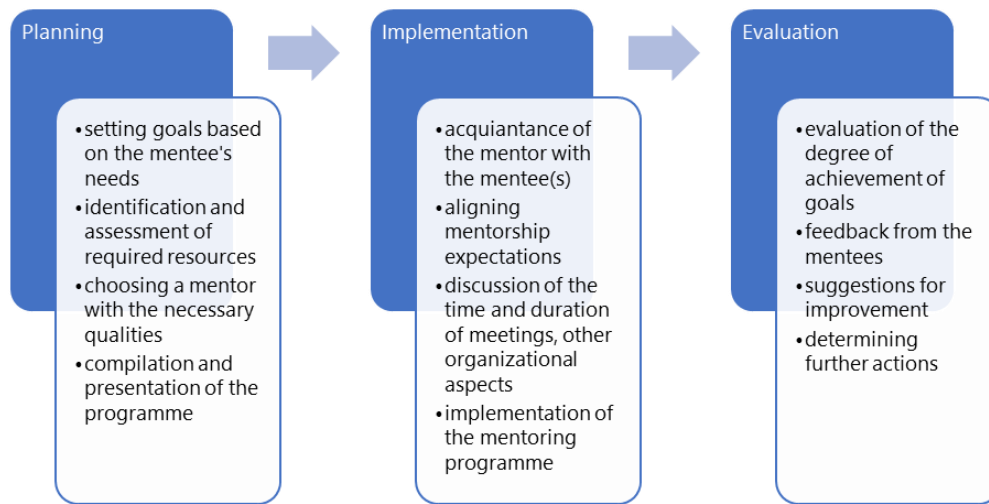
Note. Composed by the author based on Treasure et al. (2022) and our own research results

It is necessary to take into account numerous internal and external influencing factors to increase the probability of successful implementation of the mentoring programme in the process of its planning, implementation, and evaluation. There can be many such factors, so the author offers recommendations regarding which aspects are the main ones and should be taken into account in the first place. Therefore, increasing the effectiveness of the mentoring programme at different stages requires:

1) Coordination of theoretical and practical ideas — it is worth considering that programmes clearly developed and thought out in theory may not bring the expected results in practice. This can be caused by neglect or omission of important details, unclear adherence to theoretical instructions, insufficient understanding of the ideas of the programme developer, unsuccessful interpretation of ideas, etc. Therefore, theory and practice must be aligned to ensure the focus of the programme, the relevant organization. However, it is worth considering that in some cases the theory may need some adaptation to practice, without losing the main ideas;

2) The use of modern, innovative and best practices that have proven their effectiveness in other organizations (especially in the same field of activity) have a higher chance of success. However, the implementation of successful practices should be approached conscientiously, clearly determining whether they correspond to the goals and capabilities of a specific company, the unique needs of the mentees, etc.;

3) Taking into account the mentoring phase — the mentoring process can be conditionally divided into the phases of initiation (acquaintance, the beginning of mentoring), improvement (the longest and most intensive phase), separation (increasing the mentee's independence, reducing the duration of meetings), and redefinition (termination of relationships or their transformation into friendly relationships). The mentoring programme should take into account the peculiarities of each phase, which will allow the programme to be aligned with the natural development of the mentor-mentee relationship;

4) Alignment of goals and expectations – goals and expectations for mentoring should be aligned both for mentors and mentees, as well as for other stakeholders if they exist. For example, such parties may include a company that organizes a mentoring programme for its staff, company shareholders, etc.;

5) Provision of resources – the process of mentoring often requires significant resources, in particular, financial, didactic, social, time, equipment, technologies, etc. The success of the programme can directly depend on the availability and sufficiency of resources. The composition and volume of resources may vary significantly depending on the mentoring programme, company, industry, etc.;

6) Monitoring and evaluation – performance evaluation can be complicated by the lack of a unified approach to determining evaluation criteria. At the same time, systematic evaluation and monitoring, recurrent survey of mentees and mentors, and feedback can be very useful. Deficiencies discovered during the evaluation process can be corrected in time, which makes the programme more adaptive.

Comparative analysis of approaches to mentoring

All types of mentoring and the mentor role noted in the theoretical part of the work can be used within two main approaches to its implementation: group mentoring and individual mentoring. The proposed roadmap and identified problematic aspects are also universal for both approaches. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the respondents who had completed relevant mentoring programmes taking into account the aspects proposed in the theoretical part of the study. The following main features of different approaches to mentoring were revealed according to the results of the interviews (Table 4).

Table 4. SWOT analysis of group and individual approaches to mentoring

Approach to mentoring	Advantages and opportunities	Disadvantages and threats
Group mentoring	equality of group members; a wider range of perspectives and the ability to implement team strategies; joint problem solving; team spirit and healthy competition; the opportunity to build professional or friendly relationships, expand the contacts; support and joint achievement of goals; exchange of ideas and information; improving soft skills, such as communication and conflict resolution skills; schedule and discipline — the need to adhere to the schedule and pace of the group's training prevents unreasonable prolongation of the training process and delay in achieving the effect; inclusiveness – group mentoring can reach a group of employees who do not have access to traditional mentoring programmes or the opportunity to work with a qualified mentor; peer mentoring as a type of group mentoring has certain advantages, such as increasing the sense of belonging to the group, group communication and building relationships, cooperation without a hierarchical component, the presence of role models, and increasing self-efficacy through helping others, etc.	less individual attention to each member of the group compared to individual mentoring; weaker individualization of learning and communication; stress due to competition; groupthink effect – group members may be more inclined to seek agreement than to consider all alternative possibilities and individual views; less flexible time and space frameworks – there is a need to find a time and place convenient for all group members; the unequal pace of the students' learning can slow down the process or reflect poorly on the success of the participants who are lagging behind.
Individual mentoring	individualization of learning and relationships; high flexibility both with regard to the pace of learning and with regard to the time and space framework of meetings; building a trusting relationship with the mentor; the opportunity to gain access to unique professional knowledge; the long-term nature of relationships, their strengthening and deepening over time.	lack of motivation and encouragement from the group; lack of collective experience in solving tasks and problems.

Note. Authors' development

Table 4 shows that group and individual mentoring have their own advantages, and the choice of a particular approach should be based on the existing needs and capabilities of the company and employees. Most of the identified disadvantages of one approach are overlaid by the advantages of another, so the company should take this aspect into account when choosing an approach. For example, if the individualization of the experience is of high importance to the company, the group mentoring may not be the best alternative. But if the company values effective teamwork and group experience, group mentoring will be preferred.

The results of the implementation of various approaches to mentoring

The results of the questionnaire survey and the calculation of grades according to the specified methodology provided the following outcomes (Figures 4-7). The maximum possible score is one, accordingly, the lower the calculated score, the less the mentoring results correspond to the expected effects in each category of specialists.

Figure 4. Evaluation of satisfaction according to external parameters

The results of the evaluation of satisfaction according to external parameters show the overall satisfaction for respondents who underwent mentoring as part of a group. According to the indicator Increased Number of Career Contacts, group mentoring is somewhat inferior to peer mentoring.

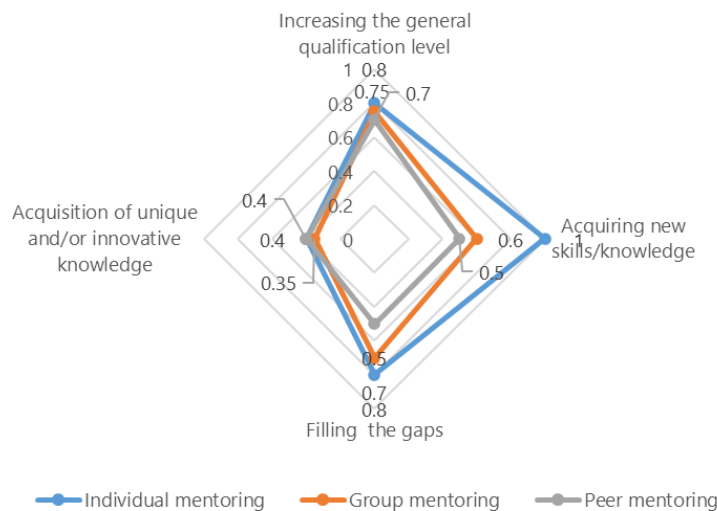**Figure 5.** Evaluation of satisfaction by internal parameters
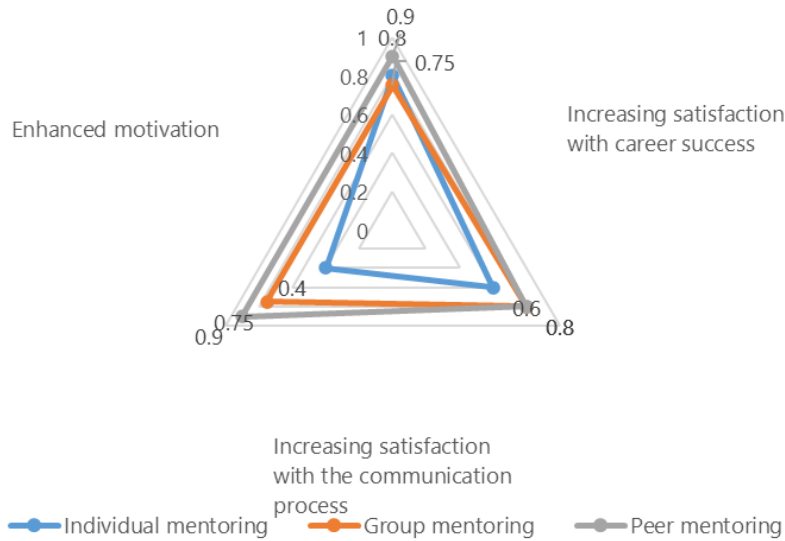
Peer mentoring leads in terms of satisfaction with the achievement of internal parameters. However, group mentoring was found to be just as effective as peer mentoring for Increasing Satisfaction with Career Success (SCS).

Individual mentoring has proven to be the most effective approach to acquiring hard skills. At the same time, this concerns both the acquisition of new skills and the filling of knowledge gaps. This is probably because more attention is paid to the specific needs of the mentee in the process of individual mentoring (Figure 6).

Moreover, soft skills were most significantly improved with the peer mentoring approach. Equal communication in a group without a hierarchical element most contributes to the development of communication skills and overcoming barriers in communication (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Evaluation of satisfaction based on acquired hard skills

Figure 7. Evaluation of satisfaction based on acquired soft skills
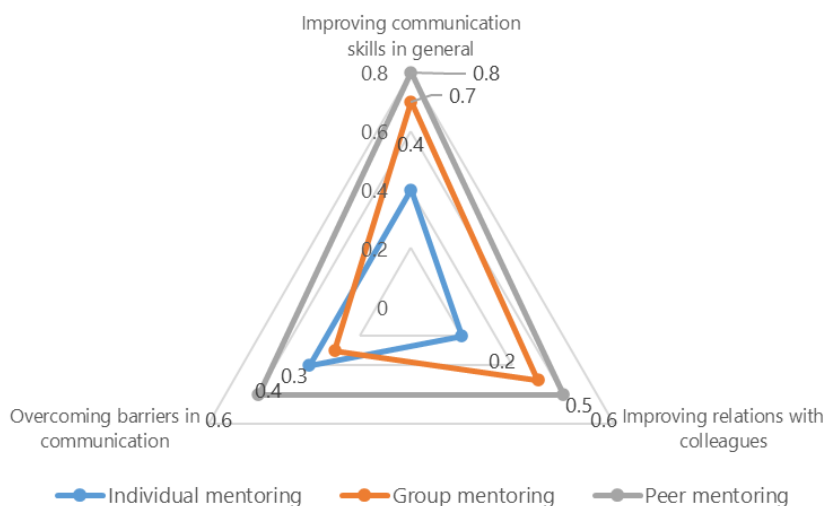
Note. Authors' development with the research data

Discussion

The analysis carried out in the work testifies that mentoring is not just a separate technology, but is a comprehensive approach to the mentee's personal development. Mentoring involves building a trusting relationship between the mentor and the mentee, which is aimed n.ot only at the transfer of knowledge and experience, but also at the development of independence in the professional sphere, communication skills, identification and development of the mentee's strengths, etc. The current stage of development of mentoring provides a wide range of alternatives for its implementation, which must be clearly aligned with the goals and specific conditions of the organization.

Some authors used a somewhat narrower approach to the definition of mentoring. Prymak et al. (2024) note mentoring among effective HR technologies along with career counselling, individual professional development plans, and horizontal transfer. Also, mentoring is often considered together with such a career technology as coaching. Coaching, which has a lot in common with mentoring, has a much shorter duration. Unlike mentoring, coaching aims to solve specific problems and/or fill gaps in workers' knowledge (Susanto & Sawitri, 2022). Coaching involves solving short-term tasks and achieving a visible result through the acquisition of specific skills (Hussey & Campbell-Meier, 2021). However, in the author's opinion, mentoring is something more than HR technology. It occupies an exceptional place, because it involves not only the knowledge transfer, but also the development of the mentor-mentee relationships. Mentoring is aimed at preparing the mentee for an independent career path in the future. This opinion is confirmed by Mullen and Klimaitis (2019), who single out not only career, but also psychosocial functions among the key functions of mentoring.

In contrast to this study, the above-mentioned work of Pryimak et al. (2024) considers mentoring as an official relationship between senior and junior employees of the company. We do not agree with this, because the author's work proves that mentoring can have a different degree of formalization of the mentor-mentee relationship. Although most studies associate mentoring with the process of transferring knowledge and professionalism from a more experienced employee to a less experienced one (Al Hilali et al., 2020), the author's work proved that the mentor and mentee can be at the same hierarchical level, such as in the case of mutual mentoring. This approach to understanding mentoring makes it more flexible and enables using the most appropriate type of mentoring depending on the goals.

The author's views are reflected in the work of Tynjälä et al. (2019), who found the effectiveness of peer mentoring on the example of the implementation of this approach in Finland. The researchers cite the Swedish example, where the key concept in mentoring is supervision, and the Australian approach, which implies support from experienced mentors (traditional mentoring). In contrast to these approaches, an approach involving joint self-development through collegial mentoring is being successfully developed in Finland. This proves the author's position that mentoring in modern conditions has many manifestations. The mentoring type should be chosen based on the specific environment and goals of the company.

Baran and Zarzycki (2021) identified the main mentoring effects that mentees receive in the mentoring process. On the one hand, this is a positive influence on external career success expressed in salary increases and professional advancement. On the other hand, the impact is expressed in the improvement of internal indicators, such as an increase in the level of satisfaction with career success. Tratsevskyi and Kubitskyi (2024) expand the list of mentoring effects, adding to it the individualization of development, the development of personal competencies, the development of the company's

intellectual potential, and the creation of an intellectual corporate culture, etc. The author's work presents a more detailed list of the mentoring effects, which, moreover, differ significantly depending on the chosen approach to mentoring — group or individual.

Dirks (2021) notes the main barriers to successful mentoring: time constraints and a lack of qualified mentors. Stoeger et al. (2021) argue that the low effectiveness of many mentoring approaches is a reflection of how these approaches are implemented. So, the main problem lies not in the low effectiveness of mentoring in general, but in the gap between the ability of mentoring to positively influence changes in the mentee and the level of mentor's skills to implement appropriate mentoring programmes. This opinion is confirmed in the author's work. Based on the results of the work, the author proposed recommendations for solving problematic issues and overcoming barriers. Such recommendations include: ensuring consistency of theoretical and practical ideas, using modern, innovative and best practices, taking into account mentoring phases in the process of developing a mentoring programme, achieving consistency of goals and expectations of all stakeholders, ensuring sufficiency of resources, as well as proper monitoring and evaluation. In practice, these recommendations should be taken into account at the stage of preparation for mentoring.

FINAL REMARKS

Mentoring has a number of generally recognized positive effects for the mentee's personal development. At the same time, in order to realize such effects, a balanced approach to the selection of an approach to mentoring and a detailed implementation plan are necessary.

The classification of mentoring types and mentor roles was proposed in the theoretical part of the work. The proposed classification is universal in that not all defined types and roles can be applied within both defined approaches to mentoring — group and individual. A universal roadmap for the implementation of the mentoring programme was created.

Taking into account the theoretical aspects of the research, an experiment was conducted on the implementation of mentoring programmes using group and individual approaches. The results of the experiment gave grounds to compare the identified advantages and disadvantages of the observed approaches to mentoring. It was determined that the appropriate approach and types of mentoring should be chosen depending on the specific environment of the organization, its goals, the mentees' goals, and available opportunities.

Limitations and future research

A limitation of the study is the consideration of only the main aspects of the choice of approach to mentoring, which are mostly related to organizational issues. The study does not address specific techniques and methodologies that can be used in mentoring programmes. However, this does not affect the value of the results, because the work is designed to solve the main issues facing the company that decided to use mentoring to improve the efficiency of employees and activity in general. Based on the results obtained, further research can supplement them by conducting quantitative analysis. In particular, valuable results can be obtained by using correlation-regression analysis. The level of employee productivity, career growth, job satisfaction, employee turnover rates, etc. can be used as dependent variables. The duration of mentoring programs, the level of digitalization of mentoring, features of corporate culture, etc. can act as independent variables. In addition, it is advisable to conduct case studies in various industries, in particular, the field of information technology, medicine, education, etc. This will allow us to characterize the industry-specific features of mentoring.

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B. data research and statistical analysis:	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
C. elaboration of figures and tables:	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
D. drafting, reviewing and writing of the text:	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
E. selection of bibliographical references	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
F. Other (please indicate)	-	-	-	-	-