CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS
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The preceding chapter discussed the results of the study. The quantitative results of the study were highlighted under the section ‘research conclusions’. Two case studies viz. Indian Oil Corporation Limited and The State Bank of India are developed under the qualitative approach of data analysis. These two cases are documented in the previous chapter. The present chapter gives the conclusions of the research. It also outlines the professional learning and some key insights during the study.
Evoskills Model for Effective Mentoring

1. Policy statement
2. Identification of mentor and mentee
3. Training the mentor and mentee
4. Getting started with mentoring
5. Process in action
6. Evaluation of mentoring effectiveness

- Communication
- Documentation
- Formulation
- Goal Setting
- Rapport Building
- Review
- Feedback
- Regular Meets
- Goal Attainment
7.1 **Evoskills Model for Effective Mentoring**

The following model for effective mentoring is called Evoskills model as it aims to evolve the personal and professional skills of the mentees. The stages of the model are as below -

**Policy Statement** -

The organization must be clear about the reasons for starting the mentoring program. The vision, mission, policy statement and objectives for initiating mentoring should be brainstormed among the senior management team and must be formulated with a group consensus. This clarity will help the organization in prioritizing its efforts, allocating resources and in strategizing the process. The vision, mission, policy statement and objectives need to be formulated before initiating the process. The same must be well documented and most importantly communicated to all the stakeholders of the process. The stakeholders of the mentoring process include the senior management team, the HR, the mentors and the mentees, the line managers (including mentees’ bosses), the non-mentored employees and the facilitator or process owner.
Identification of Mentors and Mentees -

The mentoring process aims to benefit the organization, the mentees and the mentors. It is imperative that the mentors and mentees are identified appropriately. The organization can select all senior managers as mentors. Excluding a few senior managers from the list, may lead to bitter feelings, unrest and negativity leading to more complications than benefits. At the same time, attempts should be made to help the senior members of the organization realize that mentoring is a developmental tool and not a ‘KRA’ on their appraisal format. Ideally, it should be a voluntary activity and not be imposed on the employees. The organization should project the process in such a way that all the members should feel like getting involved with the same. However if any manager wishes to not become a mentor, his/her choice should be respected. Thus identification of mentors can be on the basis of their seniority and personal inclination. The process should be projected as not only having a benefit to the mentees and the organization but also as benefiting the mentors. The mentors can derive immense satisfaction by interacting with the junior employees, can gain peer recognition and can also directly benefit by enhancing their own image within the organization as an effective leader/mentor.

Mentees can be identified on the basis of their developmental needs. A personal development plan template can be used to identify which of the junior employees should be allocated to which mentor based on the needs and goals of the mentee.
Though it is not necessary that the mentor and mentee be from the same geographical location, but it would certainly help if they are in close physical proximity. In cases where the mentors and mentees are at distant locations, it is essential that they meet and get to spend time with each other before the commencement of the process, like during the training program. One mentor should not be allotted more than three mentees.

**Training Mentors and Mentees -**

It would be unfair to assume that all mentors and mentees would know what is expected of them and would have the necessary skills and attitudes to perform their roles. A two-day training workshop can sharpen the skills, attitudes and can coach the mentors-mentees on what is expected of them. A discussion on basic do’s and don’ts in mentoring, active listening skills, giving and receiving feedback, basic counselling skills, clear communication skills and importance of empathy and positive attitudes are some important aspects of this training.

**Getting Started with Mentoring -**

After the mentors and mentees have been identified and trained, the mentoring process commences. If an organization places high importance on documentation
and is systems-driven, then a mentoring contract can be signed between the 
mentor and the mentee. This contract will explicitly clarify the expectations, role 
responsibilities, goals, time duration and other details of the mentoring 
relationship. In the initial stage of the mentoring process, it is recommended that 
the mentors and mentees meet in an informal setting. The organization can 
organize an evening ‘get-together’ where all mentors and mentees can come 
together to get to know each other. The subsequent meetings can be held in the 
mentors’ office or in common places like company cafeteria, conference rooms, 
sports club etc. Though mentors and mentees both have to take equal efforts to 
‘break the ice’, the primary responsibility of rapport building lies with the mentor. 
In the initial phase itself, the mentor will ensure that mutual goal are set and the 
mentee perceives tangible value addition in the mentoring process so that further 
interest and commitment is created and the process in sustained. If the mentee 
does not view the process as a great platform for learning, the mentoring process 
may die a natural death. Hence it is crucial that mentors create a positive 
experience for the mentees in this stage of the process.

Process in Action -

In this stage of the mentoring process, the mentor and mentee have already 
established a working relation and have struck a common chord. The mentors 
mould the personality and shape the perspectives of the mentees. They act as role
models and set an example for mentees to follow. A significant learning will happen in this stage of the mentoring process, where the mentee will learn to observe and imitate the mentor’s behaviour. This will happen only if the mentor is in the good books of the mentee and the mentee is convinced that he would like to become like his mentor someday. The mentor has to ensure regular meetings and goal attainment of the mentee. It is the primary responsibility of the mentor to call for regular meetings and ensure that he is available for his mentee’s development.

Evaluation of Mentoring Effectiveness –

The mentoring process can be evaluated with an aim to check whether the objectives of the program have been achieved or not. If yes, to what extent and if not, what were the hurdles. The mentors and mentees will engage themselves on a quarterly basis for a formal self-evaluation and evaluating the mentee and mentor respectively. This feedback will be treated confidential and areas for improvement will be identified. Apart from this, there can be quarterly separate ‘mentor meets’; ‘mentee meets’; and ‘mentor-mentee meets’.
7.2 **General Conclusions**

In days gone by, young men would seek a ‘guru’ to acquire wisdom and learn the ways of the world. The guru-Shishya relationship is now seeing a new high-tech revival in the mentoring system. Mentoring is one of the oldest means of human development. It can be traced as far back as the Stone Age when older members of the tribe or clan taught youngsters how to hunt, gather or prepare food and fight off enemies. Selected young members were trained by talented cave artists, shamans and healers to ensure that these skills were perpetuated.

Today many firms realize the importance of attracting and retaining highly skilled, quality employees as a necessary component of their competitive advantage. HR practitioners are busy developing innovative tools to sustain a talented workforce. One such tool that is gaining popularity in the corporate world is *Mentoring*. Mentoring is an effective technique to retain the talented workforce (Radha Mohan Chebolu, 2005).

Mentoring is the process by which a loyal wise and helpful friend, teacher, protector or guide uses his/her experience to show a person how to overcome difficulties and avoid dangers. The original perception of a mentor – a ‘he’ rather
than `she` was a protector, which explains the use of the medieval term `protégé` (literally `the protected one`) to describe the mentee.

Throughout history, there have always been individuals, scattered throughout all societies, who invested personal time to help others achieve more than they would have without that assistance. Some of these relationships have gone down in history like Socrates and Plato, Haydn and Beethoven and Freud and Jung. The fathers of western philosophy regarded the transmission of experience as nothing more than a moral duty. Socrates, for instance, declared that knowledge is the most valuable thing a person can have and that it must be shared for the good of the community.

Formal mentoring programs are most likely to fail when mentors and mentees are assigned to each other and participation is not voluntary (Kram, 1988). In fact, Taibbi (1983) claimed that a mentorship could fail to develop if it is imposed on the individuals involved. The limited success of mandated mentoring might be the result of a lack of knowledge and training on the part of the mentors, not a result of resistance. There is also some recent research suggesting that the quality of a relationship and a mentee`s satisfaction with a mentorship are more important than the mere existence of a mentorship (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). To avoid unsuccessful formal mentoring arrangements, organizations can offer the
employees an option of choosing their own mentors and thus keep the process informal.
7.3 **Professional Learning**

1. **Conceptual Framework of Mentoring:** As a part of the literature review, I accessed many national and international journals using online database sources like EBSCO. I have studied more than 180 research papers of international standards. Reading and studying these white papers enabled me to broaden my knowledge base about this subject Mentoring.

2. **Application of Research Methodology:** Studying a 100 marks subject ‘Research methodology’ and applying this subject into practice are slightly different things. Though having a good knowledge was imperative, the application of subject was a great learning experience in itself. Forming research objectives, formulating hypothesis, developing questionnaires, doing an exhaustive literature review, choosing the appropriate data processing and analysis technique, developing case studies and synchronizing all these efforts in the form of a research report are the various aspects of research methodology that I have learnt.

3. **Application of Statistical Tools:** Using statistics for data analysis was one of the biggest learning in my journey of Ph.D. I have used two tools
viz. unpaired t test (for pilot testing of the questionnaire) and chi square testing of hypothesis for the final data analysis.

4. Computer Applications Skills: I have learnt to use excel sheet during the data entry and data processing of my raw data. Though I was quite familiar with the ‘Microsoft word’ program of computers. I had not used any opportunity to utilize the ‘excel program’ of computers. This was a major learning.

5. Ability to Do ‘follow ups’: Following-up is an important skill especially when you depend on others for professional activities. I realized and understood the meaning of the phrase, ‘Patience is a virtue’ in true spirit during my follow-ups with business organizations for access into their respective companies for data collection. I wrote to at least 20 companies, heard from around 8-10 and actually got permission to conduct my data collection in only two out of these. I have religiously followed up with all the other companies and have travelled from Mumbai to Pune in the hope of getting the official permissions for data collection. I have followed up local companies and have visited them in person umpteen numbers of times but in vain. The learning here is to not get disappointed inspite and despite the futile efforts.
6. **Build Perspectives:** Another important skill was to learn to look at things from other people’s perspectives and to learn to respect opinions. I developed this skill of building perspectives through interactions with seniors from the various companies I have interacted with. It was a thoroughly eye-opening experience.

7. **Connect to People:** It is a myth that research is a solitary activity and makes people withdraw from social settings. People tend to believe that researchers are individualistic who like to work in isolation. I recognized and accepted this quickly that connecting to people is an important skill or knack any researcher must learn. Whether it is for approaching senior managers for permissions for data collection, or approaching middle (or junior) managers as respondents or interaction with intellectuals for their guidance, whatever it be, connecting to people is indispensible.

8. **Reading Habits:** I have always known that reading is a ‘good habit’ but I wouldn’t have known it is such a satisfying or fulfilling experience had it not been my Ph.D. research. I learnt to read research papers, books, magazines and even newspapers.
9. **Perseverance**: Perseverance is a virtue, especially when it comes to data collection. Some executives did report a reluctance to fill in the questionnaire because of the length of the questionnaire. Further given the busy schedule the executives have on the job, it was difficult and time consuming to collect data and the entire process was stretched over 12 months. Here was the trait of Perseverance that I learnt as a researcher.

10. **Scientific Mindset**: This was the biggest professional learning for me. I have benefited by training my mind to question everything around me. I tend to apply logic and rationale to everyday life situations and people around me have recognized and appreciated this positive change in me.

11. **Learning not to Plagiarize**: Another important professional learning was to learn not to plagiarize. I used the Wanda and Smith model of mentoring effectiveness in my pilot study and was glad to receive permissions from these authors (based in US). I also wrote to Dr. Udai Pareek seeking his kind permission to use MAO-B and was very encouraged to receive his positive reply.
Working on a PhD is a long drawn process intending to train the scientific mind. It will help me develop different ways of looking at things and will certainly add to my personal and professional development thereby enhancing my credibility and effectiveness as a teacher, trainer and coach. An IIM-Lucknow professor, Debashish Chatterjee in his book, ‘Ignite the fire in your heart’ says that “Life has only one goal – to express itself”. I want to express my life through my work, my research, and my studies. I choose to devote my life to this quest for knowledge and this thirst for learning. My aim to learn through a doctoral program has given me a direction, a purpose. I am holistically prepared to have my share of disappointments, frustrating occasions, unmet targets and hardships, and many hurdles in my path, but to sail through all these and emerge as a winner is my ultimate calling.