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## Exploring formal mentoring relationships in a nascent entrepreneurial context: functions, interactions, emotions, behaviour, and agency

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**UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

**Exploring Formal Mentoring Relationships in a Nascent  
Entrepreneurial Context: Functions, Interactions, Emotions,  
Behaviour, and Agency**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University  
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# Abstract

Formal mentoring programmes are an important support available to nascent entrepreneurs during venture formation, emergence and growth. This form of support has received little theoretical or empirical attention in the entrepreneurship and mentoring literature. Given that an entrepreneur or entrepreneurial team is the *primus inter pares* of emerging, growing, and established ventures, the development of the venture is intertwined with the competence and capability of the entrepreneur(s). To advance scholarship on formal nascent entrepreneurial mentoring relationships, this research reviews existing entrepreneurship and mentoring literature, and links social support theory to this research context. The literature review provides insight into five areas that remain under researched in the context of nascent entrepreneur and mentoring, namely, functions, interactions, emotions, behaviour and entrepreneurial agency, and as a result a multilevel model of nascent entrepreneurial mentoring is proposed and utilised as a foundation for the empirical research. An analysis of the research is provided including implications for research, policy and practice. This thesis makes a number of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical contributions. It proposes a multilevel model of the entrepreneur-mentor relationship highlighting the multiple contexts that impact the relationship, and a model of the relationship between emotions and entrepreneurial agency. Finally, it explores the positive emotions derived through functions and mentor interactions reinforce particular behaviours that can enhance dimensions of entrepreneurial agency.

# Declaration

I declare that the thesis represents the results of my own work. Following normal academic conventions, I have made due acknowledgements of the work of others. No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

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Janice O'Connell

March 2017

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I would like to express my sincere thanks to my Family and the Padre. Because of you my life has been filled with ambition, excitement, curiosity and a wonderful sense of achievement – long may it continue.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>GEM</b>	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
<b>TEA</b>	Total early-stage Entrepreneurship Activity
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and Development
<b>SME</b>	Small or Medium-sized Enterprise
<b>SCT</b>	Social Cognitive Theory
<b>SCCT</b>	Social Cognitive Career Theory
<b>GALC</b>	Geneva Affect Label Coder
<b>GEW</b>	Geneva Emotion Wheel
<b>IRCT</b>	Interaction Ritual Chain Theory
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PSED</b>	Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics

# Dedication

I would like to dedicate this research to my parents, Maurice and Anne O'Connell. Your faith in my ability, and pride in me as a person are the true reasons why I started and continued this journey.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

## 1.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the current research as a context for the subsequent chapters. The chapter presents a background to the research, outlines the key concepts, discusses the rationale for the research, states the research objectives, and finally highlights the central contributions of the thesis.

Entrepreneurship<sup>1</sup> is increasingly viewed as the engine of economic growth and employment creation spanning a broad spectrum of national, regional, and local contexts (Carlsson 1989; Thurik and Audretsch 2004; Glaeser et al. 2015; Acs 2006; Acs et al. 2015; McKeever et al. 2015), and has been heralded as the incubator of innovation (Carree and Thurik 2000; Erken et al. 2009; Hagen et al. 2014; Morris and Kuratko 2014). According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the rate of total early stage entrepreneurship activity (TEA) is between one and two percent in innovation-driven economies<sup>2</sup>, however, the discontinuance rates within the first five years are between forty and fifty percent (GEM 2015). Given the centrality of entrepreneurship to economic growth, increasing the TEA rates and survival rates of incumbents is vital to future prosperity. While entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon, theoretical and descriptive arguments linking entrepreneurship to economic growth have emerged from various fields of economics and management studies (Wennekers and Thurik 1999; Carree and Thurik 2000; Baumol and Strom 2007; Audretsch et al. 2006; Acs and Szerb 2007; Leyden and Link 2013; Galindo and Méndez 2014). This interest in entrepreneurship is fuelled in part by uncertainty and innovation (York and Venkatraman 2010; Galindo and Méndez 2014), globalisation (Acs and Preston 1997; Stehr 2007), increased competition (Kirzner 2015; Plummer and Acs 2014), and internationalisation (Hagen et al. 2014). Explaining why and how some entrepreneurs succeed remains a

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<sup>1</sup> process of starting and continuing to expand new businesses (Hart 2003)

<sup>2</sup> economies whose economic development depends on innovation (Schwab 2012)

challenge for academics, governments, and practitioners alike (Aldrich and Yang 2014; Sarasvathy et al. 2013).

Many entrepreneurship research studies have focused on either the *individual* or *structure* to analyse entrepreneurship (Martinelli 1994; Thornton 1999; Ruef 2007). Individual studies have argued that personality traits affect the levels of entrepreneurship (Podoynitsyna et al. 2012; Rotter 1966; Sexton and Bowman 1986; McMullen and Shepherd 2006), while structural research emphasises that cultural, institutional support and policy, including good access to resources, is what influences entrepreneurship (Audretsch and Beckmann 2007; Kauffman 2011; Stangler 2010; Bailey et al. 2011). Both the individual and structural categorisations have been criticised for not considering the temporal dynamics and contextual factors, and their failure to account for *agency*<sup>3</sup> (Gartner 1988; Thornton 1999; Shaver and Scott 1991; Townsend 2012). More recently, research has begun to focus on heterogeneous factors (knowledge, preferences, abilities, behaviours etc.) to analyse entrepreneurship (Patzelt and Shepherd 2011; Obschonka et al. 2011; Stenholm 2011; Frese and Gielnik 2014; Henneke and Lüthje 2007; Hmieleski and Ensley 2007; Townsend 2012; Bøllingtoft and Ulhøi 2005). Researchers have also distinguished between different types of entrepreneurs (Dimov 2010; Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009; Ucbasaran et al. 2008a; Storey 1982; Alsos and Carter 2006; Pasanen 2003). The increased focus on heterogeneity has encouraged more detailed investigations and explanations of entrepreneurship in the context of different types of entrepreneurs (St-Jean and Audet 2012; Newbert et al. 2012) and the dynamics associated with entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b).

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<sup>3</sup> *agency* refers to the efficacy of human action (Sewell 1992), which incorporates all perspectives and forms of human action.

In addition to the above, mentoring support as a determinant of entrepreneurship is of interest in the literature (Deakins et al. 1998; Nandram 2003; Miettinen 2006; St-Jean and Audet 2009; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; McKevitt and Marshall 2015). Mentoring is a social process (Kemper 1978; Fearon 2004; Roseman 1984) described as 'the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, entailing the most influence, identification, and emotional involvement' (Wanberg et al. 2003: 41). A distinguishing contextual factor of mentoring is whether the relationship was initiated informally or formally (Allen et al. 2006; Chao et al. 1992; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Underhill 2006). Informal mentoring occurs in a variety of forms and contexts, while formal mentoring, in the context of entrepreneurs, is a form of support often provided by Enterprise Development Agencies to help guide and support entrepreneurs (Grossman et al. 2012b). Mentoring relationships are dynamic and change over time (Packalen 2015; Welter 2011) and the impact of mentoring increases with the passage of time (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; St-Jean and Audet 2012). The specific functions that characterise mentoring are broadly classified as psychosocial and career-related (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985; St-Jean 2011). The existing research on mentoring has predominately focused on the antecedents and outcomes of the mentoring relationship (positive or negative) rather than the dynamic nature of mentoring and the processes within the mentoring relationship (St-Jean and Audet 2013; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Hamlin and Sage 2011; Wanberg et al. 2003; Clutterbuck 2003). Recent developments in mentoring in an entrepreneurial context have begun to investigate mentoring functions specific to the type of entrepreneur (St-Jean 2011), entrepreneur-mentor interactions (Raffo 2000; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), emotions (Wainwright et al. 2015; Ndinguri et al. 2014), behaviour (Hamlin and Sage 2011; St-Jean and Mathieu 2015; Ebbers 2014), and entrepreneurial agency (Pyysiäinen 2011; Bøllingtoft and Ulhøi 2005; Chandra 2007; Welter and Smallbone 2011). Despite these developments, there is a lacuna in the research that investigates the interplay between these aspects of mentoring currently under separate investigation.

The purpose and key contribution of the current research, is to address the gap between the individual and structural analyses, and the heterogeneous analysis of levels of entrepreneurship. The research focuses on formal mentoring relationships and considers how multiple contextual and heterogeneous factors, individually and collectively, impact the mentoring relationship. More specifically the research concentrates on a unique classification of entrepreneur, the *nascent entrepreneur*<sup>4</sup>. Research has shown that almost half of all nascent entrepreneurs fail to create a business venture (Parker and Belghitar 2006; Kessler and Frank 2009; vanGeldereren et al. 2011), therefore it is of considerable economic, policy and academic interest to understand the factors (contextual and heterogeneous) that impact the mentoring relationship and the effects they have on the entrepreneurs that do create business ventures.

Ireland serves as the locale for the current research. Thus, the question arises, what makes Ireland a suitable and interesting case study? The next section provides an explanation.

## **1.2. Ireland: an interesting case study**

Ireland represents an interesting study in which to explore mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context. Ireland is a relatively small, open economy, that experienced remarkable growth during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period, 1988-2007, transforming the country from one of the poorest in the European Union (EU) to one of the richest (O'Rourke and Hoagan 2012). During the growth years, Ireland's enterprise policy concentrated primarily on foreign multinationals to generate economic growth (Andreosso-O'Callaghan and Lenihan 2011). During this time the Irish economy expanded at an average of six percent per annum, unemployment declined from seventeen percent to just over four percent, and employment rates almost doubled, increasing from Euro 1.165m to Euro 2.139m (IMF 2013; CSO 2013). The death of the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’, coupled with the global economic downturn, in

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<sup>4</sup> First time entrepreneurs pursuing an opportunity (Dimov 2010) and actively engaged in the early stages of business venture creation (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009).

2008, generated the need to create economic growth through indigenous enterprise activity much higher up on the Irish policy agenda (Irish-Government 2010; NDP 2007; Irish-Government 2013b; Irish-Government 2013a). Policy makers in Ireland are very clear about the benefits that can flow from a dynamic entrepreneurial economy, which relate to growth, employment creation, competitiveness and innovation (GEM 2013a), and have stated their commitment to driving entrepreneurship and new start-ups (DJEI 2013). One of the areas identified by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is that Irish policy makers should focus on maximising ‘the number of new businesses that subsequently grow to a considerable size’ (GEM 2013a: 39). In order for Ireland to reap the maximum economic impact from entrepreneurship, it is important that there are not only a high number of entrepreneurs ‘but that the maximum number of enterprises are innovative, with an intention to internationalise and with a clear aspiration for significant growth’ (GEM 2013a: 40). Ireland is ranked fifteenth of twenty five European countries in terms of the rate of nascent entrepreneurs (4.4 percent in 2014 which equates to roughly 127,000 people) (GEM 2014a). In 2014, nascent entrepreneurs in Ireland spent, on average nine months working on their business venture idea (GEM 2014a). In 2014, nascent entrepreneurs in Ireland were focused on new business ventures across a broad range of sectors: business oriented services (thirty seven percent), construction and manufacturing sectors (thirty percent), consumer oriented services (twenty eight percent), and the extractive sector (e.g. mining) (five percent) (GEM 2014a). Mentoring, in an Irish context, is provided through three main programmes which are funded and operated by Enterprise Ireland: The Irish Mentor Network programme (MN 2014); New Frontiers programme (NF 2014); and Competitive Start Fund (CSF 2014). These programmes are well established and offer a rich environment in which to study nascent entrepreneurs and their associated mentoring relationships. Considering the increased focus and reliance of Ireland on entrepreneurship, and in particular new start-ups, Ireland therefore serves as an interesting case study.

### 1.3. Defining Key Concepts

In order to understand and contextualise the current research it is necessary to first define a number of key concepts, including nascent entrepreneurs, mentoring, and mentoring programmes. While this section briefly explains the key concepts, detailed descriptions of each are presented in subsequent chapters.

*Nascent Entrepreneur:* There are multiple definitions of nascent entrepreneurs (Reynolds and White 1997; Westhead et al. 2003; Westhead et al. 2003a; Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009; Langowitz and Minniti 2007; Dimov 2010). For the purpose of this research, a nascent entrepreneur is defined as an individual who is pursuing an opportunity (Dimov 2010) and is actively engaged in the very early stages of organisational creation (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009). This definition is drawn from discussion of the theory of entrepreneurs presented in Chapter 2.

*Mentoring:* Research on the phenomenon of mentoring has occurred in many different fields of study, including education, community and business settings (Crisp and Cruz 2009; Ewing et al. 2008; Allen and Eby 2007). The application of mentoring to diverse settings and its broad scope has created nuanced meanings and conceptual confusion around the topic of mentoring (Garvey and Alred 2003; Hall 2003; Jacobi 1991; Underhill 2006; Allen and Eby 2007). For the purpose of defining key concepts here, and based on the literature review outlined in detail in Chapter 2, mentoring is considered to be a powerful, influential, and emotional one-to-one relationship (Wanberg et al. 2003), between a less experienced (i.e. mentee or protégé) and a more experienced person (i.e. mentor), and is prototypically intended to advance the personal and professional growth of the less experienced individual (Mullen 1994)

*Social Support Theory:* Social support theory is the fulfilment by others of ongoing social needs (Bowlby 1982; Cutrona 1996), and the functional content of relationships (House 1981).

*Interaction Ritual:* An interaction ritual is defined as any routine interaction between two or more people that is vested with some symbolic significance (Collins 1981; Collins 1988). Two types of rituals identified as relevant in the context of interactions between mentors and nascent entrepreneurs are power rituals and status rituals. Definition of an interaction ritual is drawn from discussion of the theory presented in Chapter 2, along with a more detailed discussion on interaction ritual types and their relevance to the current research.

*Interactions:* The characteristics of interactions are significant in the context of mentor-entrepreneur relationships, such as duration and frequency (Waters et al. 2002; Nandram 2003; Cull 2006), focus (i.e. career or psychosocial) (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985; St-Jean 2011), initiation (by mentee or mentor) (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; St-Jean and Audet 2013), type (face to face, email, phone)(St-Jean and Audet 2012; Busch 2006; Kim et al. 2012), and interaction ritual type (Collins 1981; Collins 1988). These are explored in depth in Chapter 2.

*Emotion:* The simplest definition of emotion as applicable to the current research is provided by Deci (1980) who defined an emotion as a reaction to a stimulus. Further detail on emotion and the categorisation of emotion is provided in Chapter 2.

*Entrepreneurial Behaviour:* Entrepreneurial behaviour is defined as ‘the constellation of functions, activities and actions involved in the perception of opportunities and the creation of organisations’ (Misra and Kumar 2000: 149). Three different types of behaviour were identified, namely: bonding, sharing, and cooperative. Bonding behaviours were associated with accounts of friendship, confirmation, and encouragement. Sharing behaviours were identified through descriptions of understanding, knowledge transfer, introductions to a wider social network, and the provision of guidance. Cooperative behaviours were identified through accounts of responsiveness, goal development, risk encouragement, identification of critical information, and anticipation of outcomes.

*Entrepreneurial Agency:* Entrepreneurial agency is the ability to garner entrepreneurial ideas and the resources to develop them (Thornton et al. 2011). It is an intentional process that results from choices (Krueger 2003), and associated with individuals ‘who have the full-

blown ability to discover, create, and exploit opportunities' (Garud and Karnøe 2003: 277). This definition is drawn from discussion of the theory of entrepreneurs presented in Chapter 2.

The next section provides the rationale for the research and presents the contributions of the research.

#### **1.4. Rationale for the Research**

Over the past forty years, society began to enter an era of unprecedented change, a world turned upside-down (Peters 1987), that today needs to accommodate, anticipate and initiate change (Kirby 2004; Acs and Audretsch 2005; Braunerhjelm and Henrekson 2013; Vissa 2011). Globalisation and world interconnectivity have played a significant role in the changing economic structure of economies around the world (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1999). Technology is one of the driving forces behind globalisation (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1999) and has created significant opportunities for large and small firms alike (Gilbert et al. 2004). The knowledge required to obtain new levels of sophistication changes with each wave of technological change, and has resulted in the increased reliance on knowledge and knowledge workers (Gilbert et al. 2004). Knowledge as a source of competitiveness in emerging markets shifts policy towards enabling the start-up and growth of new enterprises (Lundström and Stevenson 2001). Globalisation, technology advancement and increased reliance on knowledge have contributed to economic change, which Audretsch and Thurik (2001; 2004) refer to as the shift from the managed economy to the entrepreneurial economy. The entrepreneurial economy is based on opportunities rather than resources, ideas and knowledge rather than increased investments, and people rather than organizations (Thurik 2008). New business venture creation is related to the establishment of new market sectors, net job creation, labour productivity, technical and market innovations, economic growth, and social benefits (Acs and Armington 2006; Audretsch 1995; Hagen et al. 2014). Surveys have revealed that entrepreneurial activity, in different forms (nascent, start-up, intrapreneurship), is positively correlated with economic growth (Acs and Amorós 2008; Wennekers et al.

2010). The dominant factor associated with the entrepreneurial economy is knowledge, with knowledge spillovers an important source of innovative activity (Leyden and Link 2013; Acs et al. 2013). This innovative activity drives competitive advantage and creates turbulence, diversity and heterogeneity (Thurik 2008; Feldman 2014; Acs et al. 2013; Matusinaite and Sekliuckiene 2016). Data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Reports (2012; 2013; 2014b; 2015) confirmed that the level of entrepreneurial activity varies between countries, yet this variation remains at a fairly constant rate. This confirms that entrepreneurial activity requires time and consistency in policy interventions in order to build factors that contribute to entrepreneurial activity (GEM 2014b).

Starting a new venture requires both considerable effort and the performance of a multitude of tasks by an entrepreneur (Kautonen et al. 2013). The ability of an entrepreneur to increase their knowledge and skills within the first few years is a determining factor in venture survival (Gartner et al. 1999). To achieve this, entrepreneurs mobilise and utilise resources from a variety of sources (Newbert et al. 2012). Mentoring is one such source which involves developmental interaction occurring between two or more individuals with the intent of enhancing personal development or learning, and may address a variety of personal or professional issues (Eddy et al. 2006). There are three main streams of mentoring practice and research – youth mentoring, academic mentoring, and workplace mentoring (Eby et al. 2008). The literature on mentoring relationships is vast (Kram 1985; Allen 2008), and includes mentoring in an entrepreneurial context (Deakins et al. 1997; Wilson 1998; Westanmo 2000; Bisk 2002; Nandram 2003). Some researchers have investigated the role of developmental relationships, or a constellation of mentors (Terjesen and Sullivan 2011), and entrepreneurship team mentoring (Piperopoulos and Dimov 2014; Shepherd and Krueger 2002). However, research has only recently begun to explore the value of mentoring in the context of different types of entrepreneurs (St-Jean and Audet 2012; Newbert et al. 2012).

Formal mentoring programmes<sup>5</sup> are used to support entrepreneurs and are typically provided and funded by national enterprise development agencies (Ensley et al. 2000; Benton and Sankaran 2005). They provide mentor supports to help such entrepreneurs navigate the venture formation process (Grossman et al. 2012b).

A central focus of this research is a unique classification of entrepreneur, the nascent entrepreneur. Creating a business venture is plagued with uncertainty, and ambiguity (Hopp and Stephan 2012) and nascent entrepreneurs face the added challenge of suffering from significant knowledge deficits and the liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000). Between thirty and fifty five percent of nascent entrepreneurs create a business venture (Parker and Belghitar 2006; Kessler and Frank 2009; vanGelderen et al. 2011), so it is of considerable economic, policy and academic interest to understand which nascent entrepreneurs create business ventures, and why (Parker and Belghitar 2006). Mentoring, as identified by Kram (1983; 1985), has been conceptualised as a two dimensional construct composed of two support functions: career-related<sup>6</sup> and psychosocial<sup>7</sup>. It has been widely accepted in the literature on mentoring that these two broad support functions provide accurate differentiation of the type of support that can be provided (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985; St-Jean 2011). However, studies based on Kram's work are all deductive in nature (St-Jean 2011) and in cases where an inductive approach is used, results differ (Levesque et al. 2005; Fowler and O'Gorman 2005). Existing nascent entrepreneurship research adheres essentially to a functional and instrumental understanding of becoming entrepreneurial: by carrying out certain activities an individual becomes an entrepreneur (Lundqvist et al. 2015). This stemmed from the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics, and similar studies (see, for example (Davidsson and Reynolds 2009; Liao and Welsch 2008; Reynolds 2007; Robb and

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<sup>5</sup> Dyadic constructs that capture relationships, interactions and exchanges that occur between two members of a dyad (Krasikova and LeBreton 2010)

<sup>6</sup> Career-related support enhances a mentees advancement in an organisation (Allen et al. 2004)

<sup>7</sup> Psychosocial support enhances an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness (Kram 1985)

Reynolds 2009)). Given the uniqueness of nascent entrepreneurs and the multitude of tasks they are required to perform (Reynolds et al. 2004), there is a need to reassess the two support functions (career-related and psychosocial) inductively in the context of mentoring nascent entrepreneurs.

Morris et al. (2012: 31) have raised another important issue and have encouraged researchers to ‘. . . move away from an instrumental view (for example, entrepreneurs create ventures and ventures produce outcomes), and allow for the possibility that the venture emerges, in the process developing the entrepreneur’. It is thus very important to understand the functions provided by mentors in a nascent entrepreneurial context, and the impact of these functions on the development of the nascent entrepreneur and the business venture. Mentoring is totally about personalisation and individualisation (Landefeld 2009), and as such the interactions between the mentor and the mentee are involved and emotional (Evans 2008). Mentor interactions enhance psychological characteristics such as entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, and clarity of personal goals (Frese and Gielnik 2014). Important characteristics of mentor-mentee interactions include duration and frequency (Waters et al. 2002; Nandram 2003; Cull 2006), focus (i.e. career or psychosocial) (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985; St-Jean 2011), initiation (by mentee or mentor) (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; St-Jean and Audet 2013), type (face to face, email, phone)(St-Jean and Audet 2012; Busch 2006; Kim et al. 2012), and interaction ritual type (Collins 1981; Collins 1988). The impact of mentor interactions on emotions, however, are not well understood. The entrepreneurial mentoring literature (St-Jean and Audet 2013; St-Jean and Audet 2012; Chun et al. 2012) has primarily focused on knowledge and information support, but has recently begun to focus on emotions (Baron 2008; Cardon and Kirk 2013; Patzelt and Shepherd 2011; Shepherd et al. 2009), and has linked emotions to risk perceptions (Podoyntsyna et al. 2012) and perceptions of business

failure<sup>8</sup> (due to discontinuity, bankruptcy, insolvency, or low performance) (Shepherd et al. 2009; Ucbasaran et al. 2010; Ucbasaran et al. 2013). Existing research on emotions has focused on the effects of emotions on preferences, cognition and behaviours (Bandelj 2009; Patzelt and Shepherd 2011; Foo 2011; Dolan 2002; Izard et al. 1984). According to Schwarz (2011), personal emotions inform individuals about their current situation and the thought processes needed to meet situational requirements. As Frijda (1988: 354) stated ‘emotions exist for the sake of signalling states of the world that have to be responded to, or that no longer need response and action’. Since emotions are influenced by situational factors surrounding individuals (Schwarz 2011) a mentor as an external factor elicits positive or negative emotions. Mentors, therefore, play a key role in the production of emotions (Kemper 1978; Roseman 1984; Fearon 2004), while the interactions that occur within a mentoring relationship are social in nature and also influence emotions (Frijda and Batja 1994; Kemper 1978; Goss 2005). Certain emotions motivate individual and interactive behaviours that enable individuals to form social bonds (Bowlby 2008; Watson et al. 1988; Watson 1988). The importance of nascent entrepreneurs’ interactions with external factors, and the emotional impact of those interactions cannot be underestimated.

Social capital<sup>9</sup> is increasingly used to explain the career benefits of mentoring and developmental relationships (Bozionelos 2006; Bozeman and Feeney 2008; Hezlett and Gibson 2007). The relational dimension of social capital consists of resources created through personal relationships, including trust, norms, obligations, and identity (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). These personal relationships create unique attachments that influence behaviour, such as cooperation, communication and commitment (Pearson et al. 2008). Positive emotions, particularly during stressful situations, may produce social support and strengthen social bonds such as friendship (Fredrickson 1998). A mentor is well positioned to empathise with

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<sup>8</sup> Business failure is the cessation of involvement in a venture because it has not met a minimum threshold for economic viability as stipulated by the entrepreneur (Ucbasaran et al. 2013)

<sup>9</sup> Social capital is the investment in relationships in order to access personal and social resources (Lin et al. 2001; Alder & Kwon 2002).

the nascent entrepreneur's personal circumstances and goals. Their commitment to a formal mentoring relationship is an important individual characteristic from a behavioural and psychological perspective. It is positively related to affectivity, internal locus of control, upward striving, and altruism (Allen et al. 1997; Allen 2007). Nascent entrepreneurs typically lack specific knowledge (Unger et al. 2011) which can be filled through mentor interactions. Knowledge sharing is defined as transferring business information, technology, know-how and skills (Endres et al. 2007). Cooperative behaviour<sup>10</sup> is self-perpetuating, principally because of the tendency to reciprocate behaviour (Ferrin et al. 2007). When cooperative behaviour is reciprocated it tends to spiral into ever higher levels of cooperation (Axelrod 2006; Blau 1964; Cialdini 2000). This process of developing cooperation has been described by Powell as iterative: 'The level of cooperation increases with each agreement between the same partners' (Powell 1996: 60). Gartner (1985) argued that the entrepreneurial process is the interaction between the environment, the individual, the organisation and entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial agency is associated with the entrepreneurial process<sup>11</sup> and outcomes (Baker and Welter 2015). The impact of mentoring functions and interactions, on emotions and behaviours, and how these interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency is part of premise behind this research.

With a few exceptions (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), there is scant research and theorising on entrepreneurial mentoring which highlights a number of deficiencies in the existing literature. First, mentoring as a construct is under-theorised and under-researched with few articles in leading entrepreneurship and *Small or Medium-sized Enterprise* (SME) journals. Exceptions include work by Ozgen and Baron (2007), Distelberg and Schawarz (2013), Lefebvre and Redien-Collot (2013), and McGowan et al. (2015). Second, formal mentoring relationships are dyadic constructs that capture relationships, interactions and

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<sup>10</sup> In the absence of a precise definition of *cooperative behavior* (Woodside and LaPlaca 2014), the discussions in this research relate to the cooperation between a mentor and a nascent entrepreneur.

<sup>11</sup> Action by an entrepreneur, over time, towards some entrepreneurial end (Anderson 2000)

exchanges that occur between two members of a dyad (Krasikova and LeBreton 2012), and few studies have investigated both members of the dyad nature with the majority of studies focusing on the mentee perspective and ignoring their dyadic and reciprocal nature. Third, the formation, development and management of a business venture is a significant focus in mentoring in an entrepreneurial context, however, studies largely ignore the business venture and tend to focus on the entrepreneur and wider context. These omissions are surprising given that many national enterprise development agencies both fund and organize mentoring programmes for entrepreneurs (McGowan et al. 2015).

Despite the growth in entrepreneurial mentoring the literature on formal mentoring programmes focused on nascent entrepreneurs has a number of research gaps. First, there are problems in applying the research findings from the organisational and entrepreneurial context to the nascent entrepreneurial context. The majority of the organisational mentoring literature has been conducted on intra-organisational mentoring programmes, yet the mentoring relationship in the context of entrepreneurship is more appropriately considered an inter-organisational one. Therefore, it is a relationship that requires specific consideration and analysis. Second, existing studies on entrepreneurship mentoring do not distinguish the type of entrepreneurship involved. It is reasonable to assume that the mentoring relationship will be different for a nascent entrepreneur (Westhead et al. 2003) to that of an established, habitual, or serial entrepreneur (Bonnstetter et al. 2010; Spiwak et al. 2013). Each of these entrepreneurial contexts have unique challenges that have implications for the inputs, processes, and outcomes, of the mentoring relationship. Third, unlike the organisational or educational context where the mentee is an employee or student, the entrepreneur is the *primus inter pares* of an entrepreneurial venture. The entrepreneur has a major role to play in every aspect of a new business venture and the success of this venture will be intertwined with the passion, vision, confidence, and knowledge, of the entrepreneur (Shane et al. 2003). It is well established that an entrepreneur acts as a gatekeeper or interface between the new business venture and the environment. An entrepreneur will search the environment, bring new knowledge to the start-up and development of the venture and communicate that

knowledge to others who may join the venture soon after it is established (Frese and Gielnik 2014). In contrast, much of the mentoring literature assumes that mentee development is distinct and discrete from the organisation (Allen et al. 2004; Underhill 2006; Eby and Lockwood 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Wanberg et al. 2006), this is largely due to the evaluation of mentoring programmes in terms of mentee outcomes. However, this assumption is challenged in the context of nascent entrepreneurship, where the business venture and the entrepreneur are difficult, if not impossible, to separate. Fourth, the emotions demonstrated by entrepreneurs in the context of mentor interactions, and the impact of such interactions, are not well understood in the existing research on nascent entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b) and research on mentoring (Barrett 2006; Cull 2006; Gravells 2006; Kyrgidou and Petridou 2013; Miettinen 2006; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; St-Jean 2011; St-Jean 2012; St-Jean and Audet 2009; St-Jean and Audet 2012).

### **1.5. Research Aim and Objectives**

The research aim of this thesis is to exploit the dearth of theoretical and empirical research on the impact of appropriate mentoring conditions, the influence of the whole venture system on the mentoring process, and the role of emotions and behaviour in enabling entrepreneurial agency. The current research poses the following primary question:

*In a nascent entrepreneur-mentor formal relationship context, what are the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions, and how do these impact emotions and behaviour, and interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency?*

In pursuit of this research aim, a number of research objectives have been identified. The theory underpinning each objective is detailed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

**Objective 1:** Identify the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions in a formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

**Objective 2:** Examine the emotions and behaviours derived from mentor interactions with nascent entrepreneurs.

**Objective 3:** Analyse the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency.

Figure 1 illustrates the overall research aim and associated objectives. Each of the objectives is derived from the overall research aim. Each of the research objectives also has a number of sub-objectives.

### **1.6. Contribution to Knowledge**

Using Ireland as a case study, the research builds on formal entrepreneurial mentoring by identifying the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. In addressing the primary research question posed above, the research makes a number of contributions to the knowledge base. It makes a number of contributions to existing literature from theoretical, methodological, empirical, practice and policy perspectives.

The theoretical contribution provides a holistic approach to mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context and creates a combined multilevel framework and conceptual model of how multiple contextual and heterogeneous factors, individually and collectively, impact the mentoring relationship. The creation and development of multilevel framework and conceptual model embraces the traditional research on mentoring and entrepreneurship and contributes to the emerging investigations and explanations of entrepreneurship in the context of different types of entrepreneurs (St-Jean and Audet 2012; Newbert et al. 2012) and the dynamics associated with nascent entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b).

From a methodological perspective this thesis creates a new dataset. This dataset provides information on the characteristics of nascent entrepreneurs and mentors located in

Ireland (age, gender, educational attainment) and characteristics of the nascent business ventures (age, business sector, ownership). In addition, the observations provide information on the mentoring interactions (number, duration, initiation, focus, method, location and categorisation). While Ireland is used as the case study for the current research, the methodological approach applied and analysed here has the potential to have a broad-based application regardless of country context. The research considers one type of entrepreneur, the nascent entrepreneur. While researching a single categorisation of entrepreneur is not new, analysing specific mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions in the Irish context is new and provides insight into emotions and behaviours and how these interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency.

The empirical results provide evidence that the classification of mentoring functions is too broad in the context of nascent entrepreneurs and requires further distinction. The research identifies specific functions, which were derived from the literature on generic functions (career-related and psychosocial) and the study findings. These specific functions were analysed and measured during each phase of the mentoring relationship to help answer why, when, and how, functions work best in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Further analyses provide evidence on the quantity and focus of nascent entrepreneur-mentor interactions during different phases of the relationship. The evidence revealed that interactions with mentors were an important source of positive emotions and that these emotions were linked to distinct forms of behaviors that affect entrepreneurial agency.

This research suggests the need for public policy frameworks to support the development of nascent entrepreneurs, and to build strong positive links between and within developmental support networks. The research suggests that public policy makers have cause to examine and increase their efforts to build social capital and developmental networks of both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs. There is a need to develop focused policies that support mentors and entrepreneurs to meet the needs of different types of entrepreneurs and

business ventures, and address the heterogeneous factors that impact the mentoring relationship. From a practical perspective, this research highlights the way positive emotions serve to facilitate different behaviours. Understanding the impact of positive emotions on entrepreneurial behaviour and agency can significantly influence the design and development of mentoring programmes. It can help raise awareness among mentors and entrepreneurs of the powerful effects of interactions and also provide development agencies with vital knowledge to support the education and training of new mentors. Mentors who are aware of the effects of behaviour can adopt these behaviours to help increase entrepreneurial agency. A nascent entrepreneur that has awareness of the role entrepreneurial agency and the personal abilities required for a venture to succeed will be far better equipped to understand what they require and need from the mentor interactions. This awareness could increase a nascent entrepreneurs' ability to assess strengths, personal limitations, address significant obstacles, focus on important strategic priorities, take risks and understand their consequences.

Primary Objective ———  
 Secondary Objective ———

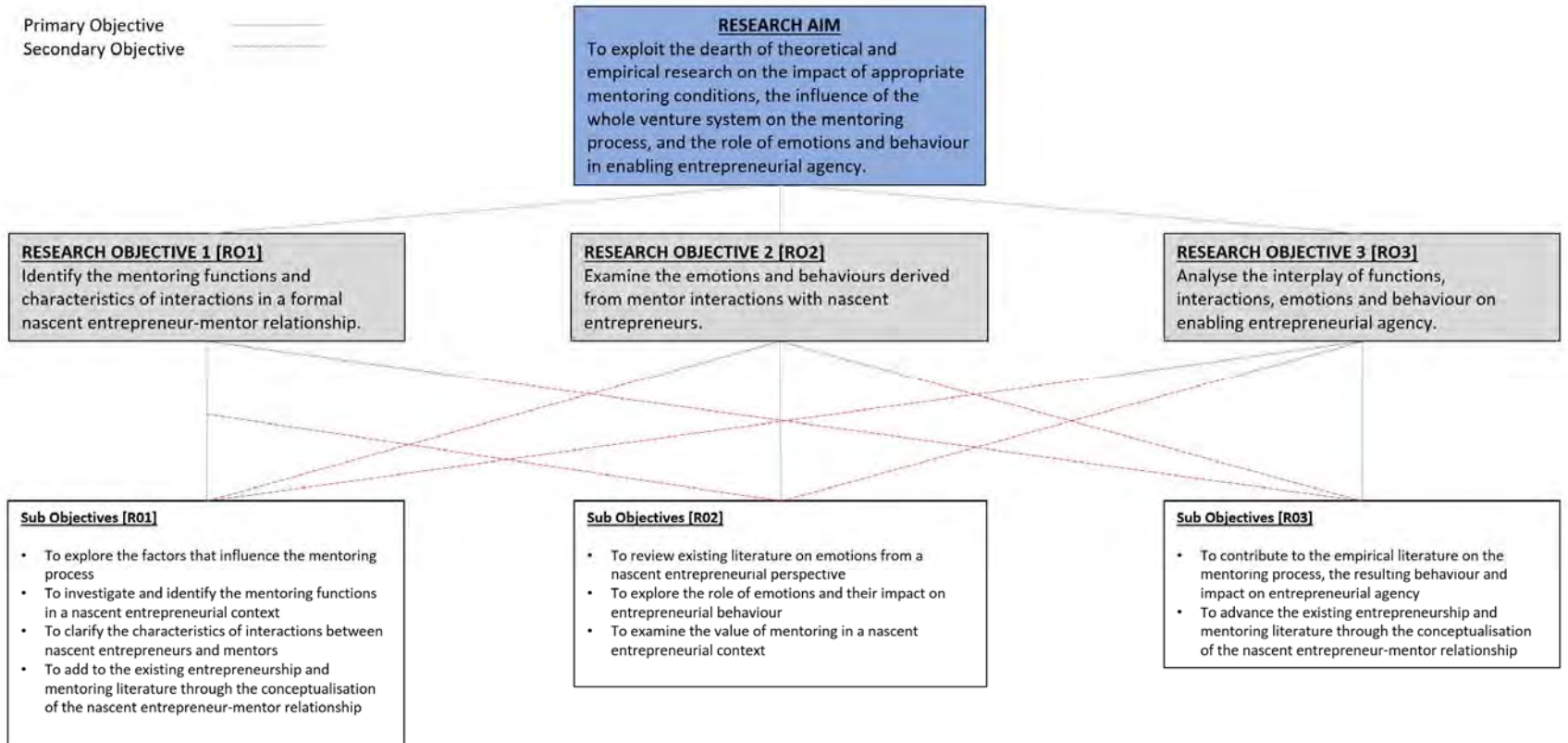


Figure 1: PhD Aims and Objectives Framework

## **1.7. PhD Structure**

The theoretical framework underlying this research is grounded in a comprehensive approach to the literature and theory, including mentoring, and entrepreneurship. Chapter Two presents a review of entrepreneurship and mentoring theories, and sets out a definition of nascent entrepreneur and mentoring. An overview of the core theoretical approach, social support theory, is provided and the link between social support theory and formal mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context is explored from an individual and collective perspective. The literature surrounding heterogeneous factors that affect nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships culminated in a proposed combined multilevel framework and model of mentoring in an entrepreneurial context. Social support theory, interaction ritual theory, and the multilevel framework and model, are used to explore the research question and associated objectives. Chapter Three presents the research methodology, which includes the justification for the qualitative approach and methods employed. Characteristic details of research participants are described as well as the various contexts within which the mentoring relationships operate. Finally, there is a discussion of the procedures and strategies for how the data was analysed and presented. Chapter Four discusses the findings in detail. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the main findings of the research and presents key contributions to knowledge. It also sets out the limitations of the research and suggests opportunities for future research in the field.

## **1.8. Conclusion**

Despite the plethora of distinct literature on entrepreneurship and mentoring and the large volume of empirical studies, all-inclusive measure of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context has yet to be embraced. This may be a result of the lack of literature on entrepreneurial mentoring (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), the assumption in the mentoring literature that mentee development is distinct and discrete from the organisation (Allen et al. 2004; Underhill 2006; Eby and Lockwood 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Wanberg et al. 2006), and the lack of understanding of the impact of heterogeneous factors in the existing

research on nascent entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b) and research on mentoring (Barrett 2006; Cull 2006; Gravells 2006; Kyrgidou and Petridou 2013; Miettinen 2006; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; St-Jean 2011; St-Jean 2012; St-Jean and Audet 2009; St-Jean and Audet 2012). The thesis, in essence, extends the understanding of the impact of mentoring by developing a novel combined multilevel framework and conceptual model from an all-inclusive perspective. This novel concept of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship includes existing factors of mentoring and entrepreneurship. However, it moves further to include specific mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions, their impact on emotions and behaviours, and how these interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency. This chapter provided an overview of the key concepts, a rationale for the research and choice of Ireland as a location for the research. In presenting the contribution of the current research, the chapter also highlighted that the findings contribute to the academic literature and provide a valuable addition both to the research on different types of entrepreneurs (St-Jean and Audet 2012; Newbert et al. 2012) and the dynamics of nascent entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b). The research has the potential to inform policy and practice. Based on a broad theoretical framework, the next chapter provides a review of the entrepreneurship and mentoring literature.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

## 2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical foundations that underpin the current research by reviewing entrepreneurship and mentoring literature in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. This chapter first traces the economic origins of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur, and how they have shaped contemporary understandings. Levels of entrepreneurship activity across countries, and within countries, are influenced by a variety of factors. The specific factors that influence the levels of nascent entrepreneurs are reviewed from both individual and structural perspectives. This approach provides an appreciation of the importance of entrepreneurship and the nascent entrepreneur for economic growth, while providing a deeper awareness of the complexities involved. The chapter then shifts focus to the theoretical foundations of mentoring, providing an overview of the conceptualisation of mentoring from a nascent entrepreneur perspective. Relational perspectives on mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context are outlined. This offers an appropriate way to understand the characteristics and processes of effective and valuable mentoring relationships in a nascent entrepreneurial context. The main theoretical approach adopted in this thesis is *Social Support Theory*. An overview of social support theory is provided and linked to the factors that impact effective nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, namely: psychological, information, and network and tangible assistance. A multi-level framework and model of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships is proposed which provides a holistic view of all factors impacting nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Finally, the gap in the literature is identified, which centres around two core concepts which are neglected in the literature on mentoring in an entrepreneurial context: the identification of the critical mentoring functions in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship; and the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency. The clarity and identification of mentoring functions in a nascent entrepreneurial context will provide insights into the crucial role the mentor plays in supporting the unique challenges and multitude of tasks faced by nascent entrepreneurs. It

may also contribute to the focus of formal nascent entrepreneur mentoring programmes. The interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour may help clarify how these aspects of mentoring relationships impact on entrepreneurial agency, how they inter-operate, and how they change over the duration of the relationship. It may also shed light on nascent entrepreneurs' emotional state and how these emotions affect the core properties of entrepreneurial agency.

The study of entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon, though the economic impact has been the study of much debate of leading twentieth century economic theorists (Matlay 2005) and is the focus of many reports, books, articles, and policy programmes and documents (Carlsson et al. 2013). The domain of entrepreneurship research consists of many specific questions and contributions, for example the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship and its role in economics (Baumol and Strom 2007), entrepreneurship activity and sociology (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986), public policy and entrepreneurship (Storey 2003) and international entrepreneurship comparisons through GEM reports (GEM 2006). A considerable amount of research has been dedicated to the individual and structural analysis of the levels of entrepreneurship and its economic contribution. The individual (or explorative) viewpoint is concerned with the discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities, the individuals involved and the actions used to exploit the opportunities (Carlsson et al. 2013). From an individual entrepreneurial perspective, researchers have investigated the important contribution of human capital (Porter 1990; Unger et al. 2011; Haber and Reichel 2007), psychological traits (Krueger 2003), social capital (Dubini and Aldrich 1991; Shane and Cable 2002; Zhang et al. 2010), and the impact of behaviour (Gartner 1988) and demographics (Parker and Belghitar 2006) on the decision to become an persevere as an entrepreneur. The structural (or exploitation) perspective focuses on entrepreneurship and its role in furthering economic progress, which is influenced by aspects such as the economic environment (Wennekers et al. 2005), culture (Wennekers et al. 2005; Freytag and Thurik 2007), technology (Thurow 2003), institution and public policy (Reynolds 1991; Sternberg and Wennekers 2005; Acs et al. 2008; Robson 2010) and the entrepreneurial ecosystem

(Mason and Brown 2014). The different philosophical underpinnings of these two approaches are quite different, with the individual perspective more micro oriented, and the structural perspective more macro oriented (Carlsson et al. 2013). Contemporary studies of entrepreneurship are extending the concept of entrepreneurship in new domains, notably social entrepreneurship (Austin et al. 2006; Austin et al. 2012; Mair and Marti 2006), and contextualising entrepreneurship (McMullen 2011; Welter 2011). According to Wiklund et al. (2011: 9), the 'emergence of new economic activity' lies at the heart of entrepreneurship. While research on the individual and structural perspectives impacts on the levels of entrepreneurship is important, contemporary research has begun to investigate different types of entrepreneurs and what entrepreneurs do (Dimov 2011). This behavioural approach has yielded important insights into how entrepreneurs operate (Jones and Wadhvani 2007). The emphasis on individual behaviour rather than context implicitly reasserts the fundamental agency of entrepreneurs (Jones and Wadhvani 2007). The current research focus is founded on the contribution of entrepreneurship to economic development and growth, with a specific focus on mentoring nascent entrepreneurs and the factors that impact entrepreneurial agency.

Research on the phenomenon of mentoring has occurred in many different fields of study, including education, community and business settings (Crisp and Cruz 2009; Ewing et al. 2008; Allen and Eby 2007). The existing research on mentoring has predominately focused on the antecedents and outcomes of the mentoring relationship rather than the dynamic nature of mentoring and the processes within the mentoring relationship (Hamlin and Sage 2011; Wanberg et al. 2003; Ragins and Kram 2007; Clutterbuck 2003; Hansford et al. 2010). Mentoring has been discussed in the context of improving retention rates, increasing academic achievement, promoting self, reducing risk behaviour, and facilitating career development (DuBois et al. 2002; Ewing et al. 2008; Kram 1985; Levinson et al. 1978; Chandler and Kram 2007). The application of mentoring to diverse settings and its broad scope has created nuanced meanings and conceptual confusion around the topic of mentoring (Garvey and Alred 2003; Hall 2003; Jacobi 1991; Underhill 2006; Allen and Eby 2007). For

example, Jacobi (1991) identified fifteen different definitions of mentoring in the educational, psychological, and management literature. Some authors conceptualise mentoring as an intense, emotionally deep relationship (Kram 1985; Levinson et al. 1978), while others define it in much less emotionally-rich terms (Lester and Johnson 1981; Phillips-Jones 1982). Other areas of disagreement include the difference in age between a mentor and protégé/mentee, the duration of the mentoring relationship, and the functions provided (Kram 1985; Lester and Johnson 1981; Levinson et al. 1978; Jacobi 1991). Multiple definitions of a mentor exist however, no specific one has been unconditionally accepted (Chandler and Kram 2007). In general, mentors are defined ‘as individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing support and upward mobility to their protégés’ careers’ (Ragins 1999: 349). Mentoring is suggested to be ‘the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, entailing the most influence, identification, and emotional involvement’ (Wanberg et al. 2003: 41). By definition nascent entrepreneurs are pursuing an opportunity (Dimov 2010) and are actively engaged in the very early stages of organisational creation (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009). For the purpose of this research, mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs is considered to be a powerful, influential, and emotional one-to-one relationship (Wanberg et al. 2003), between a less experienced (i.e. mentee or protégé) and a more experienced person (i.e. mentor), and is prototypically intended to advance the personal and professional growth of the less experienced individual (Mullen 1994)

In the context of the discussion above, and to address the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1, the remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: a review of the original theorists in the area of entrepreneurship, and its contribution to economic growth is provided in Section 2.2. This provides the theoretical foundations underpinning the current study and highlights how the theory of entrepreneurship has evolved over time. Section 2.3. provides an overview of the conceptualisation of mentoring in the current context. Section 2.4. outlines the relational perspectives on mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context, and Section 2.5. links the main theoretical approach adopted to formal mentoring in the context of nascent

entrepreneurs. Section 2.6. explores the main factors and characteristics of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships are reviewed in the context of the relational theories outlined in Section 2.4. Finally, Section 2.7. concludes the chapter by providing a summary and synthesis.

## **2.2. Entrepreneurship, Research Theories, and the Nascent Entrepreneur**

Entrepreneurship research and practice has been heavily inspired by economic theory, in terms of defining the phenomenon, guiding empirical research, and as a source of legitimacy in theory development (Ogbor 2011; Steyaert 2007). The modern economic theory of the entrepreneur has evolved from a series of fundamental contributions going back to Cantillon (Casson 2003), however its impact owes a great deal to leading twentieth century economic theorists such as Knight (1921), Schumpeter (1934), Kirzner (1973), Casson (1982), and Baumol (1993) (Matlay 2005). It is important therefore, to briefly review the various economic perspectives on entrepreneurial action. The crucial role of the entrepreneur in economic theory was first and foremost recognised by Cantillon (Thornton 1998; Murphy 1986; Hebert and Link 1989). Cantillon's entrepreneur is a speculator in search of profit from arbitrage, someone who exercises business judgements in the face of uncertainty. Cantillon emphasised the economic function of the entrepreneur, and not their personality or social status (Thornton 1998; Murphy 1986; Hebert and Link 1989). The motivating factor for the Cantillon entrepreneur was the potential profit generated from the activity of buying at a certain price and selling at an uncertain price. The distinguishing nature of the Cantillon entrepreneur is inherently risk-bearing, and the pre-requisite for their existence is uncertainty (Thornton 1998; Murphy 1986; Hebert and Link 1989). Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) was the first economist to refer to the entrepreneur as a modern leader and manager (Hebert and Link 1989; Forget 1999; Barreto 2013). He extends the entrepreneurial function identified by Cantillon to a prominent position in the entire system of production and consumption (Hebert and Link 1989; Forget 1999; Barreto 2013). According to Say (1836), the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower productivity to an area of higher productivity and

greater yield (Steiber and Alänge 2016). Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) highlighted the economic importance of different categories of firms, their proximity in order to achieve external scale economies, the relevance of broader environmental factors, and entrepreneurs as chief sources of industrial progress (Asheim et al. 2009). His theory of the entrepreneur attached seeking opportunity and pioneering new paths to the role of the entrepreneur (Wennekers and Thurik 1999). Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1850) argued that innovation and technological change came from entrepreneurial efforts (Wennekers and Thurik 1999). According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurial action starts with a unique individual's creative flash of insight that, combined with actions, provides leadership that inspires others (Berglund 2005). His work established the entrepreneur as a key figure feeding creative destruction and driving economic development (Wong et al. 2005; Wennekers and Thurik 1999; Baumol and Strom 2007). Frank Knight (1885-1972) was the first to explicitly distinguish between risk and uncertainty (Karlsson et al. 2004). According to Arrow (1962) the economic value of new knowledge is essentially uncertain (Audretsch et al. 2008). Therefore, transforming new knowledge into economically viable new products or technologies is associated with uncertain outcomes (Audretsch et al. 2008). This is directly linked to Knight (1921) who distinguished calculable risks from incalculable uncertainty (Audretsch et al. 2008). Israel Kirzner's (1973) described entrepreneurship as the process of acting upon a previously unnoticed profit opportunity, which is an important insight into the process of innovation (Holcombe 1998). Entrepreneurs act upon these profit opportunities thus contributing to economic growth (Holcombe 1998).

Schumpeter proposed that entrepreneurs provided the engine for economic growth, so linking entrepreneurship to economic growth is not a new concept (Audretsch et al. 2006). The role of entrepreneurship has evolved over time from productive efficiency (production, capital and labour) (Solow Model) to innovative activity (Baumol 2002) in terms of generating economic growth. The intellectual revolution triggered by endogenous growth models (Romer 1990; Lucas 1988) placed knowledge and innovation at the centre of

economic growth (Audretsch et al. 2006). In recent years, entrepreneurship has been cited as a crucial component, and important mechanism, in fostering economic growth (Audretsch 2007; Carlsson 1989; Thurik and Audretsch 2004; Glaeser et al. 2015; Acs 2006; Acs et al. 2015; McKeever et al. 2015). It is seen as an important job creator that stimulates growth, increases prosperity, and provides stability to countries worldwide (Carree and Thurik 2003; Acs 2006; Baumol and Strom 2007; Wennekers et al. 2010; Braunerhjelm and Henrekson 2013; Feldman 2014; Zaki and Rashid 2016). A number of empirical studies, conducted across Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, provide evidence that increased entrepreneurship is associated with higher rates of employment growth (Audretsch and Fritsch 2002; Carree et al. 2002; Wennekers and Thurik 1999). Some studies found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and growth at the country level by examining twenty OECD-countries over the period 1981-2002 (Braunerhjelm et al. 2010; Acs et al. 2009). While other studies concluded that new firm start-ups accounted for a considerably larger share of job creation than already existing firms (Acs and Armington 2003; Stel and Storey 2002; Baptista et al. 2008; Van Stel and Suddle 2008). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Reports (2012; 2013; 2014; 2015) provide data on levels of entrepreneurship activity across countries. However, aligned with the data on entrepreneurship activity is the high failure rate of new start-ups with fewer transitioning into the established small firm status (Townsend et al. 2010; GEM 2012; GEM 2013b). The economic contribution of entrepreneurship is significantly influenced by the type and motivation of the entrepreneurial activity (Acs 2010; Levie and Autio 2008; Stenholm et al. 2013; Acs and Preston 1997; Acs and Szerb 2007; Saridakis 2012).

The process of establishing a business venture (Davidsson and Gordon 2009), is a ‘complex and multidimensional phenomenon’ (Gartner 1985: 696) which generally operates in dynamic environments (Ensley et al. 2006; Hmieleski and Ensley 2007), is highly unpredictable (Gunther-McGrath and MacMillan 2000), and is subject to rapid change (Lichtenstein, Dooley, & Lumpkin, 2006). Early start up entrepreneurs experience the greatest problems at the initial stages of their development, resulting in risk and uncertainty which

affect the continuity of the business (Townsend et al. 2010; Dimov 2010). Research on start-up failure is predominately focused on the process of entrepreneurship and the role of external factors in contributing to this attrition (Audretsch and Keilback 2004; Kuratko 2009). Almost twenty years ago, Reynolds and White (1997) defined a nascent entrepreneur as an entrepreneur who is active in the phase of business creation process. Nascent entrepreneurs by definition are individuals with no prior business ownership experience (Westhead et al. 2003; Westhead et al. 2003a). More recently, Hechavarria and Reynolds (2009) characterised a nascent entrepreneur as an individual actively engaged in the very early stages of organisational creation, while Langowitz and Minniti (2007) defined a nascent entrepreneur as an individual who is in the process of starting a business, has committed resources to it, and expects to own at least part of it. For the purpose of this research, a nascent entrepreneur is defined as an individual who is pursuing an opportunity (Dimov 2010) and is actively engaged in the very early stages of organisational creation (Hechavarria and Reynolds 2009). It is estimated that there are twenty million nascent entrepreneurs in the United States alone (Zanakis et al. 2012) and according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2013b) there may be as many as 400 million nascent entrepreneurs world-wide. These 400 million nascent entrepreneurs are extremely interesting, in particular their progression towards venture emergence (Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Davidsson 2006; Stenholm et al. 2013). Nascent entrepreneurs face a variety of challenges and problems (St-Jean 2012) and have to confront unique goals that are complicated by deficits in knowledge and their liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000; Shane 2000). By focusing on this cohort of entrepreneurs this research aims to identify unique aspects of their entrepreneurial journey that will assist in successful venture emergence. The majority of the literature on entrepreneurship can be categorised into two areas, one which focuses on the *individual* and the other focusing on *structure* (Martinelli 1994; Thornton 1999; Ruef 2007). The individual perspective seeks to clarify the pervasiveness of entrepreneurs in terms of psychological traits and personal characteristics. The structural perspective seeks to explain how social and cultural structures influence

entrepreneurs by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship. The next section reviews the individual and structural literature from the perspective of the nascent entrepreneur.

### ***2.2.1. Individual Perspectives on Nascent Entrepreneurs***

Nascent entrepreneurs experience unique internal factors that contribute to the success, or failure of the business venture (Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b; vanGeldereren et al. 2011; Davidsson and Gordon 2009). Individual perspectives on nascent entrepreneurial challenges during the emerging phases of a business venture include: opportunity recognition (Ardichvilli et al. 2003; Shane and Venkatraman 2000); information and knowledge acquisition (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007); human and social capital development (Liao and Welsh 2005; Huggins 2000; Porter 1990; Bruderl et al. 1992); resource acquisition and management (Grossman et al. 2012b); and behavioural psychology (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b; Kor et al. 2007; Dimov 2010). Each of these individual perspectives will be explored in further detail below.

#### **2.2.1.1. Human Capital Development**

Human capital theory simply states that human capital investment ‘improves knowledge, skills, or health, and thereby raise money or psychic incomes’ (Becker 1964: 1). Human capital as defined by Becker (1964) is the knowledge and skills that individuals acquire through investments in schooling, on-the-job training, and other types of experience. Human capital theory has been adopted by entrepreneurship researchers (Davidsson and Honig 2003; Rauch and Frese 2005) in their prediction of entrepreneurial success. They highlight human capital variables as critical to venture success (Porter 1990; Unger et al. 2011; Haber and Reichel 2007), growth (Bruderl et al. 1992; Colombo and Grilli 2005), and profitability (Bosma et al. 2004; Watson et al. 2003). Two important components of human capital, that are closely associated with venturing efforts, are entrepreneurial experience and industry experience (Bruderl et al. 1992). According to Ucbasaran et al. (2008b), lessons learned from prior entrepreneurial experience might enhance entrepreneurs’ ability to effectively recognise and act on entrepreneurial opportunities. In a nascent entrepreneurial

context, it is positively associated with becoming a nascent entrepreneur (Davidsson and Honig 2003) and successfully founding a business (Rotefoss and Kolvereid 2005). Interestingly, according to Samuelsson and Davidsson (2009) prior entrepreneurial experience is associated with higher initial venturing progress but has no effect on subsequent progress. The tacit, contextual knowledge provided by prior industry experience can provide valuable knowledge, skills, and personal connections and is a valuable resource in guiding nascent entrepreneurial efforts towards venture emergence (Dimov 2010). Industry experience can affect venture performance and reduce the likelihood of the entrepreneur's exit from the business (Gimeno et al. 1997). Where the nascent entrepreneur has already established relationships with key stakeholders it may provide an opportunity to capitalise on the relationships (Kor et al. 2007; Shane and Venkatraman 2000).

One of the most important abilities of an entrepreneur is deemed to be their ability to discover and develop business opportunities (Ardichvilli et al. 2003; Shane and Venkatraman 2000). This ability is enhanced through the acquisition of valuable knowledge and information during attempts to engage particular stakeholders, acquire resources, and achieve certain milestones (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000). Acquiring accurate, meaningful, and timely information (Longnecker et al. 2013) and filtering pertinent information (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007) is an important factor in overcoming the liability of newness experienced by nascent entrepreneurs (Shepherd et al. 2000), and a necessary requirement for effective decision-making (Longnecker et al. 2013). Early planning efforts play a significant role in the context of nascent entrepreneurs (Delmar and Shane 2006; Honig and Karlsson 2004). They can be particularly beneficial under high environmental uncertainty (Liao and Gartner 2006) and can affect the nascent entrepreneur's opportunity confidence (Dimov 2010), ability to identify critical missing information, anticipate problems and prepare contingencies, and thus make faster decisions (Delmar and Shane 2003; Dimov 2010; deJanasz et al. 2003). Early planning can also facilitate interaction with potential stakeholders and access to external funding (Honig and Karlsson 2004).

A learning theoretical perspective specifies the process by which human capital attributes affect business ventures outcomes (Unger et al. 2011). Learning processes have been acknowledged from the beginning of human capital theory (Becker 1964; Mincer 1958). It has long been argued that a determining factor in venture survival is the ability of an entrepreneur to increase their knowledge and skills within the first few years (Gartner et al. 1999; Florén 2003; Pfeffer 1994). Researchers' interest in human capital is reflected in the numerous studies that have applied the concept to entrepreneurship (Davidsson and Honig 2003; Rauch and Frese 2005; Unger et al. 2011). In general, entrepreneurs address their learning through formal education and training programmes (Garavan and O'Connell 1994; Krueger 2009), and informal on the job learning such as double loop-learning<sup>12</sup> (Senge 1990; Argyris and Schön 1978), learning from critical incidents (Deakins and Freel 1998), trial and error (St-Jean and Audet 2012), and learning through external stakeholders (Gibb 1997; Taylor and Thorpe 2004). Throughout the emerging stages, entrepreneurs face a variety of challenges and problems (St-Jean 2012), however, nascent entrepreneurs confront added barriers due to knowledge gaps and the liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000; Shane 2000), working in isolation (Florén 2003), self-efficacy beliefs (Dimov 2010), and their lack of network connections (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009). It is without question that developmental support for nascent entrepreneurs comes from different formal and informal sources over the lifespan of a venture. However, single individual mentors have been identified as playing a significant role (Cope and Watts 2000) in bringing added value interventions that make a difference in the long-term success of the business. A small number of contributions have established that formal mentors are important in influencing nascent entrepreneurial start-ups (Newbert et al. 2012; Powell and Eddleston 2012), however, despite the growth of entrepreneurship research the majority of empirical research has concentrated

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<sup>12</sup> A process of examining why the problem occurred and learning from that process (Senge 1990)

on hierarchical and organizational mentorship (Kram 1985; Cotton et al. 2011). Mentoring support will be explored in more detail starting from Section 2.3.

#### **2.2.1.2. Psychological/Trait Development**

The psychological or trait approach to the study of entrepreneurship is the most widely represented area in the literature studies. This approach concentrates on the personal disposition of an individual and their traits. According to Krueger (2003) entrepreneurs are viewed as the basic unit of analyses and entrepreneurial traits and characteristics are central to explaining entrepreneurship as a phenomenon. The literature has explored entrepreneurship prevalence through individual psychological traits and characteristics, such as: risk-taking propensity (St-Jean and Audet 2012; Macko and Tyszka 2009), internal locus of control<sup>13</sup> (Perry 1990; Hansemark 2003; McCombs 1991), tolerance for ambiguity, over-optimism (Ucbasaran et al. 2010; Cassar 2010) and need for autonomy (Lumpkin et al. 2008). The capacity to tolerate and resist high levels of stress is particularly important for entrepreneurs who often work to the point of exhaustion and frequently stretch their own resources to the limit (Baron and Tang 2009). Adopting effective coping strategies enhances the capacity to tolerate high levels of stress (Baron and Tang 2009), which are important for a number of reasons but not least for personal health (Cohen and Pressman 2006). The nature of a person's environment incorporates the change or consistency over time in the characteristics of a person and the environment within which they live. The life course perspective 'reflects on the interweave of work, family, and community role trajectories, the interdependencies of paths among family members, and the changing circumstances and options of both families and family businesses' (Moen 1998: 16). Major events affecting an individual can include changes to the family structure (Shane and Venkatraman 2000) and physiological changes that occur with chronological development (Lerner et al. 2005).

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<sup>13</sup> The extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them (McCombs 1991)

Nascent entrepreneurs' opportunity feasibility and start-up self-efficacy beliefs, represent their confidence about the pursued opportunity (Dimov 2010). Self-efficacy is a distinct entrepreneurial characteristic (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b) and an important factor in the decision to become and persevere as an entrepreneur (Zhao et al. 2005b). It relates to the general belief in one's ability to produce high levels of performance in tasks undertaken (Bandura 1982). It is also a characteristic associated with people who set challenging goals, persist toward the achievement of their goals, recover quickly from failure (Bandura 1982), and have high levels of belief in their entrepreneurial abilities (Markman et al. 2003). Higher levels of self-efficacy tend to be associated with a belief in the ability to overcome losses (Bandura 1982) and increased confidence which can partly mitigate psychological strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005). Social cognitive theory (discussed in Section 2.4.2.) outlines the important role of mentoring in maintaining high-levels of self-efficacy in the face of uncertainty, adversity, and high levels of stress. The evolution and progress of an emerging business venture is critically dependent on nascent entrepreneurs' perceptions and subjective judgement of the opportunity (Kor et al. 2007; Shaver and Scott 1991; Shook et al. 2003). Sustained nascent entrepreneurial effort requires sufficient confidence by the nascent entrepreneur in the feasibility of the opportunity (Dimov 2010). Self-efficacy is associated with increased confidence which can propel a nascent entrepreneur forward (Dimov 2010), and help mitigate psychological strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005). Maintaining high-levels of self-efficacy in the face of uncertainty, adversity, and the high levels of stress associated with nascent entrepreneurial ventures is an essential part of nascent entrepreneurship.

#### **2.2.1.3. Social Capital Development**

'It's not what you know, it's who you know', is a common aphorism that sums up much of the conventional wisdom regarding social capital (Woolcock 2001: 225). Social capital can be viewed as an investment in relationships in order to access personal and social resources (Lin et al. 2001). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998: 243) define social capital as the

‘sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit’. Social capital theory refers to the ability to extract benefits from social structures, networks, and memberships (Granovetter 1985; Lin et al. 1981). These relationships supplement knowledge gaps in education and experience, internationalisation, as well as financial capital (Yli-Renko et al. 2001; Yli-Renko et al. 2002; Inkpen and Tsang 2005; Davidsson and Honig 2003). Entrepreneurial activity is embedded in networks of interpersonal relationships, which form the basis of a person's social capital (Granovetter 1985; Coleman 1988). It facilitates the entrepreneurial process through the identification, collection, and allocation of scarce resources (Burt 2005; Manev et al. 2005; Birley 1985; Grossman et al. 2012a; Grossman et al. 2012b), and the provision of critical information and other essential resources (Davidsson and Honig 2003). Entrepreneurship literature has long credited networks with the generation of new ideas, exploitation and recognition of opportunities, and the provision of funding either directly or indirectly through personal contacts (Dubini and Aldrich 1991; Shane and Cable 2002; Zhang et al. 2010). Venkatraman (1997) argues that the ability to connect specific knowledge and a commercial opportunity requires a set of skills, insights, and circumstances that are neither uniformly nor widely distributed. Widening the social capital network brings exposure to new and different ideas and the provision of a wider frame of reference (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986; Aldrich et al. 1998) which together contribute to the development of the entrepreneur and their business venture. If social capital is properly leveraged, it can provide considerable resources and be of particular importance in environments where incomplete information and weak economic markets exist (Leff 1979). Aside from the role of social capital in accessing resources and capital (Cummings et al. 2003; Papagiannidis et al. 2009; Coviello 2006), social capital relations provide emotional support for risk-taking (Ardichvilli et al. 2003; Walter et al. 2006), perseverance (Spencer 2007; Cascio and Gasker 2001), opportunity recognition (Arenius and Clercq 2005; Ozgen and Baron 2007), growth and competitive advantage (Awazu 2004; Lechner and Dowling 2003).

The acquisition and management of resources is an important factor in venture emergence, however, in the context of a nascent venture, it is itself nascent (Grossman et al. 2012b). A serious issue, however, for most nascent entrepreneurs is their lack of prior connections resulting in a network clean slate (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009). Nascent entrepreneurs must initiate resource management in the absence of resources, pursue the acquisition of resources without precise knowledge, and establish how to combine and deploy these resources to support venture emergence (Grossman et al. 2012b). To achieve this they must identify and develop relationships with relatively unknown individuals (Grossman et al. 2012b), which is a significant issue for most nascent entrepreneurs due to their lack of prior connections and network ‘clean slate’ (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009: 47). Nascent entrepreneurs must network in order to mitigate the liability of newness (Stinchcombe 1965), support growth (Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002), legitimise their business (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002), avoid failure (Westhead 1995), and survive (Huggins 2000). The social skills of nascent entrepreneurs also plays an important role in the positive outcomes of venture start-up (Witt and Ferris 2003) as well as political skills which refers to ‘the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives’ (Ahearn et al. 2004: 311). Nascent entrepreneurs who lack these skills fail to make favourable first impressions, conduct successful negotiations, or gain access to pertinent information (Baron 2006; Shane and Venkatraman 2000). These skills contribute to effective business strategies in managing changing economic, market, competitive and social conditions (Ireland et al. 2003) and are essential to the successful emergence of nascent business ventures.

#### **2.2.1.4. Behavioural Development and Demographics**

Entrepreneurial behaviour is defined as ‘the constellation of functions, activities and actions involved in the perception of opportunities and the creation of organisations’ (Misra and Kumar 2000: 149). This approach began a shift away from psychological/traits and who an entrepreneur is, to what entrepreneurs do. This meant that entrepreneurship could and

should be exercised systematically (Drucker 1988) without ‘trying to pin down ... inner qualities and intentions’ (Gartner 1988: 26). ‘The focus of research on entrepreneurial behaviour is about exploring how various activities undertaken by individuals emerge into organizations’ (Gartner and Carter 2005: 195). It is mainly concerned with what entrepreneurs do, in what order and to what extent, and how these activities help create, discover and develop new organisations (Van de Ven and Ferry 1980; Gartner 1988; Gartner and Carter 2005) or new economic activity (Shane and Venkatraman 2000; Davidsson 2004; Dew et al. 2008).

Central to nascent entrepreneurial actions are individual entrepreneurial vision and goal characteristics (Dimov 2010). Goal theory, in an entrepreneurial context, postulates that where entrepreneurs set specific and challenging goals, this will lead to the successful development of a new venture (Baum and Locke 2004). Developmental help seeking behaviour (Higgins and Kram 2001) is another important characteristic associated with the entrepreneur. It involves seeking and initiating behaviours that have developmental benefit. Therefore, entrepreneurs with a high propensity for external feedback will respond more favourably to feedback through developmental support, will be more open to it, and will make more use of it (Linderbaum and Levy 2010). From a behavioural approach, entrepreneur start-up commitment (Carsrud and Brännback 2010), entrepreneurial start-up goals and vision (Frese and Gielnik 2014), and entrepreneurial ability and expectation (Cassar and Friedman 2009), are key influential characteristics that are relevant to the entrepreneur. Commitment is defined as ‘how long an individual is willing to strive for a specific goal’ (Austin and Vancouver 1996: 344). According to Townsend et al. (2010), research on entrepreneurial start-up commitment reveals that the higher an entrepreneur’s commitment, the higher the chances that key venture milestones will be achieved. Trust is associated with increasing confidence and cooperative behaviour (Mayer et al. 1995; Dirks and Ferrin 2001; Ferrin et al. 2007; Bouquillon et al. 2005; Chun et al. 2010). Learning is a dynamic process which enables entrepreneurial behaviour to be enacted (Rae and Carswell 2000). The role of a mentor in the learning process of nascent entrepreneurs is explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

From a demographics perspective, the main aspect explored by entrepreneurship literature is the impact of gender (Parker and Belghitar 2006). Women's intentions for starting a venture may differ from men's (Carter and Brush 2004). Instead of a venture designed to achieve profit through economic advantage, women may perceive their venture as cooperative networks of relationships, in which business relationships are integrated rather than separated from family, societal, and personal factors (Brush 1992; Ruef et al. 2003). Rotefoss and Kolvereid (2005) found that women are under-represented in the entrepreneur category. From an age perspective, research studies have suggested that older entrepreneurs are more capable of starting new ventures than younger entrepreneurs due to financial, human and social capital (Singh and DeNoble 2003; Weber and Schaper 2004). According to Cressy et al. (1995) the survival rates of ventures established by older entrepreneurs are higher than those of younger entrepreneurs. Other demographic research suggests that individuals and their role models tend to be similar in gender and race (Ruef et al. 2003; Reskin et al. 1999). These demographic aspects are reviewed later in this chapter, particularly in the pairing of entrepreneurs and mentors.

### ***2.2.2. Structural Perspectives***

The creation of new business is not only an economic process but it is also embedded in a specific environment (Jack and Anderson 2002; Arenius and Minniti 2005). Wennekers et al. (2002) argue that technology, level of economic development, culture, and institutions all influence the demand for entrepreneurship by creating opportunities available for start-ups. These influential factors are explored in more detail in the sections below.

#### **2.2.2.1 Economic Development and Technology**

Wennekers et al. (2005) demonstrate that there is a U-shaped relationship between nascent entrepreneurship and economic development. This means that nascent entrepreneurship is most common in the most developed and least developed nations (Verheul et al. 2010; Wennekers et al. 2005). This is consistent with Gilad and Levine (1986) who suggest that entrepreneurs are either *pushed* into entrepreneurship due to adverse economic

and social conditions, or *pulled* into entrepreneurship by opportunities. Pull entrepreneurs strongly and positively impact the economy (Acs 2006). A significant impacting aspect on the pull factors associated with nascent entrepreneurship is that innovative advantage has moved from large, established corporations to small and new enterprises, because new technology has reduced the importance of scale of economies in many sectors (Wennekers et al. 2005). Technology and globalisation have also increased the degree of uncertainty in the world economy since 1970 (Thurow 2003; Audretsch and Thurik 2001; Wennekers et al. 2005; Wennekers et al. 2010). This economic uncertainty has created an increased need for new business ventures to act as agents of change trying to exploit new ideas (Thurow 2003). Schumpeter's Mark I regime (1860-early 1990s) focused on *creative destruction*, where entrepreneurs disrupted markets through new innovations (Wennekers et al. 2005). In Mark II, research and development (R&D) activities determined the rate of innovation known as *creative accumulation* (1930-1970) (Wennekers et al. 2005). The increase of technological development may be interpreted as a 'Schumpeter regime switch' back to Mark I, and a switch from the managed economy to the entrepreneurial economy (Audretsch and Thurik 2004; Thurik and Audretsch 2004).

#### **2.2.2.2. Cultural Perspective**

Cultural and institutional conditions impact the supply of entrepreneurship due to their ability to influence the skills, resources and preferences of individuals within the population (Wennekers et al. 2005; Freytag and Thurik 2007). Culture is defined as a characteristic way of perceiving social environments (Triandis 1996). Cultural values and cultural practices are the two measures that dominate cross-cultural research (Hopp and Stephan 2012). Research on culture and entrepreneurship is dominated by the values perspective, however, the findings have been inconsistent, with some contending that entrepreneurship rates are positively related to individualism and low uncertainty avoidance, while other research finds the opposite pattern (Bowen and DeClercq 2008; Wennekers et al. 2007; Hofstede et al. 2004). The reason for this inconsistency may be because values are

relatively distal to individual actions (Stephan and Uhlaner 2010). Individuals are more likely to display behaviour in accordance with cultural practice (or norms) (Cialdini 2005), which may be a strong predictor of an initial decision to engage in entrepreneurship (Hopp and Stephan 2012). Culture is most commonly conceptualised at national level, but is also acknowledged at regional and community level (Davidsson 1995; García-Cabrera and García-Soto 2008; Tung 2008). Indeed entrepreneurship has been characterised as a locally embedded phenomenon (Brixy et al. 2012) where community-level cultural norms reflect a more proximal context within which entrepreneurial action takes place (Hopp and Stephan 2012). Community-level cultural norms influence nascent entrepreneurs through their impact on start-up motivation and self-efficacy (Hopp and Stephan 2012). National, regional and community norms influence individual-level antecedents of nascent entrepreneurship (Hopp and Stephan 2012) (Stephan and Uhlaner 2010). Socially supportive environments help shape individual beliefs (Hopp and Stephan 2012). Regions characterised by a high population of young small firms may stimulate nascent entrepreneurship (Mueller 2006). Regions with a strong entrepreneurial tradition have also been shown to increase the propensity to start a business (Parker 2004).

### **2.2.2.3. Institutional Support and Policy**

Empirical studies suggests that significant differences exist in the levels of new business creation across countries and over time (Reynolds 1991; Sternberg and Wennekers 2005; Acs et al. 2008; Robson 2010). A country's institutional support and policy, including good access to resources, plays an important role in encouraging entrepreneurship (Audretsch and Beckmann 2007; Kauffman 2011; Stangler 2010; Bailey et al. 2011). The central theoretical justification for public policy intervention is premised on the notion that there is an insufficient level of the right type of activity (Lundström et al. 2013; Lundvall and Borrás 2005; Aghion et al. 2009). More specifically, government intervention is normally justified in the context of market failures (of late there is also a lot of discussion of systematic failures-see for example Gustafsson and Autio (2011)). The most common types of recent market

failures with respect to entrepreneurship are those of incomplete markets (e.g. finance markets (Fraser et al. 2015)), and externalities (e.g. R&D (Cantner and Kösters 2012), innovation (Dodgson et al. 2011), and technology innovation (Bleda and Del Rio 2013)). Specific to this research is entrepreneurship policy which ‘consists of measures taken to stimulate more entrepreneurial behaviour in a region or country’ (Stevenson and Lundström 2005: 19). Policy interventions that concentrate on the supply of entrepreneurs, the pre-entry phase, the removal of barriers, and provision of support and finance (European-Commission 2008) all play an integral role in facilitating entrepreneurship. The implementation of entrepreneurship policy is complex because it is usually not the responsibility of one agency or department, and it is typical to find the remit for entrepreneurship policy spread over a spectrum of departments and agencies (Dodd and Patra 2002; Arshed et al. 2014). Lundström et al. (2008) outline distinct yet overlapping domains of entrepreneurship and innovation policy. Innovation policy focuses on the creation of new knowledge, optimising government innovation investments, improving the interaction between stakeholders in the innovation system (i.e. universities, R&D, and enterprises), and enhancing technology transfer and commercialisation. A major research study by the OECD found that a large portion of public policy support is often less important to entrepreneurs than more hands-on forms of support such as business mentoring, leadership development, and strategic guidance (Roper and Hart 2013; OECD 2013). The importance of mentoring support in the context of nascent entrepreneurs will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

#### **2.2.2.4. The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors, entrepreneurial organisations, institutions and entrepreneurial processes which formally and informally coalesce to connect, mediate and govern the performance within the local entrepreneurial environment (Mason and Brown 2014). A characteristic of entrepreneurial

ecosystems is that their growth is driven by a process of ‘entrepreneurial recycling’<sup>14</sup> (Mason and Harrison 2006: 55). Only a handful of entrepreneurial successes are needed to have major benefits for the ecosystem with spillover effects in terms of role models, serial entrepreneurs, angel investors, venture capitalists, board members, advisors and mentors (Isenberg 2011). Components of an entrepreneurial ecosystem include formal and informal networks, government incentives, support services, capital services, talent pool, universities, physical infrastructure and community culture (Neck et al. 2004; Cohen 2006; Isenberg 2011; Mason and Brown 2014). While nascent entrepreneurs are the focus of this research, the existence of an entrepreneurial ecosystem could play a supportive role in the development of both the individual and the business venture.

### 2.2.3. Entrepreneurship Theoretical Perspective Summary

The entrepreneurship research approaches are concisely summarised in Table 1 below outlining the key foci, and relevant entrepreneurial characteristics.

**Table 1: Summary of the Entrepreneurship Approaches**

PERSPECTIVE	FOCUS	ENTREPRENEUR CHARACTERISTICS
Economic	Risk-bearer, uncertainty	Cantillon Entrepreneur (mid-1700s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupation independent, motivated by profit, inherent risk-bearing</li> <li>• Pre-requisite: uncertainty</li> </ul>
	Leader/Manager	John-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern leader and manager</li> <li>• Rare combination of qualities and experiences</li> </ul>
	Opportunity seeking, innovative	Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager and employer</li> <li>• Poses general and specialised ability</li> <li>• Opportunity seeking, innovative, bear all responsibility, exercise control, direct production, undertake risks, coordinate capital and labour</li> </ul>
	Innovation and technological change	Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1850) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influenced by innovation and technological change</li> <li>• Research and development</li> </ul>
	Uncertainty	Frank Knight (1885-1972) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty bearer</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> Entrepreneurs who have built and sold successful companies, and reinvest their wealth and experience to engage in other entrepreneurial activity (Mason and Harrison 2006)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgmental decision maker</li> </ul>
	New possibilities	Israel Kirzner (1930-present) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alert to new possibilities</li> </ul>
	Heterogeneity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial categorisation in terms of: context, agency, knowledge, behaviours, emotions</li> </ul>
Human Capital	Knowledge skills, competencies, attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate creation of personal, social and economic well-being</li> <li>• Critical to venture success</li> <li>• Influences ability to identify opportunities</li> <li>• Important components: entrepreneurial experience and industry experience</li> <li>• Tacit and contextual knowledge</li> </ul>
Psychological	Personal traits and characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to tolerate high levels of stress</li> <li>• Effective coping strategies</li> <li>• Self-efficacy</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Risk-taking propensity</li> <li>• Internal locus of control</li> <li>• Tolerance for ambiguity</li> <li>• Need for autonomy</li> </ul>
Social Capital	Networks, relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement knowledge gaps in education, experience, internationalisation, financial</li> <li>• Networks of interpersonal relationships</li> <li>• Facilitates entrepreneurial process through identification, collection and allocation of scarce resources</li> <li>• Provision of critical information and essential resources</li> <li>• Generation of new ideas, exploitation and recognition of opportunities, and provision of funding</li> </ul>
Demographics	Gender, race, age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different approaches to entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
Behavioural	Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What entrepreneurs do, what order tasks are performed and to what extent</li> <li>• How activities help create, discover and develop new ventures or new economic activity</li> <li>• Key entrepreneurial characteristics: start-up commitment, goals and vision, ability and expectation, help seeking behaviour, information seeking behaviour, feedback propensity</li> </ul>
Structural	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and Technology influences</li> <li>• Cultural impact</li> <li>• Institutional support and policy (national and regional)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial Ecosystem</li> </ul>

### 2.3. Mentoring Conceptualisation

The original concept of a mentor can be traced back to Greek literature in Homer's Odyssey: Odysseus secured the aid of his friend, Mentor, to counsel and guide his son

Telemachus (Finley 1978). Several writers including Kram (1983, 1985), Kram and Isabella (1985), Dalton (1989), Dalton and Thompson (1986), and Dalton et al. (1977) firmly placed mentoring into contemporary literature and made important contributions to the early body of research on mentoring. The early studies showed that mentoring advanced a mentee's career and enhanced the mentor's sense of worth and self-esteem (Dalton 1989; Dalton and Thompson 1986; Dalton et al. 1977). Kram's (1983; 1985) seminal work identified many of the possible mentoring roles or functions that can be fulfilled, which has had a lasting effect on how mentoring is defined and understood. Mentoring is an interpersonal complex and multi-faceted relationship (Kram 1985), and the essence of the mentoring relationship is embedded in Eby's (1997:126) description of mentoring as an 'intense developmental relationship whereby advice, counselling, and developmental opportunities are provided'. Mentoring relationships unfold over time and follow a four-stage sequence of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Kram 1985). The first two stages, initiation and cultivation, are of particular interest to the present study as they involve the formation of the mentoring relationship and the development of the dyadic relationship. During the *Initiation* stage, initial interactions between the mentor and mentee allow both parties to gain respect for one another (Weinburg and Lankau 2010). This initiation phase mirrors Gray and Gray's (1985) first and second levels of mentoring where mentors provide socio-economic support to mentees. It also parallels what Phillips-Jones (1982) called the initial introductory point, the groundwork and warmup phases of mentoring relationships (Kochan and Trimble 2000). The *Cultivation* phase is marked by strengthened interpersonal bonds and a shift from a one-way helping relationship, to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity (Kram 1985). This phase mirrors Gray and Gray's (1985) third and fourth levels of mentoring where detailed guidance and shaping of shared values is provided, and Kochan and Trimble's (2000) working phase which forms the core of the mentoring relationship. There are several attributes that provide a common frame of reference for understanding the phenomenon of mentoring. Firstly, mentoring reflects a unique relationship between individuals (Astin 2002; Garvey and Alred 2003; Jacobi 1991). Second, mentoring is a learning partnership (Garvey

and Alred 2003; Jacobi 1991; Roberts 2000). Third, mentoring is a process, defined by the types of support provided by the mentor to the mentee (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985). While the specific functions that characterise mentoring vary, they are broadly classified as psychosocial and career-related (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985). Fourth, a mentoring relationship is reciprocal, yet asymmetrical (Eby et al. 2007). Fifth, mentoring relationships are dynamic and the relationship changes over time (Garvey and Alred 2003; Kram 1985; Roberts 2000). The following sections review the core characteristics of the mentoring relationship: the mentor, the dyad relationship and the development agency.

### ***2.3.1. Mentor Characteristics***

A mentor's human capital is typically conceptualised as industry specific knowledge (Baum and Locke 2004), industry experience (Shepherd 1999), venture experience (Baum et al. 2011), and explicit (Davidsson and Honig 2003) and tacit knowledge (Hedlund et al. 2003). Therefore, mentors (invariably experienced entrepreneurs) bring important human capital to the mentoring relationship. A mentor's human capital coupled with their individual-level characteristics (Gibb 2000), traits (Sullivan 2000), and ability to share knowledge (Pegg 1999; Dymock 1999) can bring significant value to the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship and make a difference to the long-term success of a venture. Mentor commitment to a formal mentoring relationship is an important individual characteristic from a behavioural and psychological perspective. It is positively related to affectivity, internal locus of control, upward striving, and altruism (Allen et al. 1997; Allen 2007). The quality of a mentor is an issue of major importance (Scanlon 2009; Barrett 2006; Allen and Eby 2004), while other key traits include open-mindedness, patience, and honesty (Allen et al. 1997; Wanberg et al. 2003). Related to commitment are the personal goals that mentors have for a relationship, such as displaying their knowledge, developing leadership and mentoring skills, ensuring future work as a mentor, and exploiting business opportunities (McMullen and Shepherd 2006). Mentors will also be mindful of enhancing their reputation through successful

mentoring experiences. Another important aspect emphasised by Higgins and Kram (2001) is mentor competency in the form of emotional competence.

### ***2.3.2. Nascent Entrepreneur-Mentor Relationship Dyad Characteristics***

In order to maximise the benefits of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, it is essential that the entrepreneur is open to change (Audet and Couteret 2005), open to new experiences (Engstrom 2004), and that they open up to their respective mentor (Gravells 2006). Self-disclosure supports the evolution of the relationship and is an indicator of the relationship depth (Keller 2005). Self-disclosure in a mentoring context contributes to increased mentoring received and improved relationship satisfaction (Wanberg et al. 2007). This attribute, in particular, is significant in the context of nascent entrepreneurs as they tend not to disclose difficulties in order to preserve a positive image toward stakeholders, however, when paired with a mentor, such a reflex would inhibit the relationship's potential and the ensuing learning (St-Jean 2012). Another vital dimension of the mentoring dyad relationship is trust, which positively enhances both the relationship quality and efficiency (Kram 1985). It is considered the most critical feature of virtually any kind of dyadic relationship (Fisher and Brown 1988; Pratt and Dirks 2007), and is crucially important for establishing and maintaining an effective relationship (Sheppard and Sherman 1998). Affect-based trust develops from a close emotional connection (Lewicki and Bunker 1995; McAllister 1995) and is a product of social exchange which may be influenced through a sense of common values, motives, and behaviours (Wang and Tomlinson 2010). Affect-based trust is developed through openness, exploration, and mutual respect for the moral contract established at the beginning of the relationship (St-Jean and Audet 2009). A nascent entrepreneur's behaviour can also help develop cognition-based trust. This can be achieved by taking charge of the relationship, clearly expressing their needs and developmental goals, and actively seeking input from their mentor (Klasen and Clutterbuck 2002). Particular characteristics such as personality of the dyad members can also inhibit the on-going relationship (Pompa 2012; Turban and Lee 2007). Relationship mismatches can cause

discomfort for the mentor, but more importantly for the entrepreneur this can be disastrous (Cull 2006).

### ***2.3.3. The Development Agency***

The role of small business support agencies and developmental networks and how they contribute to the entrepreneur-mentor relationship plays an integral role in the success of the relationship. The objective of development agencies (often referred to as economic development offices, small business development centres, enterprise centres and business service centres) is to provide counselling, advisory and business planning services to fledgling and existing small businesses to improve their chances for survival and growth (Stevenson and Lundström 2001). Mentoring in an entrepreneurial environment is clearly not a routine or mechanical activity, with the practices and processes honouring the organic and nonlinear nature of entrepreneurial development (Kalbfleisch 2002). Therefore, where a development agency builds actionable knowledge about what mentoring characteristics benefit the mentoring relationship and the impacting factors, can have a significant impact on nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships.

### **2.4. Relational Perspectives on Mentoring in a Nascent Entrepreneur Context**

Positively constructive and effective communication is the key to maintaining mentoring functional relationships (Kalbfleisch 2007). Communication is the pivotal element of mentoring relationships as its functionality is affected by prerequisite relational qualities and characteristics of the mentoring dyad members. Various theoretical perspectives can be used to understand the relational perspective of mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. Interpersonal relationships characterised in this manner have a central theoretical concept that Duck et al. (1984) describe as unique and/or irreplaceable. Focusing on the mentoring construct from a relational perspective currently offers the most appropriate way to understand the characteristics and processes of effective and valuable mentoring relationships (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). The following theoretical perspectives were selected and can be applied: social capital theory, relational/social cognitive theory, social

cognitive career theory, social exchange theory, social capital theory, relational cohesion theory, self-in relational theory, attachment theory, and interaction ritual chain theory. These have potentially strong implications for the qualitative characteristics of mentoring relationships in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. These theories are explored in further detail in the sections below.

#### ***2.4.1. Social Capital Theory***

Social capital theories have increasingly been used to explain the benefits of mentoring and other developmental relationships (Bozionelos 2006; Bozeman and Feeney 2008; Hezlett and Gibson 2007). According to Baker (2000: 25), the social capital resources ‘include information, ideas, leads, business opportunities, financial capital, power, emotional support, goodwill, trust, and cooperation’. Social capital is embodied in information exchange, social trust, and norms of reciprocity that enhance cooperation for mutual advancement (Putnam 1993; Woolcock 2001). Initial research on social capital focused on the strength of the relationship as a basis for social capital formation, which is defined by the level of emotional affect, reciprocity, and frequency of communication (Granovetter 1973). Granovetter (1973) characterised ties as either strong or weak. Strong ties are found in relationships with strong interpersonal bonds, and characterised by reciprocity, mutuality, and interdependence (Jordon 1986; Fletcher 1996; Miller 1986). Individuals in such relationships tend to be highly motivated to help each other (Granovetter 1973), exhibit the highest levels of trust (Krackhardt 1992) and are particularly helpful during times of uncertainty (Krackhardt and Stern 1988). Weak ties, which are those of less intensity and intimacy, shorter duration and with fewer reciprocal services, rather than strong ties, are more likely to bridge two otherwise unconnected social networks (Granovetter 1973). Weak ties are more efficient for knowledge sharing through their provision of novel, rather than redundant information (Granovetter 1973). There is strong evidence that trust increases confidence and cooperative behaviour (Ferrin et al. 2007; Chun et al. 2010). It is an important antecedent to cooperation and has a major influence on interpersonal behaviour (Golembiewski and

McConkie 1975), and the extent to which resources and information will be exchanged (Uzzi 1996; Tsai and Ghoshal 1998). Social capital theory is valuable to our understanding of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships by helping to explain how and why the relationships evolve and are sustained. The focus of this research is on the interplay of mentoring relationship aspects of which social capital plays a significant part. While human capital is ‘...necessary to success, it is useless without the social capital of opportunities in which to apply it’ (Burt 1997: 339). Therefore, greater social capital aids development of opportunities identified through human capital. Social capital is therefore a core functional aspect of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

#### ***2.4.2. Relational/Social Cognitive Theory***

Social cognitive (or learning) theory (SCT) (Bandura 1977; Bandura 1982) suggests that perceptions of personal self-efficacy strongly influence behaviour. Self-efficacy, originally defined by Bandura (1977) as a belief in one’s ability to execute actions, can affect one’s cognition, self-confidence, courses of action, and perceptions of control. As such, it has emerged as an important predictor of success, with higher levels of self-efficacy increasing perseverance and goal achievement (Bandura 1997). According to SCT, self-efficacy represents a central mechanism of personal agency (Zhao et al. 2005b). It is thought to influence one’s level of effort and persistence on a specific task and also one’s choice of activities and behavioural settings (Zhao et al. 2005b). Self-efficacy, which seems to be the most central defining element of personal agency, derives from four principal sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal (Bandura 1986). These sources of information help to create a dynamic set of self-beliefs that are specific to particular performance domains and that interact with other people, behaviour, environment, and contextual factors (Albert and Luzzo 1999). Learning opportunities that are tailored to provide positive outcomes that individuals attribute to their own ability, effort, and performance lead to increased self-efficacy (Zhao et al. 2005b). Mentoring is one such form of tailored learning that helps develop self-efficacy

through encouraging initiative, thought and independent judgement, and the provision of reinforcement and feedback (Noe 1988; Saffold 2005; Ballout 2009).

Relational Theory (Miller 1976; Miller 1991; Miller 2015) was developed based on the experiences of women and on gender-related developmental research. Miller (1976) theorised that an inner sense of connection to others is a central organising feature of the development of a female. Relational theory as applied to the mentoring construct is essentially a combination of positive social capital theory with psychological perspectives on cognitive processes in relationships (Fletcher and Ragins 2007; Ragins and Verbos 2007). It explores how people acquire and represent information about themselves and others through cognitive schemas that influence their behaviour. According to Ragins and Verbos (2007: 100) cognitive schemas represent ‘organised structures of tacit knowledge that serve to construct, construe and evaluate the behaviour of self, others and the relationship’. Expectations, behaviours, and evaluation of those behaviours by both members of a relationship are key factors in the perceived quality of relationships (Ragins and Verbos 2007). Traditional theories of mentoring describe how a more senior, experienced, superior mentor guides a less experienced younger mentee/protégé to help develop their career advancement (Kram 1985; Noe 1988; Levinson et al. 1978). However, in more recent years, researchers have questioned this basic assessment of the mentoring relationship which in reality is more dynamic and reciprocal in nature (Higgins and Kram 2001; Dutton and Ragins 2007; Wanberg et al. 2003). This has broadened the concept of mentoring dynamics and qualities and includes the multi-directional aspect of what is an exchange rather than simply a delivery (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). The concept of relational mentoring refers to a relationship that is in a state of high quality and brings to light the mutual nature of relationships through reciprocal process and in particular functions contributed by the mentee and benefits that accrue to the mentor (Fletcher and Ragins 2007; Ragins and Verbos 2007). Mentoring is therefore more reciprocal and dynamic in nature. This multi-directional relational perspective on mentoring widens the understanding of mentoring (Fletcher and

Ragins 2007). The mutual and reciprocal nature of mentoring is valuable to our understanding of how and why nascent entrepreneurial mentoring works. Rather than a mentor controlling the relationship as a source of power, influence, and expertise, the nascent entrepreneur influence is considered. It questions the power structure of mentoring relationships and allows for the contribution of the nascent entrepreneur and the learning that may be gained by the mentor through the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

### ***2.4.3. Social Cognitive Career Theory***

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) posits that person-environment interactions form learning experiences, in turn, they influence perceived confidence in one's abilities to perform career-related tasks and activities (i.e. career self-efficacy) and the types of outcomes one expects as a consequence of given career pursuits (Lent et al. 1994). SCCT asserts that career-related interests, goals, and choices develop from relevant self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Bakken et al. 2006). Simply stated, self-efficacy relates to the question 'Can I do this?', whereas, outcome expectations address the question 'If I do this, what will happen?' (Bakken et al. 2006). Positive self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are formed through: personal success experiences; exposure to successful role models; social and verbal persuasive communications; and positive affective reactions while completing a task (Lent et al. 1994). Lent et al. (1994) highlighted how a person's background variables (e.g. personal characteristics) interact with and influence the nature and variety of learning experiences to which they are exposed. Contextual factors are another influential component that are external to the individual but directly impact the nature and variety of learning (Lent et al. 1994). Section 2.2.2. outlined the structural level factors that influence nascent entrepreneurs, while Section 2.3. reviewed the micro factors associated with the conceptualisation of mentoring, that together impact the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

SCCT highlights the significance of personal agency in the career decision-making process, it addresses the internal and external factors that enhance or constrain that agency,

and recognises the interacting influences between people, their behaviour, and their environment (Albert and Luzzo 1999). Outcome expectations represent another important component of social cognitive career theory, which are personal beliefs about the probable outcome of a behaviour, and involve the imaged consequences of performing a certain behaviour (Albert and Luzzo 1999). Therefore, outcome expectations play a major role in motivating certain behaviours. A third component to SCCT is that of goals and the roles that they play in the self-regulation of behaviour (Lent et al. 1994; Lent and Brown 1996). Albert and Luzzo (1999) defined goals as the determination to engage in a particular behaviour or activity, or to effect a particular future outcome. By setting goals, individuals help to organise and guide their behaviour, and through exercising forethought they become able to self-regulate and increase the likelihood of attaining their desired outcome (Albert and Luzzo 1999). Goals seem to be a critical aspect through which individuals are able to exercise their personal agency (Bandura 1977). SCCT suggests that there is a complex interplay among self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting (Albert and Luzzo 1999). These aspects help individuals exercise personal agency and become self-directed, especially with their career decision making and career development (Lent et al. 1994; Lent and Brown 1996). From an entrepreneurial perspective, the strength of agency, in the way that agency shapes entrepreneurial intentions, is viewed as a particularly significant predictor of entrepreneurial activity (Lee et al 2011). Investigating nascent entrepreneur behaviour from the perspective of entrepreneurial agency may shed light on entrepreneurs' emotional state and how these emotions affect the core properties of agency.

#### ***2.4.4. Social Exchange Theory and Relational Cohesion Theory***

Homans (1974) defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, between at least two people. Homans' primary focus was the social behaviour that emerged as a result of the social processes of mutual reinforcement behaviour between two or more people. Blau (1964) was particularly concerned with the emergent properties of exchange relations, and he argued that ongoing relationships of social exchange develop

intrinsic value to exchange partners. This is a central concern of *Relational Cohesion Theory* which explains how emotional responses to exchange relationships affect exchange outcomes (Lawler and Yoon 1998; Lawler et al. 2000). Other researchers also explored the role of emotions in exchange, by focusing on affect as an outcome of exchange rather than a factor guiding exchange outcomes (Molm et al. 1999; Molm et al. 2000). The outcomes of power, trust, liking and commitment studied by Molm et al. (Molm et al. 1999; Molm et al. 2000) were theorised originally by Emerson (1972). Relational cohesion theory is based on the premise that emotion is a proximal mechanism in the exchange process, mediating the effects of structural arrangements on behavioural outcomes (Cook et al. 2013). The basic model proposes a simple causal chain (Lawler and Yoon 1998; Lawler et al. 2000): structural power positively affects the frequency of exchanges between actors, which in turn results in the development of positive everyday emotions (e.g., liking, satisfaction) which in turn positively affects relational cohesion which positively affects behavioural outcomes such as commitment to the relation. Lawler and Yoon (1996) also found that perceptions of uncertainty and the frequency of exchange have enduring independent effects on relational cohesion and commitment. When social network structures were included, the effects of relational cohesion became more complex (Cook et al. 2013). Lawler et al. (2000) acknowledged that two parallel processes affect the development of relational cohesion, one emotional and the other more cognitive. The emotional aspect of exchange is a social bonding process in which the relation becomes an object of intrinsic value (Cook et al. 2013). The cognitive aspect of exchange is one of boundary increasing the predictability of exchange outcomes (Cook et al. 2013). The emotional aspect of mentoring relationships between nascent entrepreneurs and mentors is of particular interest to the current study. Emotional bonds linking mentoring dyads bring about affective foundations for building trust (McAllister 1995; Kram 1985; Kram and Cherniss 2001). Certain emotions motivate individual and interactive behaviours that enable individuals to form social bonds (Bowlby 2008; Watson et al. 1988; Watson 1988). Positive emotions, particularly during stressful situations, may produce social support and strengthen social bonds such as friendship

(Fredrickson 1998). Mentors are in unique positions to strengthen or dispel emotions through their interactive behaviours. Investigating such behaviour from the perspective of enhancing entrepreneurial agency may shed light on entrepreneurs' emotional state and how these emotions affect the core properties of entrepreneurial agency.

#### ***2.4.5. Self-in-relation Theory***

Self-in-relation theory was initially proposed as a theory of women's development, the basic goal of which is a deepening capacity for relationships and relational competence (Surrey, 1991). Taking aspects of relational theory (such as mutuality, relational competence, and reciprocity) and applying them to a relational mentoring construct focuses on the importance of concepts such as interdependence, co-responsibility, authenticity, empathy, empowerment, willingness to experience vulnerability, emotional competence, relational competence and desire to engage in further connection (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Self-in-relation theory postulates that mentoring and developmental relationships have significant interdependent qualities. Relational competence is increasingly important in the context of entrepreneurs and is important in explaining the operation of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. It is a competence that determines the successful functioning of mentoring relationships as well as a competence that can be developed through other social or developmental relationships. According to Fletcher & Ragins (2007) mentoring is a series of interactions. The frequency, duration, and intensity of interactions predicts the degree to which the relationship members will perceive the relationship to be of high-quality in nature (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). Other important determining factors of relationship quality are the frequency with which episodes of disconnection are addressed effectively and the interpersonal and relational skills of those in the relationship (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). In a nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship context, frequency, duration and relationship intensity have an important impact on the perceived quality of the relationship.

#### ***2.4.6. Attachment Theory***

Attachment theory can be used to conceptualise and understand the importance of relationships in the context of nascent entrepreneur development. Attachment theory first emerged as a social cognitive, relational phenomenon in child–parent relationships (Ainsworth et al. 1978). It was later adopted to romantic partnerships (Hazan and Zeifman 1994), and it was further extended by Popper and Mayseless (2003) to include conceptualisations of attachment in supervisory relationships and leader–follower relations. Davidovitz et al. (2007) highlighted that attachment theory can be applied to any adult relationship that fulfils three criteria: the maintenance of proximity; the provision of a safe haven; and the provision of a secure base. According to Germain (2011), understanding attachment patterns in mentoring relationships helps explain effective mentoring. She suggested that mentors with secure attachment styles, who are readily available and willing to provide support, are effective mentors particularly for attachment anxious individuals. Different patterns of attachment styles by both members in relationships significantly affect a wide range of behaviours, perceptions, cognitive conditions, and ultimately the functioning of relationships (Davidovitz et al. 2007). Furthermore, individuals who have a secure base established through attachment relationships are more resilient when they experience avoidance and lack of emotional availability from others (Davidovitz et al. 2007; Mikulincer and Shaver 2007). Lopez (1995) found that continued participation in mutually satisfying relationships was important for many developmental activities across the life span. According to Bowlby (1982), the control role of attachments, are defined as enduring emotional bonds of significant intensity that influence the development and ultimately participation in satisfying developmental relationships. Attachment styles that are pre-existing and possessed by individuals create ‘systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotions, emotion regulation strategies and social behaviour’ (Shaver and Mikulincer 2002: 134). Attachment theory is valuable to understanding of levels of trust, mutuality, levels and types of support functions,

and the reciprocal nature of the connection between nascent entrepreneurs and mentors in mentoring relationships.

#### **2.4.7. Interaction Ritual Chain Theory**

The essence of Collin's *Interaction Ritual Chain Theory* (Collins 1981; Collins 2004) is that individuals are attracted towards some types of situations and away from others on the basis of what he terms *emotional energy (EE)*. 'EE gives energy, not just for physical activity...but above all for taking the initiative in social interaction, putting enthusiasm into it, taking the lead in setting the level of emotional attainment' (Collins 2004:107). The positive effects of emotional energy can make an individual feel confident, have the courage to take action, be brave in taking initiative, have a sense of doing what is important and most valuable (Durkheim 1995) and can have a powerful motivating effect upon an individual (Collins 2004). Emotional energy itself is generated through participation in interaction rituals. An interaction ritual is defined as any routine interaction between two or more people that is vested with some symbolic significance (Collins 1981; Collins 1988). The individual is the interaction ritual chain as he/she is the ingredient of past and future interactions (Collins 2004). Two types of rituals identified as relevant in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor interactions are *power rituals* and *status rituals*. Power rituals involve individuals unequal in their resources and focus on the giving and taking of orders (Collins 1990). In a mentoring context, a mentor often acts as a leader, role model, coach, teacher, advisor, counsellor and friend (Scanlon 2009; Barnett 2008; Sullivan 2000). In some of these roles, mentor interactions may take on the form of a power ritual, i.e. where the mentor becomes the order-giver and the entrepreneur the order-taker (Collins 2004). In situations lacking any obvious order-giver or order-taker form, emotional energy can be connected with status rituals, which involve interactions structured on membership (i.e. belonging or not belonging) (Collins 1990). An individual's participation in such rituals differs depending on their level of activity, involvement, and their centrality to the activity (Goss 2005). Where rituals are positive, affirming, build solidarity, connect, and are supportive, positive emotions are

experienced (Boudins 2005; Elfrenbein 2007; Tracy and Robins 2007b; Turner and Stets 2006). Examples of positive emotions include pride, elation, happiness and satisfaction. Other positive emotions that yield low control include relief, hope, interest and surprise (Scherer 2005). Rituals can also produce negative emotions (Brundin and Nordqvist 2008), which Scherer (2005) categories as anger, hostility, contempt, disgust, shame/guilt, boredom, sadness, and anxiety.

An internal factor that is a fundamental aspect of new venture growth is entrepreneurial agency, which is an intentional process that results from choices (Krueger 2003). It is associated with individuals 'who have the full-blown ability to discover, create, and exploit opportunities' (Garud and Karnøe 2003: 277). *Human Agency*, in its broadest sociological sense, refers to the efficacy of human action (Sewell 1992), which incorporates all perspectives and forms of human action. According to Bandura (2006), there are four core properties of human agency: intentionality (the ability to form intentions that include actions, plans and strategies for realising them); forethought (the ability to set goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate efforts); self-reactiveness (the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution); and self-reflectiveness (the ability to reflect on thoughts and actions, and the meaning of their pursuits, and the ability to make corrective adjustments if necessary). Entrepreneurial agency is associated with entrepreneurial processes and outcomes (Baker and Welter 2015). The strength of entrepreneurial agency, in the way that agency shapes entrepreneurial intentions, is viewed as a particularly significant predictor of entrepreneurial activity (Lee et al 2011). Therefore, in a nascent entrepreneurial context, the core properties identified by Bandura (2006) are not solely reducible to individual attributes and may be significantly influenced through the support of a mentor, the associated behaviour, emotions and relationship dynamics. Interaction ritual chain theory is valuable in understanding the effects of different types of rituals on emotions, behaviours, relationship dynamics, and entrepreneurial agency. Investigating the impact of rituals will help provide insight into the interplay of emotions, behaviours and relationship dynamics on entrepreneurial agency. It

may provide invaluable information pertaining to the types of rituals, emotions and behaviours that encourage intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. These aspects of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships are investigated, analysed and discussed in the remaining chapters.

#### **2.4.8. Theoretical Perspective Summary**

The mentoring theoretical approaches discussed in Section 2.4. are summarised in Table 2 below outlining the key relevant influential factors, and relevant behaviours, influences and characteristics.

**Table 2: Summary of the Mentoring Approaches**

<b>THEORY</b>	<b>INFLUENTIAL FACTOR</b>	<b>RELEVANCE</b>
Social Cognitive Theory	Personal Self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief in one’s ability to execute actions</li> <li>• Affects one’s cognition, self-confidence, course of action, and perceptions of control</li> <li>• Strongly influences behaviour</li> <li>• Important predictor of success, perseverance and goal achievement</li> <li>• Central defining element of personal agency</li> <li>• Influences level of effort and persistence, choice of activities, and behavioural settings</li> <li>• Derived from: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, and psychosocial arousal</li> </ul>
Relational Theory	Connection to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances sense of self, self-worth, confidence, clarity</li> <li>• Influences creative action</li> <li>• Mutuality and reciprocal nature of relationship</li> </ul>
Social Cognitive Career Theory	Person-environment interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form learning experiences</li> <li>• Influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations</li> <li>• Exposure to role-models</li> <li>• Persuasive communication</li> <li>• Positive affective reactions</li> <li>• Influential components include: personal background and characteristics; external contextual factors</li> <li>• Complex interplay between: self-efficacy; outcome expectations; and goal setting</li> </ul>
Social Exchange Theory	Exchange activity (tangible or intangible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influences social behaviour</li> <li>• Develops intrinsic value to exchange partners</li> </ul>
Relational Cohesion Theory	Emotional Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affect exchange outcomes</li> <li>• Influence outcomes: power; trust; liking; and commitment</li> <li>• Proximal mechanism in exchange process</li> <li>• Structural power positively affects frequency of exchanges</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency of exchanges positively affects positive emotions</li> <li>• Positive emotions affect relational cohesion and commitment</li> </ul>
Social Capital	Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to resources: information; ideas; business opportunities; financial capital; power; emotional support; goodwill; trust; and cooperation</li> <li>• Embodied in information exchange, social trust and norms of reciprocity</li> <li>• Three dimensions: structural; relational; and cognitive</li> </ul>
Relational Social Capital	Nature of relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide behaviour and resulting impact of exchanges</li> <li>• Trust, reciprocity and obligation behaviours</li> <li>• Antecedent to cooperation</li> <li>• Major influence on interpersonal behaviour</li> <li>• Impacts extent or resource and information exchange</li> </ul>
Social Support Theory	Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of empathy, love, trust and caring</li> <li>○ Friendship, confirmation, encouragement</li> <li>○ Source of confidence building, and socio-emotional support</li> <li>○ Reduce self-doubt and emotional uncertainty</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Instrumental support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of tangible aid, services, assistance with tasks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Informational support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of advice, suggestions and information</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Appraisal support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provision of constructive feedback and confirmation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Attachment Theory	Emotional Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of proximity</li> <li>• Provision of safe haven and secure base</li> <li>• Influences behaviours, perceptions, cognitive conditions, functioning of relationship</li> <li>• Builds resilience</li> <li>• Impact levels of trust, mutuality, support functions, and reciprocity</li> </ul>
Interaction Ritual Chain Theory	Emotional Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Energy</li> <li>• Power rituals</li> <li>• Status rituals</li> <li>• Emotions, behavior, entrepreneurial agency</li> </ul>

## 2.5. Linking Social Support Theory to Formal Mentoring in the Context of Nascent Entrepreneurs

Social support theory identifies various forms of social support that have relevance in understanding mentoring relationships. However, despite the extensive research on formal mentoring programmes, there are very few studies that consider relationships from the

perspective of social support theory. Social support theory posits that support occurs through a communicative process and occurs in a manner appropriate to the context and the needs of the individual (Cutrona and Russell 1990; Cutrona and Suhr 1992). Mentoring can fulfil a valuable role as a social support mechanism for various career and psychosocial purposes. Indeed, mentoring can be considered a unique type of social support through the provision of informational and instrumental social support (Nielsen et al. 2001). This is echoed in Soisk and Lee's (2002: 102) definition of mentoring as 'a form of social support in which individuals with more advanced experience and knowledge (mentors) are matched with a lesser experienced and knowledgeable individual (protégé) for the purpose of advancing the protégés' development and career'. Mentoring fulfils a vital role as a social support mechanism for various forms of entrepreneurial support. However, given the different types of entrepreneurs, the rapid moving nature of new business, and the changing economic environment, it still remains unclear why, when and how mentoring works best (Bisk 2002; McKeivitt and Marshall 2015; St-Jean and Audet 2012; Ragins and Kram 2007). Much is known about the beneficial and dysfunctional outcomes of mentoring, however, the qualitative and affective aspects of positive relationships remain unclear (Ragins and Kram 2007). Although considerable research exists on perceived social support, little is known about the determinants of receiving social support (Lindorff 2005).

### ***2.5.1. Overview of Social Support Theory***

Social support theory considers relationships of interpersonal support, which is difficult to define due to its multifaceted and contextually dependent nature. The term social support has therefore been defined and measured in numerous ways (Heaney and Israel 2008). In its most basic form it can be considered as the fulfilment by others of ongoing social needs (Bowlby 1982; Cutrona 1996). According to the influential work by House (1981), social support is the functional content of relationships that can be categorised into four broad types of supportive behaviour: emotional support; instrumental support; informational support; and appraisal support. Emotional support involves the provision of empathy, love,

trust and caring (Heaney and Israel 2008). Emotional support in the context of mentoring emphasise friendship, confirmation, and encouragement behaviour, which can be a source of socio-emotional support, confidence building and help reduce self-doubt and emotional uncertainty (Nielson et al. 2001). Instrumental support involves the provision of tangible aid and services that directly assist a person in need (Heaney and Israel 2008). In a mentoring context, it refers to assistance that focuses on the provision of resources or assistance with tasks (e.g. access to money, time, and resources) (House 1981). Informational support is the provision of advice, suggestions and information that a person can use to address problems (Heaney and Israel 2008). Appraisal support involves the provision of information that is useful for self-evaluation (i.e. constructive feedback and confirmation) (Heaney and Israel 2008). Nielson et al. (2001) highlighted that the psychosocial aspects of the mentoring construct resemble House's (1981) descriptions of emotional and appraisal support. They also highlighted that mentors can provide informational and instrumental social support aimed at career development. Cutrona and Russell (1990) and Cutrona and Suhr (1992) categorised social support into five core social support functions: emotional; esteem; information; tangible assistance; and network. In the context of mentoring, esteem support is an important resource to help build self-efficacy and confidence, and validate thoughts, feelings and actions. Network support concerns the feeling that the mentoring relationship enables an individual to be a part of a network of individuals with similar interests and concerns. Tangible assistance focuses on the provision of resources or assistance with tasks.

Social support is long associated with mitigating the negative effects of job-related stress (Bliese and Britt 2001; Cohen and Wills 1985; Robbins et al. 1993). The importance of studying support received through everyday discourse helps to construct and embody personal relationships as dynamic structures of social support (Barnes and Duck 1994). While formal mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs does not occur in an everyday manner, there is value in studying mentoring through the lens of social support theory. Understanding the role of a mentor provides insights into the crucial role they play in shaping distinct types

of support (Kram 1985; Ragins and McFarlin 1990). As discussed in Chapter 1, existing studies based on Kram's work are deductive in nature (St-Jean 2011) and in cases where an inductive approach is used, the mentoring functions identified seem to differ (Levesque et al. 2005; Fowler and O'Gorman 2005). For example, in the context of novice entrepreneurs, St-Jean (2011) identified four sub-functions of psychological support: reflector, reassurance, motivation, and confidant. Career-related functions were also sub-divided into four sub-functions: integration, information, confrontation and guide. Role modeling was identified as a unique distinct function (St-Jean 2011). Given the uniqueness of nascent entrepreneurs and the multitude of tasks they are required to perform (Reynolds et al. 2004), there is a need to reassess inductively the two broad categorisations of mentoring support functions (career-related and psychosocial) to examine if there is a need to further sub-divide the functions and if functions change over the duration of the mentoring relationship. The clarity and identification of mentoring functions in a nascent entrepreneurial context, will provide insights into the crucial role the mentor plays in supporting the unique challenges and multitude of tasks faced by nascent entrepreneurs. It may also contribute to the focus of formal nascent entrepreneur mentoring programmes. The next section investigates the categories of social support theory that are relevant to mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. For the purpose of this research the categories identified by House (1981), Cutrona (1996), and Nielson, Carlson and Lankau (2001) are combined into: psychosocial (incorporating emotional, esteem, and appraisal); informational; and network support and tangible assistance.

### ***2.5.2. Psychological Support***

The psychosocial issues identified that pose significant issues for nascent entrepreneurs were outlined in Section 2.2.1. and include: lack of confidence and self-efficacy (Dimov 2010), over-confidence (Koellinger et al. 2007), ability to maintain perseverance (Zhao et al. 2005b), mitigate strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005), take risks, and manage uncertainty (Cascio and Gasker 2001), reduce work-family conflict, and lower rates of job

exhaustion (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001). Psychosocial support provided through mentoring, consists of several specific functions which are geared toward building mentee self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity (Kram 1985). They include interpersonal skills such as active listening, conflict management, active discussions, clarity brought to team conflicts, and the promotion of positive attitudes (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001). Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013) suggested that mentors enhance attitudes and help entrepreneurs deal with risk taking, managing uncertainty, and developing their flexibility, through the facilitation and encouragement of double-loop learning. Mentors guide, advise, and utilise learning opportunities that arise as part of the venture creation process (Sullivan 2000). The role of a mentor in helping to develop perceptions of self-efficacy and perseverance are highlighted in the venture emergence literature (Cardon and Kirk 2013) and play a crucial role in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. Mentors help nascent entrepreneurs to maintain high levels of self-efficacy through the process of validation, encouragement, role-model behaviours, and the mentors' perceived status (St-Jean 2012). An experienced mentor is well positioned to empathise with nascent entrepreneurs' personal circumstance and goals. This is often realised through friendship, confirmation, and encouragement. These behaviours are a source of socio-emotional support and confidence building that helps reduce self-doubt and emotional uncertainty (Nielson et al. 2001). It is not untypical to find that entrepreneurs over estimate their skills and abilities in terms of forecasting the success of their business venture (Koellinger et al. 2007). It is accepted that some elements of over-confidence are central to entrepreneurship motivation and resilience, it may however lead to flawed decisions and result in inaccurate perceptions of the risks associated with a business venture (Hmieleski and Baron 2008). Through a number of communication strategies such as constructive criticism, provocation, and the questioning of assumptions (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), mentors help entrepreneurs to filter information and achieve a sense of realism. These are crucial skills in overcoming the emotional aspects of the liability of newness experienced by nascent entrepreneurs.

### ***2.5.3. Information Support***

Social support theory highlights the importance of the provision of support from similar others that are reliable (Cutrona and Russell 1990). High quality relationships are based in mutual liking, trust and respect (Thomas and Lankau 2009). Therefore, compatibility is an important feature for nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Compatibility between the provider and receiver of support is also important for any form of social support, and highlights the importance of the pairing and compatibility of nascent entrepreneurs and mentors. Key influential factors that affect the communicative aspect of social support include entrepreneur characteristics and traits, mentor characteristics and traits, the formal dyadic structure, socio-economic factors, sectoral experience and gender (Deakins et al. 1997). The unique individual and venture challenges that affect nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships were highlighted in Section 2.2.1. and 2.3. From a social support perspective, the informational challenges facing nascent entrepreneurs include their lack of: tacit and contextual knowledge (Dimov 2010), information and resources (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000), liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000). Other information support addressed nascent entrepreneurs' ability to: filter pertinent information (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007), make effective decisions (Longnecker et al. 2013), anticipate problems and prepare contingencies (Delmar and Shane 2003; Dimov 2010; deJanasz et al. 2003). The newness and innovativeness of a venture and the stage of venture growth have a direct impact on the number and type of mentoring functions performed. Newness characteristics require mentors to challenge entrepreneurial cognitive structures and encourage new insights (Stam et al. 2014). Mentors support nascent entrepreneurs by bringing focus and direction to the venture formation process, as well as the provision of planning advice. They play a key role in the provision of resources such as industry knowledge, industry networks, knowledge, and financial advisors/investors. Mentors have a particularly important contribution to make in helping nascent entrepreneurs to prepare the initial roadmap for new business ventures. This support is achieved through identifying missing information (Tubbs and Ekeberg 1991),

anticipating problems that may arise with the realisation of a venture (Gollwitzer 1996), and facilitating quicker decision-making (Honig and Karlsson 2004). Effective performance of this type of mentoring function facilitates the development of more realistic venture goals and helps nascent entrepreneurs identify the tasks that support the achievement of venture goals (Gravells 2006). A crucial function of mentor support is the provision of knowledge, advice, information, and know-how (Unger et al. 2011). The interpretation and understanding of new information are central to the identification of business opportunities, and nascent entrepreneurs can utilise mentors' knowledge to help reflect on, and construct new knowledge (Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012).

#### ***2.5.4. Network Support and Tangible Assistance***

Network support and tangible assistance are two forms of social support (Cutrona and Russell 1990; Cutrona and Suhr 1992) that are applicable to entrepreneurial mentoring relationships. In social support research, these types of support are generally perceived or realised as reactions to stressors or buffers of stress. Psychological research conceptualises network support as received from a provider of support that is part of an individual's social support network. The challenges that relate to network and tangible assistance from a nascent entrepreneurial perspective were addressed in Section 2.2.1. and include: network connections (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009), entrepreneurial behaviour (Gartner and Carter 2005), and social/political skills (Witt and Ferris 2003). Mentors support entrepreneurs through sharing their networks and social capital (Ozdemir et al. 2014). Evidence of this was found by Patel and Terjesen (2011) who concluded that an entrepreneur will only have access to important resources in the presence of strong ties. Mentors through the use of their networks help nascent entrepreneurs to shape the evolution of their networks. However, this does not discount the finding that entrepreneurs have a central role in building, growing and evolving their own entrepreneurial social networks (Ozdemir et al. 2014). Ebbers (2013) found that where entrepreneurs avail of network opportunities they become more aware of business opportunities. Interestingly, Fielden and Hunt (2011), argued that women actively avoid

networks that reflect the social needs of males and they have less access to developmental networks. Therefore, women entrepreneurs benefit from mentors who have access to networks and business organisations.

From a social support perspective, tangible assistance is the provision of help to overcome practical problems (Lindorff 2005). Lefebvre and Redien-Collot (2013: 373) argue that mentors help entrepreneurs to ‘navigate through the successive phases of the entrepreneurial process with the aim to enhance the mentee’s ability to build a permanent business project’. Entrepreneurs perform a multiplicity of tasks during the start-up phase. Reynolds et al. (2004) highlighted twenty-five tasks that they are required to perform including: the discussion of business ideas, concept development, searching copyrights and patents, scanning the environment, and developing and managing human resources. The particular challenge of this is that their tasks have to be performed simultaneously (Lichtenstein et al. 2007). Ozdemir et al. (2014) describe entrepreneurs as suffering from activity capacity in that they have limited time and energy to perform this broad range of tasks. Drawing on the theory of planned behaviour (Schlaegel and Koenig 2013), experienced mentors may impose subjective norms around the desirability to perform particular behaviours and in a particular way. This occurs because entrepreneurs perceive the behaviour as desirable (Krueger 2000). Therefore, where a mentor creates positive expectations about the performance of particular behaviours, this will more likely lead to the demonstration of the behaviour. In the context of nascent entrepreneurs, this could include the performance of effective work habits and direct task behaviours that help nascent entrepreneurs to achieve both personal and business goals. An experienced mentor has had the experience of creating a new venture and has derived important learning and knowledge from that entrepreneurial experience (Shane and Khurana 2003; Baron 2006). Experienced entrepreneurs will have acquired unique insights of the risks associated with new venture creation and the base rates of success and failure (Hayward and Sheperd 2006). A mentor can, therefore, steer entrepreneurs through a sequence of activities and the right approach to take (Bruderl et al.

1992) and help entrepreneurs to see things from different angles (Gravells 2006). Planning in the context of new venture creation has a number of important symbolic, learning and efficiency functions (Castrogiovanni 1996). Frese and Gielnik (2014) argued that business plans legitimise the business venture and provide evidence that the venture is feasible (Honig and Karlsson 2004). A mentor can, therefore, play an important role in helping nascent entrepreneurs to prepare an initial roadmap for the new venture which has particular benefits in conditions of high uncertainty such as those experienced by nascent entrepreneurs. Action planning is also highlighted as an important element of successful new venture formation (Gollwitzer and Sheeran 2006). Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) place particular value in the new venture formation process because they specify the when, where and how of action and they help to direct the efforts of entrepreneurs. Frese (2009) argued that action plans are important in enhancing entrepreneurial persistence, goal intentions and new venture creation. Mentors help entrepreneurs to engage in action planning through the identification of critical missing information and steps in the anticipation of problems and the facilitation of quicker decision making (Tubbs and Ekeberg 1991; Gollwitzer 1996).

The developmental needs of nascent entrepreneurs may not always be met by an individual mentor for a variety of reasons. Where a mentor has access to diverse developmental networks, they can enlist support from others and as a result will suffer less from their own skill and competency limitations (Hall and Chandler 2007). Clusters are an important developmental network resource and are considered central to new business ventures and commercial innovation (Acs et al. 2013). Clusters are conceptualised as ‘geographic concentrations of interrelated companies and institutions in a particular field’ (Porter 1998: 78). They are considered to be important in reducing barriers to entry growth and the enhancement of regional competitive advantage (Delgado et al. 2010). Proponents of clusters argue that proximity to universities increases knowledge sharing, knowledge spillovers (OECD 2009), the perception of innovation opportunities, and the pressure to innovate (Feldman et al 2005). These benefits are of significant assistance to nascent

entrepreneur-mentor relationships through increased access to developmental networks, visibility of university R&D, R&D collaborative opportunities, and technology transfer. Mentors can open entrepreneurs' networks to cluster contacts and university connections, which form an important component of social support and social capital theory.

## **2.6. Factors and Characteristics of Nascent Entrepreneur Mentoring Relationships**

There are many relationship dimensions that influence the quality, process, and potential outcomes, of a dyadic mentoring relationships, particularly in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. These include the formality of the relationship (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), pairing process of mentors and mentees (St-Jean and Audet 2012), mentoring functions (Bisk 2002), frequency of interactions, and duration of the relationship (Cull 2006). These dimensions are explored in greater detail in the sub-sections below.

### ***2.6.1. Mentoring Formality and Pairing***

A distinguishing contextual factor between different forms of mentoring is whether the relationship was initiated informally or formally (Allen et al. 2006; Chao et al. 1992; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Underhill 2006). While the range of quality and processes in formal and informal mentoring relationships clearly overlap (Ragins et al. 2000), it can be quite helpful to consider differences in how this contextual factor influences the norms and expectations of mentoring relationships (Eby et al. 2007). According to Ragins and Cotton (1999), formal and informal mentoring relationships differ according to three key dimensions: initiation of the relationship, structure of the relationship, and other aspects of the relationship. Informal mentoring occurs when a relationship is formed solely through mutual attraction (Kram 1985; Ragins et al. 2000). Formal mentoring programmes may include elements of structure, meeting guidelines, agendas, duration of meetings, and duration of relationship (Wanberg et al. 2003). Formal mentoring programmes are increasingly popular in the entrepreneurial context (Ozgen and Baron 2007; Newbert et al. 2012), and are often

included as part of accelerator programmes (Cohen and Hochberg 2014), student entrepreneur development programmes (Mars et al. 2008), and programmes designed to support nascent entrepreneurs (McKevitt and Marshall 2015). Other differences between formal and informal mentoring are often described in terms of expectations for the relationship, the time-bound nature of formal mentoring, and differences in the training, quality, and structure among formal programmes (Baugh and Fagenson-Eland 2007). According to Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007), it is quite likely that some of the personal benefits experienced by mentees/protégés and mentors in informal mentoring relationships (e.g. long-term friendship, increasing intimacy) are less likely to occur in formal relationships. The focus of this research is on formal mentoring which is an important source of support available to entrepreneurs during different stages of venture emergence (Ozgen and Baron 2007; Newbert et al. 2012). These programmes are typically provided and funded by national enterprise development agencies and are generally face to face (Ensley et al. 2000; Benton and Sankaran 2005). Formal mentoring programmes for entrepreneurs are a world-wide phenomenon. The governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland, have launched mentoring programmes to match experienced mentors with less experienced entrepreneurs (Deakins et al. 1997; Kempster and Cope 2010; St-Jean 2011; Westanmo 2000; St-Jean 2012; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Stevenson and Lundström 2001). Examples of other programmes include (see Table 3 for a full overview of programmes): The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme (UK)(TPT 2014); Mentor Eget Företag (Sweden)(MEF 2015); Business Mentors (New Zealand)(BM 2015); L'Insitut du mentorat entrepreneurial (France)(LME 2015); Futurpreneur Canada (FC 2015); SCORE (USA) (SCORE 2014); and Mentor Network Programme (Ireland)(MN 2014). Two entrepreneur development agencies are responsible for entrepreneur mentoring programmes in Ireland, Enterprise Ireland (EI)<sup>15</sup>,

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<sup>15</sup>Enterprise Ireland (EI) is the government organisation responsible for the development of Irish enterprises in world markets (Enterprise-Ireland, 2012)

and Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)<sup>16</sup>. An analysis of this data is provided in Chapter 3 and research findings outlined in Chapter 4.

In formal mentoring relationships the compatibility of the nascent entrepreneur and mentor is of particular importance. It is a crucial factor in the allocation of mentor-mentee pairs (Engstrom 2004), and has a substantial bearing on the success of the mentoring relationship (Cull 2006). Kram (1985) suggests matching on the basis of individual attitudes, knowledge and interpersonal skills, while others focus more on psychological elements such as cognitive style or similarity (Armstrong et al. 2002) , and socio-economic factors, sectoral experience and gender (Deakins et al. 1997). Mentors and entrepreneurs can contribute to the pairing process by providing accurate information, however this depends on the matching criteria used. The similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that mentors will be attracted to those they perceive to be similar to themselves (Byrne 1971). It is interesting to note that in empirical studies, same-gender mentorships typically greatly outnumber cross-gender mentorships (Allen and Eby 2003; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Sosik and Godshalk 2000). The least common dyadic combination is female mentors paired with male mentees (Allen 2008). According to Deakins et al. (1997), close matching by socio-economic factors works well in mentoring relationships particularly in new venture support. Deakins et al. (1997) also found that entrepreneurs preferred matches based on close sectoral experience and gender match. Formal entrepreneur mentoring programmes usually involve a third-party matching process that results in individuals who do not know each other meeting as part of a mentoring relationship (Deakins et al. 1998). The typical duration of formal entrepreneur-mentor relationships is six months to two years (Blake-Beard 2001; St-Jean and Audet 2009). According to Eby et al. (2000), negative mentoring experiences for mentees can be the result of an inappropriate match within the dyad because of the different values, work-style, or personality, between the mentor and mentee. A mismatch can cause discomfort for the

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<sup>16</sup> LEOs offer startup ventures training courses, business plan advice, market research information, mentoring, and feasibility grants and co-investments (LEO, 2014).

mentor, but more importantly for the mentee, this can be disastrous (Cull 2006). In a nascent entrepreneurial context, the pairing process is particularly important given the subjective judgement of their business opportunity (Kor et al. 2007; Shaver and Scott 1991; Shook et al. 2003), and the unique challenges nascent entrepreneurs face as outlined in Section 2.2.1. Relationships are constructed based on cognitive maps (social cognitive theory), and evolve effectively based on mutual attraction and respect, and are essential to interpersonal social support (social support theory). The resulting enduring bonds are established through attachment (attachment theory). All relationships consist of varying degrees of interdependence and the relational competence that is integral to this interdependence. This interdependence is highlighted by self-in relational theory. High-quality relationships are founded on trust, respect, and mutual liking (Thomas and Lankau 2009), therefore compatibility is an important feature of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

**Table 3: Overview of Entrepreneur-Mentor Programmes**

Country	Programme	Focus	Provider	Selection Criteria	Focus	Objectives	Formal Matching and Meeting Frequency	Duration	Rewards for Mentors
UK (TPT 2014)	Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme	Pre-entry entrepreneurs	Charity	18-30 year olds. Unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours per week.	Entrepreneur / Venture Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide psychological support to the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Act as a sounding board to lease out ideas.</li> <li>• Motivate, encourage and focus the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Provide business advice and direction.</li> <li>• Help develop business plans and approach Financial support organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching – formal matching</li> <li>• Matching undertakers by agency.</li> <li>• Duration: 3 years programme</li> <li>• Meeting frequency: Four to six hours of mentoring per month. Face-to-face.</li> </ul>		<p>Voluntary involvement of mentors</p> <p>No financial rewards</p>
Sweden (MEF 2015)	Mentor Eget Företag	Established entrepreneurs Pre-entry entrepreneurs	Tillväxtverket, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth	Business concept that has the potential to become a profitable company. Main occupation of the entrepreneur must be the venture.	Individual Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convey knowledge and experience to entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Challenge entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Listen and act as sounding board.</li> <li>• Help mentor build networks</li> <li>• Provide opinions and tools to help mentor realise goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Formal matching</li> <li>• Duration: 1 year programme</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency:</li> </ul>		Financial rewards for mentors
New Zealand (BM 2015)	Business Mentors	Start-up. Existing business. Not for profit	Economic Development Agencies and Chambers of Commerce	Income of entrepreneur is primarily derived from the venture. Venture must have less than 25 employees.	Individual / Venture Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share personal life experience.</li> <li>• Listen, inspire and encourage the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Respond to personal development issues, questions and concerns.</li> <li>• Provide respect, guidance and Advice.</li> <li>• Facilitate growth of the venture by sharing resources and networks.</li> <li>• Discuss venture goal setting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Combination of formal and informal matching</li> <li>• Duration: 6-12 months</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency: Frequency of meetings agreed between the entrepreneur and mentee – face-to-face.</li> </ul>		Financial rewards for mentors
France (LME 2015)	L'Insitut du mentorat entrepreneurial	Promising SMEs	Chambers of Commerce and Industry Paris Ile-de-France	Venture must be operating for a minimum of two years. It must have at least ten employees. Revenues of at least €1million.	Individual Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen sympathetically to the concerns of the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Ask questions and provide space for entrepreneur reflection.</li> <li>• Confront and challenge ideas and perspectives of entrepreneur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Formal matching process</li> <li>• Duration: 12-18 months of mentoring</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency: Monthly meetings however precise number not specified – Face—to-face.</li> </ul>		Financial rewards for mentors.

Canada (FC 2015)	Futurpreneur Canada	Young entrepreneurs	Not-for profit organisation	Age range 18-39 years. Full time business owner for up to 12 months Part time business owner for up to 12 months.	Individual / Venture Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as a sounding board for the ideas of the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Enhance an entrepreneur's business acumen.</li> <li>• Build the entrepreneurs' confidence and enhance networks.</li> <li>• Analyse business opportunities.</li> <li>• Assess the risks associated with different opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Formal matching process</li> <li>• Duration: 6-months programme</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency: 4-5 hours per month. Face-to-face.</li> </ul>	Financial rewards for mentors.
USA (SCORE 2014)	SCORE Association	Entrepreneur, SME owners	USA Small Business Administration	All types of entrepreneurs. No age restrictions.	Individual / Venture Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of support and encouragement to mentors.</li> <li>• Clarification of the personal goals of the entrepreneur.</li> <li>• Act as sounding board, devil's advocate and challenger.</li> <li>• Help establish venture goals.</li> <li>• Develop solutions to pressing venture issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Formal matching provided by Agency.</li> <li>• Duration: 6-12 month programme</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency: 5-10 meetings over duration of programme.</li> </ul>	Financial reward for selected mentors.
Ireland (MN 2014)	Mentor Network Programme	Established SMEs	Enterprise Ireland	High potential start-up venture. Manufacturing or internationally traded services SME. Employees of numbers between 10-249.	Venture Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venture advice and guidance around start-up, running and growing a business.</li> <li>• Development of strategies to finance the business, marketing and management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching: Formal process</li> <li>• Duration: Not specified</li> <li>• Meeting Frequency: Not specified – on-line.</li> </ul>	Both financially rewarded and volunteer mentors.

### ***2.6.2. Frequency and Duration***

Lyons and Oppler (2004), highlighted that the frequency of mentoring meetings influences mentees' perception of the value of support received from the mentor. It is typically thought that more frequent interaction between mentor and mentee will translate into the provision of greater mentoring (Allen 2008). However, the fact that interactions occur does not guarantee the quality, rigour, or efficiency of the communication (St-Jean and Audet 2009). Jablin and Putman (2001) argue that the quality of the time spent together has a greater impact on the mentoring relationship than the quantity of time. The importance of relationship duration was shown by Waters et al. (2002) to have a positive effect on the perception of the relationship and the self-confidence of entrepreneurs. Relational cohesion theory highlights the positive effects of frequency of exchanges and the positive emotions that may result. A range of interaction approaches are used during entrepreneur-mentor relationships such as face-to-face, email, telephone, and the use of virtual technology (Memon et al. 2014). The intensity of high-quality interactions (self-in relation theory), coupled with their frequency and duration are significantly important indicators of the perceived quality of mentoring relationships (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). Likewise, the frequency with which episodes of disconnection are addressed effectively is another important determinant of the quality of mentoring relationships (Fletcher and Ragins 2007). The application of these aspects of relational cohesion, social capital, and self-in relational theory, highlights the importance of such concepts in the context of nascent entrepreneur mentoring relationships. Understanding these aspects, and the impact of different interaction approaches, helps provide insight into the impact of these aspects in the context of nascent entrepreneurs and the venture emergence process.

### ***2.6.3. Mentoring Interactions***

Interactions during formal mentoring relationships are social in nature. Social capital theory, social cognitive career theory, and self-in relational theory have highlighted the importance of interactions in the context of mentoring (Fletcher and Ragins 2007; Chandler

and Kram 2007; Dobrow and Higgins 2005). Such interactions are considered a significant influence on emotions (Frijda and Batja 1994; Kemper 1978; Goss 2005) which play a significant role in relationships as outlined by social exchange theory, relational cohesion theory, social capital theory and attachment theory. According to Deci (1980) an emotion is a reaction to a stimulus. Scherer (2001: 93) further expands the definition of emotion as ‘an episode of interrelated, synchronised changes in the states of all or most of the five organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal stimulus event as relevant to major concerns of the organism’. Scherer (2005) identified components of emotion which include: cognitive; neurophysiological; motivational component; expression; and subjective feeling. Both non-verbal behaviour and physiological indicators can be used to deduce the emotions, however, there are no objective methods to measure the subjective experience of a person during an emotion episode (Scherer 2005). Researchers often utilise standardised lists of emotion labels along with associated answer formats to obtain information on the qualitative nature of the affective state experienced. In the interest of the comparability and cumulativeness of findings from different studies, Scherer (2005) suggests a pragmatic solution, the Geneva Affect Label Coder (GALC), that attempts to recognise thirty six affective categories commonly distinguished by words in natural languages and parses text data bases for these terms and their synonyms (Table 4).

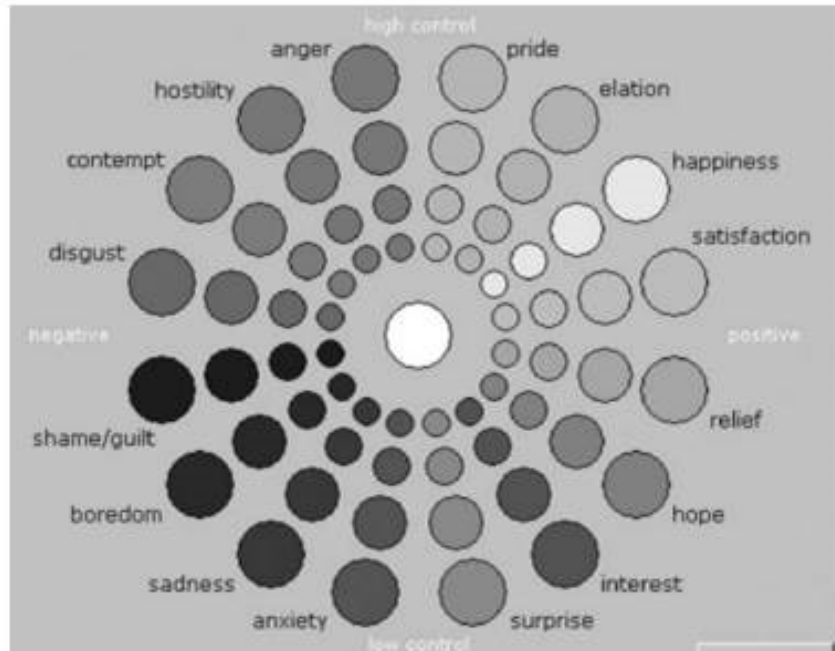
**Table 4: Geneva Affect Label Coder (GALC)**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Pertinent Words or Word Stems</b>
Admiration/Awe	admir* ador* awe* dazed dazzl* enrapt* enthrall* fascina* marveli* rapt*
Amusement	reveren* spellbound wonder* worship* amus* fun* humor* laugh* play* rollick* smil*
Anger	Anger angr* cross* enrag* furious fury incens* infuriat* irate ire* mad* rag* resent* temper wrath* wrought*
Anxiety	anguish* anxi* apprehens* diffiden* jitter* nervous* trepida* wari* wary worried* worry*
Beingtouched	affect* mov* touch*
Boredom	bor* ennui indifferen* languor* tedi* wear*
Compassion	commiser* compass* empath* pit*
Contempt	contempt* denigr* deprec* deris* despi* disdain* scorn*
Contentment	comfortabl* content* satisf*
Desperation	deject* desolat* despair* desperat* despond* disconsolat* hopeless* inconsol*
Disappointment	Comedown disappoint* discontent* disenchant* disgruntl* disillusion* frustrat* jilt* letdown resign* sour* thwart*

Disgust	abhor* avers* detest* disgust* dislik* disrelish distast* loath* nause*
Dissatisfaction	queas* repugn* repuls* revolt* sicken*
Envy	dissatisf* unhapp*
Fear	envious* envy*
Feelinglove	afraid* aghast* alarm* dread* fear* fright* horr* panic* scare* terror*
Gratitude	affection* fond* love* friend* tender*
Guilt	grat* thank*
Happiness	blame* contrit* guilt* remorse* repent*
Hatred	cheer* bliss* delect* delight* enchant* enjoy* felicit* happ* merr*
Hope	acrimon* hat* rancor*
Humility	buoyan* confident* faith* hop* optim*
Interest/Enthusiasm	devout* humility
Irritation	absor* alert animat* ardor* attent* curi* eager* enrapt* engross*
Jealousy	enthusias* ferv* interes* zeal*
Joy	annoy* exasperat* grump* indign* irrita* sullen* vex*
Longing	covetous* jealous*
Lust	ecstat* elat* euphor* exalt* exhilar* exult* flush* glee* joy* jubil* overjoyed
Pleasure/Enjoyment	ravish* rejoic*
Pride	crav* daydream* desir* fanta* hanker* hark* homesick* long* nostalg* pin*
Relaxation/Serenity	regret* wish* wistf* yearn*
Relief	Carnal lust* climax ecsta* orgas* sensu* sexual*
Sadness	enjoy* delight* glow* pleas* thrill* zest*
Shame	pride* proud*
Surprise	ease* calm* carefree casual detach* dispassion* equanim* eventemper* laid-back peace* placid* poise* relax* seren* tranquil* unruff*
Tension/Stress	relie*
Positive	chagrin* deject* dole* gloom* glum* grie* hopeles* melancho* mourn*
Negative	sad* sorrow* tear* weep*
	abash* asham* crush* disgrace* embarras* humili* shame*
	amaze* astonish* dumbfound* startl* stunn* surpris* aback thunderstruck wonder*
	activ* agit* discomfort* distress* strain* stress* tense*
	agree* excellent fair fine good nice positiv*
	Bad disagree* lousy negativ* unpleas*

According to Scherer (2005) verbal report measures the component of subjectively experienced feeling. Feelings that are associated with any one of the thirty-six emotion categories outlined in GALC can be expected to vary with respect to intensity (e.g. irritation-anger-rage). In line with an attempt to create a graphically intuitive presentation, Scherer (2005) proposed the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012) (Figure 2), in which members of each emotion category were represented as a set of circles with increasing circumference. The number of emotion categories was limited to four per quadrant, yielding a total of sixteen basic or fundamental emotions. The GEW is a theoretically derived and empirically tested instrument to measure emotional reactions to objects, events, and situation. Positive emotions that yield high control are described in the top right quadrant and include

pride, elation, happiness and satisfaction. Other positive emotions that yield low control include relief, hope, interest and surprise. Negative emotions that are associated with high control include anger, hostility, contempt, and disgust. Other negative emotions that yield low control include shame/guilt, boredom, sadness, and anxiety. Existing research on emotions has focused on the effects of emotions on preferences, cognition and behaviours (Bandelj 2009; Patzelt and Shepherd 2011; Foo 2011; Dolan 2002; Izard et al. 1984). Emotions have a strong effect on emotion consequent behaviour, often interrupting ongoing behaviour sequences and generating new goals and plans. In addition, the motor expression component of emotion has a strong impact on communication which may also have important consequences for social interaction (Scherer 2005). In the context of nascent entrepreneur, background emotions (Foo 2011) and mixed emotions (Podoyntsyna et al. 2012) influence opportunity recognition, risk perception and decision making. From a mentoring perspective the associated relational behaviours create 'systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotions, emotion regulation strategies and social behaviour' (Shaver and Mikulincer 2002: 134). Mentor behaviour may also play a role in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship in strengthening or dispelling emotions as highlighted by social exchange theory. Understanding what emotions are produced in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, and how these emotions affect the level of exchange, reciprocity, frequency of communication (as highlighted in relational cohesion theory, attachment theory, social exchange theory and social capital theory) have significant value in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships.



**Figure 2: Geneva Emotion Wheel (Sacharin et al. 2012)**

#### ***2.6.4. Mentoring Behaviour***

Interaction ritual chain theory highlighted both power and status rituals and their impact on emotions. These emotions may in turn instigate social behaviours such as bonding, sharing (Frijda and Batja 1994) and cooperative behaviours (Cialdini 2000). In the absence of a precise definition of *cooperative behaviour* (Woodside and LaPlaca 2014), the discussions in this research relate to the cooperation between a mentor and a nascent entrepreneur. Emotional bonds linking mentoring dyads bring about affective foundations for building trust (McAllister 1995; Kram 1985; Kram and Cherniss 2001). Certain emotions motivate individual and interactive behaviours that enable individuals to form social bonds (Bowlby 2008; Watson et al. 1988; Watson 1988). Positive emotions, particularly during stressful situations, may produce social support and strengthen social bonds such as friendship (Fredrickson 1998). Mentors are well positioned to empathise with nascent entrepreneurs' personal circumstances and goals. This can be realised through friendship, confirmation, and encouragement behaviour which can be both a source of socio-emotional support and confidence building that helps reduce self-doubt and emotional uncertainty (Nielson et al.

2001). Trust is a quality of supportive relationships that develop over time (Parker et al. 2008; Young and Perrew 2000). Nascent entrepreneurs typically lack specific knowledge (Unger et al. 2011) which can be filled through mentor interactions. Knowledge sharing is defined as transferring business information, technology, know-how and skills (Endres et al. 2007). Recent research has looked specifically at knowledge sharing as a system of influences, resulting in outcomes such as performance, and the impact of feedback on future knowledge sharing (Bock et al. 2005; Haas and Hansen 2005; Tsai and Tsai 2005). Cooperative behaviour is self-perpetuating, principally because of the tendency to reciprocate behaviour (Ferrin et al. 2007). When cooperative behaviour is reciprocated it tends to spiral into ever higher levels of cooperation (Axelrod 2006; Blau 1964; Cialdini 2000). This process of developing cooperation has been described by Powell as iterative: 'The level of cooperation increases with each agreement between the same partners' (Powell 1996: 60). Cooperation is crucial for the survival of organisations (Barnard 1968), and trust is frequently recognised as an important precursor to cooperation and the strongest influence on interpersonal behaviour (Golembiewski and McConkie 1975). Emotions, along with bonding, sharing and cooperative behaviours have not been explored collectively in an entrepreneurial context. Social cognitive career theory highlights that interactions between people, their behaviour, and their environment have a significant influence on enhancing or constraining agency. From an entrepreneurial perspective, the strength of agency, in the way that agency shapes entrepreneurial intentions, is viewed as a particularly significant predictor of entrepreneurial activity (Lee et al 2011). In the context of nascent entrepreneurs, the person-environment interactions therefore have a crucial role to play in decision-making, goal setting, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. The bonding, knowledge sharing, and cooperative behaviour that occur as a result of emotional outcomes from mentor interactions, may have implications for enhancing the core properties of entrepreneurial agency identified by Bandura (2006) namely, intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness. In particular, this research seeks to investigate if emotions play a key role in the enhancement of entrepreneurial agency. For example, when individuals experience success, they feel pride

in response, and over time and with repetition, these feelings may promote positive feelings and thoughts about their global self, leading to the high self-esteem (Tracy and Robins 2007a). Mentors can also help nascent entrepreneurs maintain high levels of self-efficacy (social cognitive theory, relational theory) in the face of uncertainty, adversity and the high levels of stress associated with the emergence of a new venture (Sequeria et al. 2007). Mentors achieve this outcome through bonding behaviours such as encouraging the nascent entrepreneur, validating their status as an entrepreneur, and demonstrating effective role model behaviours (St-Jean 2012). Trust is developed through such behaviour, and focuses on the perceptions of dependability, reliability, and competence (McAllister 1995). Strategies employed by mentors include constructive criticism, provocation, and the questioning of assumptions (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013). Challenging beliefs and expectations enable a nascent entrepreneur to more quickly reach conclusions concerning the viability of the emerging venture (Dimov 2010). When a nascent entrepreneur trusts a mentor, they allow a mentor help them 'navigate through the successive phases of the entrepreneurial process with the aim to enhance the mentee's ability to build a permanent business project' (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013: 373). Consequently, where a mentor is successful in creating a positive perspective on the performance of particular tasks, a nascent entrepreneur is more likely to experience positive emotions. This in turn may lead to further more intense bonding, sharing and cooperative behaviour. These behaviours may act as the transitional relational process between emotions and entrepreneurial agency. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate if the positive emotions created as a result of power and status rituals, results in bonding, sharing and cooperative behaviour, and if these behaviours directly affect entrepreneurial agency. Positive emotions have particular importance in the study of mentor interactions, functioning to broaden and build dynamics that enhance the capacity of individuals to act (Fredrickson 1998), strengthening resilience (Hayward et al. 2010; Bullogh and Renko 2013), improving overall well-being (Fredrickson 2001; Fredrickson and Joiner 2002), and overcoming negative emotions (Bullogh and Renko 2013). For the entrepreneur this may mean the difference between venture failure and success.

## **2.7. Synthesis of the Literature**

This chapter reviewed the literature on entrepreneurship in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. The literature presented provided a broad theoretical foundation of entrepreneurship and its interconnection with economic development and growth. The evolution of modern economic theory of the entrepreneur was provided in Section 2.2. through a review of the economic theorists and their contributions to the field. This section also provided the rationale for the current focus on nascent entrepreneurs, specified the definitional context and outlined the challenges associated with this unique type of entrepreneur. The individual micro challenges were explored in greater detail in Section 2.3. with particular focus on human capital, psychological/traits, social capital and behavioural development. In order to garner an understanding of the macro factors that influence the level of nascent entrepreneurial engagement and support, Section 2.4. reviewed the existing literature from the perspectives of economic development, technology advancements, culture, institutional support and policy, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This highlighted the embeddedness of nascent entrepreneurs in the environment and the distinct nature of the existing individual and structural literature. A summary of the literature review is provided in Section 2.5. and outlines a synopsis of the broad topic of entrepreneurship and the narrow focus of the individual and structural perspectives relating to nascent entrepreneurs. Single individual mentors were identified as playing an important role in influencing nascent entrepreneurial business ventures.

In the context of mentoring research, the chapter provided a relational perspective on nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. This has helped to provide a more complete understanding of the contribution of the mentoring relationship to personal learning, support, and the emergence of business ventures. The theories explored in Section 2.4. demonstrate the broad and deep body of theory supporting the view that self is more fully developed through effective relationships with others. In the current context, this translates into the development of nascent entrepreneurs through effective formal mentor relationships (while acknowledging

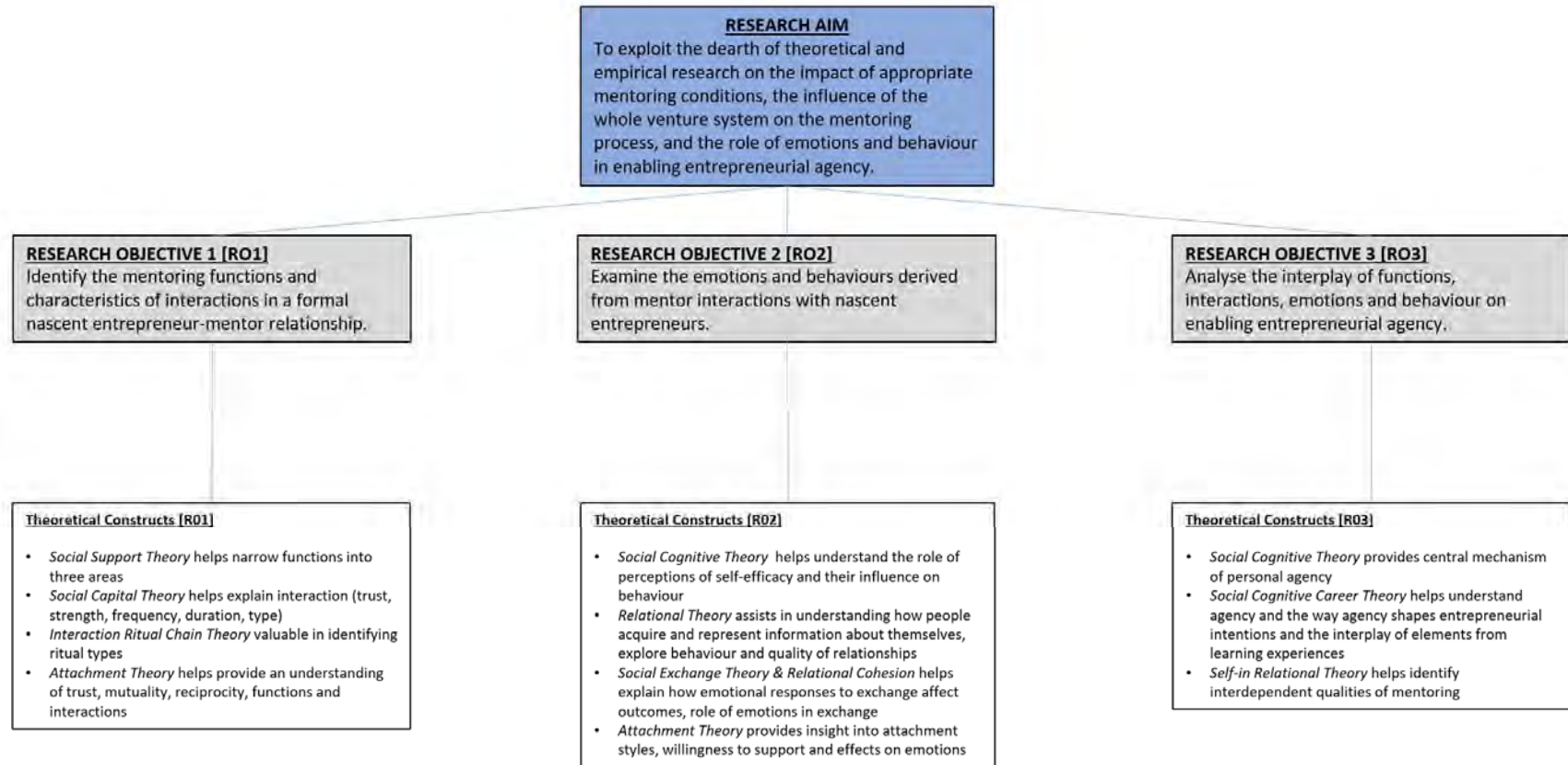
that other informal relationships also exist and contribute to the development of a nascent entrepreneur). Figure 3 provides a diagrammatic representation of the interrelationships between the research objectives and the theoretical constructs. Mentoring relationships provide critical resources to nascent entrepreneurs and facilitate a process of support, development, exploration, and shared understanding. They are increasingly structured or formalised (Allen et al. 2004; Burke and McKeen 1997). Delving more deeply into the interplay of mentoring functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour, should help clarify how these aspects of mentoring relationships impact on entrepreneurial agency, how they inter-operate, and how they change over the duration of the relationship.

The relational theories discussed in Section 2.4. highlighted various factors and characteristics of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships that play an important role in their success. It is important that the relationship is founded on trust, facilitates risk taking and learning, is compatible and permits interdependence, is cognisant of the impact of emotions on behaviour, and is aware of the collective impact of the relationship on entrepreneurial agency. The selected relationship theories discussed throughout this chapter highlight and signal a range of perspectives for the exploration of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Of particular interest to this research is the identification of the critical functions in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship and the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency. This is not sufficiently well understood or explained empirically. There are opportunities to build the theoretical basis of mentoring constructs and phenomena through further incorporation of relevant elements of social capital theory, relational/social cognitive theory, social cognitive career theory, social exchange theory, relational cohesion theory, self-in relational theory, attachment theory, and interaction ritual chain theory. Social support theory emerged as particularly salient in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Psychological support has implications for an individual nascent entrepreneur's ability to develop personally. In particular mentors support the development of nascent entrepreneurs' self-

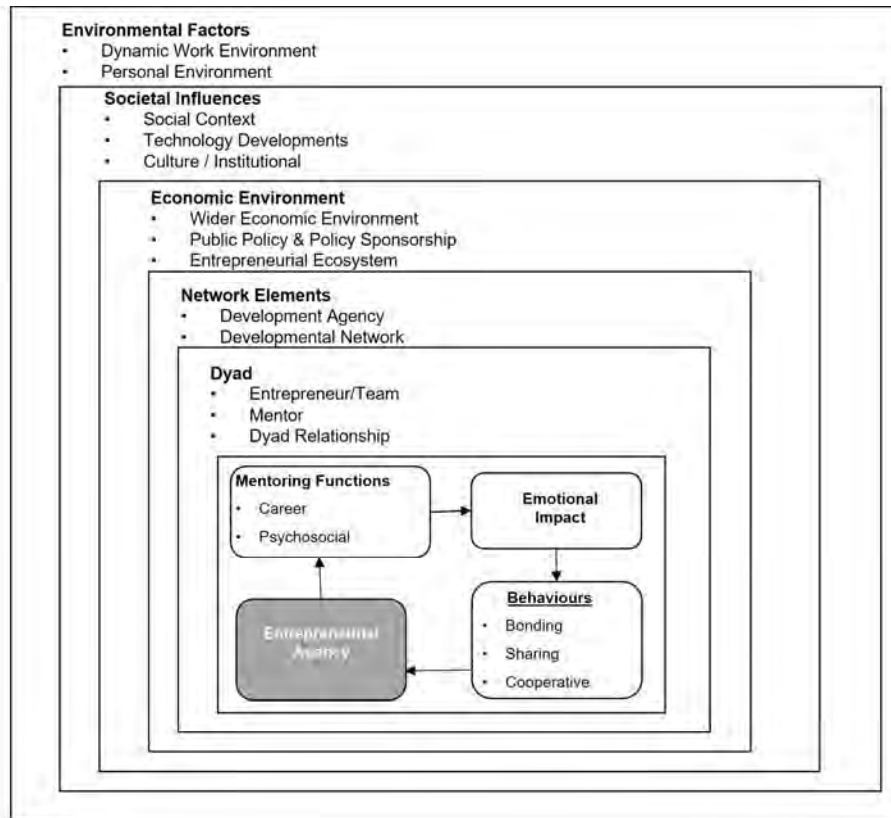
efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity. Information support through formal mentoring relationships help nascent entrepreneurs to develop tacit and contextual knowledge, and provides access to information and resources. This knowledge base helps nascent entrepreneurs filter pertinent information, make effective decisions, anticipate problems, prepare contingencies, and overcome the liability of newness. Network support and tangible assistance are important elements that help provide nascent entrepreneurs build social capital, increase their network connections, support entrepreneurial behaviour, and develop social/political skills. The focus on the relational process that supports nascent entrepreneurs through the successful stages of venture emergence stands out as social support process. This serves to contribute to understanding the ideal mentoring conditions and processes through which the nascent entrepreneurs-mentor relationship can flourish. It is evident that formal mentoring has many benefits and is accepted as both a valuable and efficient method of learning and development in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. The relational factors and characteristics that impact the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship were discussed and include formality and pairing, interactions, and behaviours.

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals that many different researchers from a variety of academic disciplines have proposed a multiplicity of constructs to study the impact of entrepreneurship, mentoring relationships, and mentoring in the context of entrepreneurs. In order to understand the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship a multilevel framework and model (Figure 4) is proposed as part of this research, which consists of six core dimensions: Dyad relationship; Dyad members; Network elements; Economic Environment; Societal Influences; and Environmental. Following Eisenhardt (1989) approach to building conceptual models and theories, the multilevel framework and model proposed in Figure 4 is built upon an integration of theoretical perspectives from entrepreneurship and mentoring literatures (Cull 2006; Deakins et al. 1998; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; St-Jean 2011; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Dimov 2010; Bronfenbrenner 1989).

Figure 3: Interrelationships between Research Objectives and Theoretical Constructs



**Figure 4: Proposed Multilevel Framework and Model of the Mentoring Relationship**



## 2.8. Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed review of the existing research on entrepreneurship, mentoring functions, interactions, emotions and agency. It highlighted mentoring as a valuable role as a social support mechanism for various career and psychosocial purposes and linked it to social support theory. Upon reviewing the literature, it became apparent how much more beneficial social support theory is in the case of the nascent entrepreneur who relies heavily on all provisions of external support. It highlighted the under-researched area of the critical functions in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship and the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency. To investigate this further, it is necessary to choose an appropriate research philosophy, approach, strategy and technique. The research methodology is reflected upon in the next chapter and justification for the choice of methodology provided.

## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Method**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed and considered in this study. Initially, the research objectives of this study are reviewed and various methodological considerations outlined. The guiding research philosophy is then provided, along with a description of the techniques and procedures used to collect the primary data. This details the content analysis approach (Berelson 1952; Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990) adopted in this study to explore nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship interactions and understanding through a sequence of qualitative in-depth semi-structured interview questionnaires. Clough and Nutbrown's (2007) interpretation of research reflects the research and opportunity perspective used to explore knowledge and theory in this thesis:

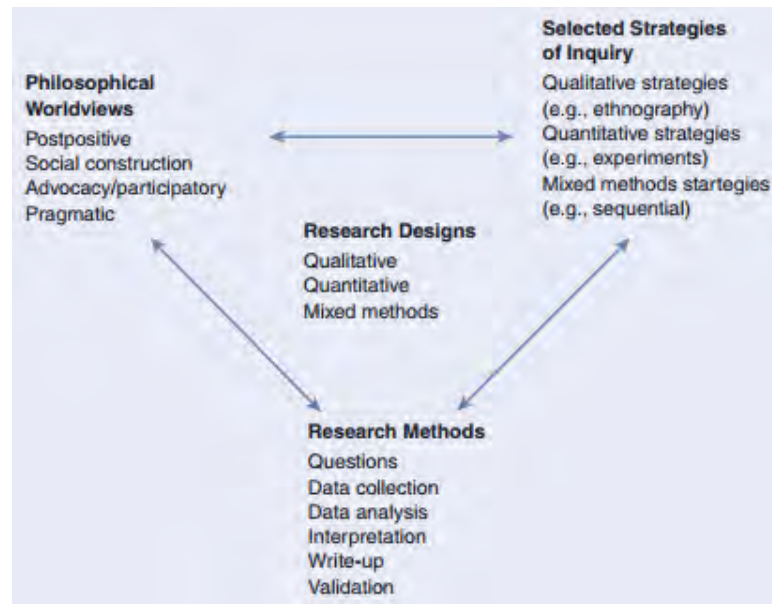
*'Research is the investigation of an idea, subject or topic for a purpose. It enables the researcher to extend knowledge or explore theory. It offers the opportunity to investigate an area of interest from a particular perspective.'* (Clough and Nutbrown 2012: 5)

The core area of interest in this study, is the phenomena of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context. The research perspective is the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship, and the purpose is to explore how these interactions may affect the emotions of nascent entrepreneurs, and if in turn these emotions affect behaviour and entrepreneurial agency. As outlined in the literature review, Chapter 2, there is very little understanding of the influence of emotions in a mentoring/entrepreneurial context. Additionally, there is a lack of a well-developed theory to explain the impacts of emotions on behaviour and entrepreneurial agency. The aim of this research is to explore the cognitive, behavioural, and developmental dimensions of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context.

### **3.2. Methodological Reflection**

Research design is the plan or proposal to conduct research, and it involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and methods (Creswell 2014). Researchers

need to examine the philosophical paradigm assumptions that they bring to the research, the strategy of enquiry related to the paradigm, and the specific methods that translate the approach into practice (Creswell 2014). Creswell (2014) provides a useful framework to understand the interaction of the philosophical paradigms/worldviews, strategies of inquiry, and research methods (see Figure 5):



**Figure 5: Interaction of the Philosophical Paradigms (Worldviews), Strategies of Inquiry, and Research Methods Creswell (2014: 5)**

According to Guba (1990: 17), the term ‘worldview’ refers to ‘a basic set of beliefs that guide action’. Others have referred to the term as paradigms (Lincoln and Guba 2000; Mertens 2014), epistemologies and ontologies (Crotty 1998), or broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman 2000). In briefly explaining the paradigms/worldviews outlined in Figure 5, the researcher recognises that these broad descriptions in no way account for the complexities and variations within these perspectives. The purpose is to provide an understanding of why certain paradigms/worldviews have been adopted, or discounted, within the current study. Since Comte (1844) introduced the concept of positivism, it has been central in the philosophy of science (Alvesson 2009). Data or facts, according to positivism, are observable, which links positivism to empiricism (Harré 1991). Post-positivism

challenged the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge (Phillips and Burbules 2000), arguing that claims about knowledge cannot be positive when researching the behaviour and actions of human beings. According to post-positivism, causes probably determine effects or outcomes (Creswell 2014). Constructionism, in contrast to positivism, is socially constructed (Alvesson 2009). It is rooted in the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world and develop subjective meaning of their experiences (Andrews 2012). According to Berger and Luckman (1966), all knowledge is derived from, and maintained by, social interactions. Social constructionists construct knowledge and are concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it is created (Andrews 2012). Constructionist studies usually adopt a qualitative approach employing broad, open-ended questions in order to elicit detailed responses that highlight views of the study in question (Golafshani 2003). The advocacy/participatory paradigm/worldview focuses on research inquiry that is intertwined with politics and a political agenda (Creswell 2014). It contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants (Creswell 2014). Research associated with this paradigm is typically qualitative, practical and collaborative (Andrew et al. 2011). The pragmatism paradigm/worldview is primarily concerned with applications and solutions to problems (Patton 1990). Pragmatists focus on the research problem and on all available approaches to its understanding (Rossman and Wilson 1985). As a result, they often rely on both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.

Paradigms/worldviews are shaped by the discipline area, the beliefs of advisors, past research experience, and beliefs held by the individual researcher. These beliefs often influence the choice of strategy of inquiry: quantitative; qualitative; or mixed methods. Philosophers and researchers have long debated the use of quantitative or qualitative research design (Clough and Nutbrown 2012). The qualitative–quantitative debate is also referred to as the positivist/empiricist and constructivist/phenomenological division (Clough and Nutbrown 2012; Creswell 2014; Neuman 2000). Personal beliefs may guide researchers to conduct research in a pragmatic way, however, researchers seeking to address problems, policies, and

practises are called to use something stronger than their beliefs alone (Phillips and Burbules 2000). According to Phillips and Burbules (2000), researchers must generate views based on beliefs generated through rigorous inquiry, and that are likely true. In short, they need to seek knowledge. Mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context primarily addresses the social world. Therefore, it is important to capture multiple perspectives of the phenomena under study in order to gain the most objective and correct understanding of them. The next sections of this chapter will focus on the issues surrounding the search for knowledge through a deeper worldview.

### **3.3. Research Objectives**

It is important to consider the context of the research question and objectives in selecting appropriate methodology and methods (Phillips and Burbules 2000). The primary research question of this study is: *In a nascent entrepreneur-mentor formal relationship context, what are the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions, and how do these impact emotions and behaviour, and interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency?* By answering this question and achieving the three objectives below, this research will provide further conceptual understanding regarding the relationship between mentors and nascent entrepreneurs, the mentoring process and associated functions, and the impact of emotions and behaviour on entrepreneurial agency. The objectives of this research are:

***Objective 1:*** Identify the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions in a formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

***Objective 2:*** Examine the emotions and behaviours derived from mentor interactions with nascent entrepreneurs.

***Objective 3:*** Analyse the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency.

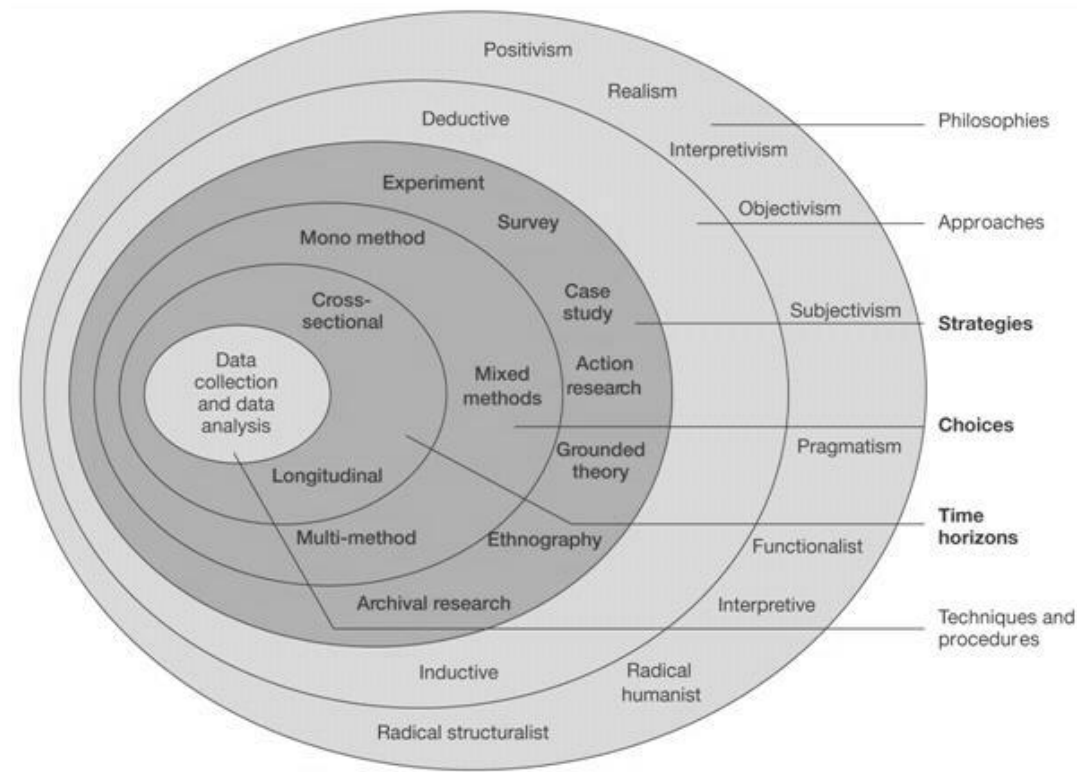
According to the literature mentoring is considered a unique type of social support (Nielson et al. 2001), however, the qualitative and affective aspects of positive relationships

remain unclear (Ragins and Kram 2007). While some research has established that formal mentors are important in influencing nascent entrepreneurial start-ups (Newbert et al. 2012; Powell and Eddleston 2012), little research has investigated the contribution by mentors in the development of nascent entrepreneurs. Chapter 1 outlined the existing problems in applying existing mentoring research findings to different types of entrepreneurs, how mentoring differs in the nascent entrepreneurial context, and the need to address the interconnectivity between entrepreneurs and their business ventures, an aspect that the current mentoring literature assumes are distinct (Allen et al. 2004; Underhill 2006; Eby and Lockwood 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Wanberg et al. 2006). It also highlighted the lack of research on the impact of emotions on nascent entrepreneurs from an entrepreneurial perspective (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b) and mentoring perspective (Barrett 2006; Cull 2006; Gravells 2006; Kyrgidou and Petridou 2013; Miettinen 2006; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; St-Jean 2011; St-Jean 2012; St-Jean and Audet 2009; St-Jean and Audet 2012). By addressing these gaps, the current study may help mentors and nascent entrepreneurs to understand how to maximise the benefits of mentoring programmes, highlight the impact of interactions on emotions and behaviours, and ultimately entrepreneurial agency. In addition, it may help influence the design of mentoring programmes, the process of mentoring and associated functions, and help educate mentors, nascent entrepreneurs, and the responsible governing agencies on the impact of emotions.

#### **3.4. Methodological Underpinnings**

Performing research and pursuing knowledge is influenced by a variety of factors. There are many models that exist for conducting research projects, one of which is the 'Onion Model' developed by Saunders et al. (2011). This model best addresses the research process (see Figure 6) and helps map and develop the research methodology for this study, which includes the research approach, relevant strategies and philosophies, as well as the techniques

involved in the collection and analysis of the data. The ‘Onion Model’ is used to organise and present the remaining parts of this chapter regarding theory and practical considerations.



**Figure 6: Research ‘Onion Model’ (Saunders et al. 2011: 138)**

### **3.4.1. Research Philosophy**

The first layer of the ‘Onion Model’ addresses the philosophical approach which according to Saunders et al. (2007) contains important assumptions that underpin the research strategy and methods chosen as part of the strategy. Assumptions regarding two dimensions are required when developing a philosophical approach: the nature of society; and the nature of science (Burrell and Morgan 1979). Society is viewed as unified and cohesive, however, the sociology of change views society in constant conflict to free the domination of societal structures (Burrell and Morgan 1979). Science on the other hand, involves either a subjective or objective approach to research. The subjective and objective philosophical approaches are outlined by several core assumptions relating to ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge), human nature (pre-determined or not), and methodology (Holden and Lynch

2004). Traditionally for philosophers, the twin terms of methodology are ontology and epistemology (Clough and Nutbrown 2012). Ontology relates to the nature of reality and assumptions regarding the way the world works and the commitment held to a particular view (Saunders et al. 2009). Epistemology is related to the study of knowledge and what is regarded as valid knowledge (Collis and Hussey 2003). According to Saunders et al. (2007), there are three epistemology approaches: positivism; realism; and interpretivism. The *positivism* approach is often associated with researchers seeking to observe social reality to develop law-like generalisations (Remenyi and Williams 1998). A highly structured methodology is required to facilitate replication (Gill and Johnson 1997), coupled with quantifiable observations that may be analysed statistically (Saunders et al. 2003). The researcher is assumed to be independent of, and neither affects nor is affected by, the subject of the research (Remenyi and Williams 1998; Saunders et al. 2003). According to *realism*, real objects exist independent of human consciousness, however knowledge is socially created (Saunders et al. 2007). Realism is concerned with what kinds of things there are and how these things behave, yet it is accepted that reality may exist in spite of science or observation, hence there is validity in recognising realities that are simply claimed to exist or act, with or without proof (Blaikie 2007). In an organisational context, the realist researcher examines mechanisms and structures that underpin institutional forms and practices, how they emerge over time, their effect, and how they may be evaluated and changed (Hatch and Cunliffe 2012). Given that reality exists at multiple levels, realists purport that researching from different angles and at multiple levels contributes to understanding (Chia 2002). The *interpretivist* approach prioritises subjective meaning and social-political (as well as symbolic) action, in the process through which humans construct and reconstruct their reality (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). This approach concentrates on diverse cultures, socioeconomic conditions, and the experiences and perceptions of those involved (Avgerou and Walsham 2001). This highlights research associated with people rather than objects.

This study involves a level of interpretation of experiences and perceptions within mentoring relationships between mentors and nascent entrepreneurs. Therefore, the philosophy suited to this study is interpretive as it is ‘an epistemology that advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors’ (Saunders et al. 2007: 106). In terms of ontology (nature of reality), the research will involve a subjective approach due to the required analysis of the interactions between mentors and nascent entrepreneurs and the interpretation of their experiences and perceptions. The role of the researcher is to ‘seek to understand the subjective reality of the customers in order to be able to make sense of and understand their motives, actions and intentions in a way that is meaningful’ (Saunders et al. 2007: 109).

### ***3.4.2. Research Approach***

The two most common ways to classify a research approach are: deductive and inductive. The main difference between the two approaches is that while the deductive approach is designed to test theory, the inductive approach is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data. The *deductive* approach is based on what is known about a domain and the theoretical considerations within it, from which a hypothesis is inferred and subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman and Bell 2015). It is commonly associated with a quantitative research approach and follows a sequence that starts with existing theory, deducting hypotheses, gathering data, analysing data, outlining findings, confirming or rejecting the hypotheses, and finally a revision of the theory (Bryman and Bell 2015). The last stage in the deductive sequence involves induction, as the implications of the research findings are fed back into the stock of theory (Bryman and Bell 2015). The deductive approach therefore involves an element of induction. With an *inductive* approach, theory is the outcome of research and inductive strategies are typically associated with a qualitative research approach (Bryman and Bell 2015). The process of induction involves the development of a theory as a result of the observations of empirical data (Saunders et al. 2007). Grounded theory was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and is often used in

inductive research as a useful way of generalising theories out of data. Saunders et al. (2007: 120) describe the inductive approach as an emphasis on ‘gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events’. For the purpose of this study the inductive approach is adopted to focus on understanding the meanings and interpretations of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Flexibility in building theories and a flexible structure is another characteristic of this study that aligns itself better with an inductive approach.

### ***3.4.3. Research Strategy***

The research strategy is a generic plan guiding the way for the researcher to answer the research questions (Saunders et al. 2003). The types of research strategy available include: cross sectional studies; experimental studies; longitudinal studies; surveys; action research; case studies; ethnography; grounded theory; hermeneutics; and participative enquiry (Collis and Hussey 2003). The type of research strategy adopted for the current study involved elements of longitudinal studies, and content analysis. Longitudinal studies are defined as studies in which the observations are made repeatedly over time. This study focuses on one method of longitudinal qualitative research, the longitudinal qualitative interview (LQI). LQI's are conducted with the same people over a period of time sufficient to allow for data to be collected and observed (Hermanowicz 2013). The principal aim is to expose process, evaluate causality, and substantiate micro-macro linkage (Hermanowicz 2013). This strategy helps to understand developmental change, conceived at the individual, institutional, or societal level (Ruspini 1999). Content analysis is considered to be a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952). Originating in communications research, content analysis is a generic name for a variety of means of textual analyses that involves comparing and categorising a corpus of data (Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data in a systematic fashion using categories or discourse markers to assign features to data segments. It can be a particularly useful way to allow researchers to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional and/or

social attention (Weber, 1990). According to Kets de Vries and Miller (1987) the researcher is looking for insight rather than any final solution. They suggest the importance of ‘dialogue, reformulation, historical analysis, tentative explanation and modification’ (Kets de Vries and Miller 1987: 238) as well as being aware of the situational context.

#### **3.4.4. Research Choice**

The research choice refers to the methods used for qualitative and quantitative research. *Qualitative* research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach focused on understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena within their social worlds (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). According to Bryman (1988: 8) ‘The way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research’. Qualitative research focuses on exploration, description, and sometimes generation and construction of theories using qualitative data (Johnson and Christensen 2012). *Quantitative* research on the other hand focuses on testing theories and hypotheses using quantitative data to see if they are confirmed or not (Johnson and Christensen 2012). Strategies associated with quantitative research are experiments, surveys. Quantitative methods emphasise movement from theory to hypotheses to data to conclusions, and qualitative methods emphasise movement directly from observations and data to descriptions and patterns and to theory generation (Johnson and Christensen 2012). Strategies normally applied to quantitative research are experimental studies, surveys, and predetermined instruments used in data.

The term *mixed methods* research is defined as the integration of quantitative and qualitative research within the same study (Bryman and Bell 2007). The foundation of mixed methods research is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). Quantitative and qualitative methods are traditionally viewed as two ends of the

spectrum; however mixed methods is becoming more accepted as a third approach (Creswell et al. 2003). Triangulation<sup>17</sup> is often a common justification for choosing to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, however, mixed methods have moved beyond the purpose of mere triangulation to a distinct research approach in the social sciences (Creswell et al. 2003). Greene et al. (1989) term this *expansion*, meaning the purpose of choosing mixed methods is to expand the breadth and scope of the project. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) suggest that quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed together in order to form a more complete picture of the research question than they do when standing alone.

A qualitative research approach will be adopted in this study using a single data collection technique (mono method) for the data collection. Each dyad mentor-nascent entrepreneur provides in-depth valuable information about the mentor, nascent entrepreneur, the nascent venture, and the dyad relationship. *In-depth* interview questionnaires will be used to seek qualitative information from the respondents. They are most appropriate for situations where open-ended questions are suited, as they elicit depth of information from relatively few people (Bogdan and Biklen 2006). The in-depth interview will be semi-structured to allow for follow up questions where appropriate, and a suite of questions will be used to seek depth of information from respondents. The depth is required from the responses in order to evaluate an exploratory study of the effect of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships on emotions and behaviour and the subsequent effect on entrepreneurial agency. Interviews will be recorded to allow researcher to adequately analyse and evaluate the data.

#### **3.4.5. Time Horizon**

There are two forms of time horizons: cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. The defining feature of *cross-sectional* studies is that they compare different population groups at a single point in time (Bryman and Bell 2007). However, cross-sectional studies

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<sup>17</sup> The application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon (Jick 1979)

may not provide definite information about cause-and-effect relationships as they use data that is only collected at one time (Chambliss and Schutt 2012). They offer snapshots at a single moment in time, and do not consider what happened before or after the snapshot is taken (Saunders et al. 2007). *Longitudinal* studies conduct several observations of the same subject over a period of time (Chambliss and Schutt 2012). The benefit is that it may be possible to detect developments or changes in the characteristics of the sample population at both the individual and group level (Chambliss and Schutt 2012). Longitudinal studies are therefore more likely to suggest cause-and-effect relationships (Saunders et al. 2007). An eighteen-month longitudinal study was employed in the current research to investigate nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, the emotions and behaviours derived from their interactions, and their role in enabling entrepreneurial agency. This time horizon has many strengths and weaknesses. Utilising longitudinal studies is a prospective study rather than a retrospective study. Because prospective studies are recorded they are less likely to be influenced by biases. They allow for respondents to reflect on the changes (or lack of them) since the previous interview, and reflect on specific events, feelings or emotions. While longitudinal data is collected at multiple points, the observation periods are pre-determined and may not represent accurately what happened in between the touch points. Longitudinal studies are very time consuming and hence resource intensive.

#### ***3.4.6. Techniques and Procedures***

A qualitative research method has been chosen due to the investigative and exploratory nature of this study. Qualitative methods are used predominately for non-numerical data collection or data analysis (Saunders et al. 2007). As in-depth semi-structured interview questionnaires have been selected as the primary data collection method across nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, the technique employs qualitative data. A collection of extensive secondary data was also gathered. This included internal documents such as business plans, memos, collaborative contracts, strategy documents, and goal

statements, which was used to increase respondents' recall of past events, and to understand the specific entrepreneurial context in which to interpret the accounts of each respondent.

### ***3.4.7. Sampling Selection***

Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose, and gain access to relevant data sources (Mason 2002). Field (2005) described a sample as a smaller collection from the population used to determine truths about the same population. Two types of sampling techniques exist: probability or representative sampling; and non-probability and judgemental sampling (Saunders et al. 2007). Non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques to select samples based on subjective judgement (Saunders et al. 2007). Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, is employed in the current research where subjects were selected based on their convenient accessibility and proximity. It is acknowledged that criticisms of this technique exist as it is prone to bias and influences that are beyond the control of the researcher (Saunders et al. 2007). One objective of this study is to identify the functions and characteristics of interactions in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. However, the narrower focus is on investigating the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency. The sample was a purposeful, drawn from Enterprise Development Programmes provided by two entrepreneur development agencies (Enterprise Ireland's (EI)<sup>18</sup>, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)<sup>19</sup>) in the Republic of Ireland and focused on nascent entrepreneurs. The development agencies provided all 122 initial mentoring pairs and sought agreement from both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs to participate in the study and to share their contact details with the researcher. The final sample consisted of eighty four mentoring dyads who provided complete data for this study. The

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<sup>18</sup>Enterprise Ireland (EI) is the government organisation responsible for the development of Irish enterprises in world markets (Enterprise-Ireland, 2012) (<http://www.enterprise-ireland.ie>)

<sup>19</sup> LEOs offer startup ventures training courses, business plan advice, market research information, mentoring, and feasibility grants and co-investments (LEO, 2014)(<http://www.localenterprise.ie>)

participants consisted of mentors and nascent entrepreneurs in formal mentoring programmes designed to facilitate the development of the nascent entrepreneur and their venture.

#### ***3.4.8. Research Ethics***

This research was commissioned by Enterprise Ireland and ethics approval was sought through their internal ethics approval process, which went through several iterations prior to the data collection. Ethical issues were given serious consideration throughout this research. Confidentiality from the researcher is an essential requirement along with the non-disclosure of classified information. In a research context, ethics refers to the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour with respect to the rights of those who are the subject of the research study, or who are affected by it (Saunders et al. 2007). The purpose of the study is clearly communicated to all respondents prior to the commencement of any research. This allowed respondents time to fully understand the nature of the research and the topic under investigation. This allowed respondents adequate time to deliberate. Anonymity of the participants is a feature of the data collection and participants are not obliged to answer any questions deemed unsuitable. Agreement is sought for the use of voice recording instruments.

#### ***3.4.9. Research Limitations***

The research was conducted over a short period of time which is limiting by nature. The dynamic and demanding nature of entrepreneurship often entails busy workloads which provides limited availability for interviews. Qualitative research depends on the judgement of the individual researcher and is very dependent on the researcher's interpretation, and is therefore, prone to the bias of the researcher. Awareness and caution with respect to personal bias was maintained throughout the entire study. Reliability of data and sincerity of respondents is another potential limitation. Confidentiality constraints and policies governing the mentors could impact the integrity and validity of responses.

### **3.5. Research Methods and Data Collection**

This section describes the practical research approach adopted and the ‘operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly’ (Leedy 1989: 98). The in-depth qualitative method and the inductive approach pursued were deemed appropriate in order to gather evidence of experiences as perceived by participants (Isabella 1990; Maitlis and Lawrence 2007) and to capture data about relationships that are nested in a real-life context and the reality of participant’s perceptions (Amaratunga et al. 2002). The broader specific intentions of this study were to gather data that improve the understanding of the relationships between nascent entrepreneurs and mentors, to strengthen the perception of mentor functions in a nascent entrepreneur context, and to gain an insight into the role of interactions and emotions and their impact on entrepreneurial agency. This research responds to calls for an increased understanding of dyadic relationships in the context of mentoring. According to Krasikova and LeBreton (2012) the most necessary aspect of dyadic constructs is their relational core. For the purpose of this research, it was considered appropriate to study formal mentoring relationships in the context of nascent entrepreneurs to utilise the dimensions proposed by Krasikova and LeBreton (2012).

#### ***3.5.1. Data Collection***

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a content analysis approach was adopted to explore nascent entrepreneur experiences and understanding through a sequence of in-depth semi-structured interview questionnaires. Semi-structured interview questionnaires were conducted at three points over the eighteen-month study period between 2011 and 2013 (see Appendix A). The use of multiple interviews increased confidence about nascent entrepreneur-mentor interactions and helped to ensure that inaccurate accounts would be difficult to sustain over multiple interviews. During each interview, respondents were asked to provide accounts of specific mentor interactions, examples of positive emotions and how these interactions influenced behaviours and entrepreneurial agency, and to evaluate the importance of different mentoring functions over the eighteen months of the research. An

extensive set of secondary data was also collected. The empirical analyses are based on data collected using semi-structured interviews with a final sample of eighty four dyadic mentoring relationships. All respondents were interviewed at three points over the duration of the study. In 2010 a letter was sent to all of the nascent entrepreneurs and mentors of a forthcoming invitation to participate in a research project on mentoring and nascent entrepreneurs. For the purpose of this study the focus was described as follows:

*'Policy makers and academics have recently developed an interest in the role of mentors and the support functions that they perform for nascent entrepreneurs. The start-up of a new business venture is an important milestone and challenge for a nascent entrepreneur. Mentors perform an important role in helping the nascent entrepreneur to make a success of the business venture. We would equally appreciate your participation in this research project'*

Data were collected on both nascent entrepreneurs and their mentors during Phase 1 of the data collection process over the first three months of the relationship. Phase 2 data were collected during the third and sixth months of the mentoring relationship. Phase 3 was the longest phase and data was collected in the eighteen months of the mentoring relationship. The interview timelines were requested by Enterprise Ireland as part of the study. All interviews were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires for each phase of the research study. The Phase 1 questions focused on the nascent entrepreneurs' decision to start up a new venture, their reason for participating in the Enterprise Development Programme, and their expectations from the mentoring relationship. Demographic and human capital data was collected from both the nascent entrepreneurs and their mentors. Phase 2 and 3 focused on the progression of the mentoring relationship. During phases 1, 2 and 3 both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors were asked questions about the operation of the mentoring relationship and included open questions on issues which addressed: compatibility of the relationship, the types of support provided, relationship characteristics such as trust, openness and reflections on how the relationship has evolved since the previous phase of the study. The

specific question ‘what support did you provide [mentor] or receive [nascent entrepreneur] over the duration of the relationship to date’ was asked. Participants were invited to provide specific examples and for the purposes of this component of the study, they were requested to confine their examples and comments to the specific formal mentoring relationship that was a key component of the programmes investigated. Questions were asked of both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors thus gathering data from both members of the dyad. The research questions were designed to focus on both members of the dyad, however some questions were applicable to both members, others questions focused on either the nascent entrepreneur or the mentor. Both the nascent entrepreneurs and mentors were interviewed at the location of their preference (locations included mentor’s business, venture premises, external location). Each interview lasted about 90 minutes on average. Results of 84 dyadic relationships were included in the final analysis as a full set of data for all three phases of the study existed for each dyad.

### ***3.5.2. Sample Characteristics***

An initial 122 nascent entrepreneurs and their mentors agreed to participate in the study. Complete interviews for eighty four mentoring pairs were included in the final study. Table 5 represents the characteristics of the nascent entrepreneurs, their business venture, and respective mentors. Part A of Table 5 presents the demographic and human capital characteristics of the nascent entrepreneurs and mentors in the sample. Twenty-one percent of the nascent entrepreneur sample is female and eighty-eight percent is aged less than forty. Eighty-five percent of the sample were born in Ireland and eighty-six percent of nascent entrepreneurs have an undergraduate degree or higher. Almost a quarter of the entrepreneur sample has a parent as an entrepreneur. Part B of Table 5 describes the characteristics of the nascent venture. Seventy-nine percent of the entrepreneurs’ ventures were less than seven months in operation at Phase 1 of the research. In terms of distribution of ventures across sectors, fifty-five percent of ventures were active in the business services sector, twenty-five percent in hospitality and tourism, and twenty-five percent in research and development.

Table 5 also shows that sixty percent of the sample co-own a venture together with one or more entrepreneurs and thirty-four percent of entrepreneur's ventures are run from home. Part C of Table 5 describes the characteristics of the mentors who participated in the study. The average age of the mentors was thirty-nine years and sixty-seven percent of mentors were male and eighty-eight percent of mentors had a bachelor degree or higher. The average entrepreneur/business experience of mentors was eighteen years and the average mentoring experience was seven years.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Nascent Entrepreneurs and their Mentors**

<b>PART A</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF NASCENT ENTREPRENEUR</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	61	73
	Female	23	27
Age	Age < 30	19	23
	Age 30-40	47	55
	Age 40+	18	22
Nationality	Born in Ireland	71	85
Education	Non-national	13	15
	Certificate/Diploma	12	14
	Bachelor degree	49	58
	Masters/PhD	23	28
Parent Entrepreneurs	Yes	16	19
	No	68	81
Operation of business	Home Business	29	34
	Non-home Business	55	66
<b>PART B</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF NASCENT VENTURE</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Age of Ventures	< 4 months	20	24
	< 7 months	46	55
	7 months+	18	27
Business Sector	Business Services	44	52
	Hospitality and Tourism	21	25
	Research and Development	19	23
Ownership	Single Ownership	50	70
	Shared Ownership	34	10
<b>PART C</b>	<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF MENTOR</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Average Age	Average Age	39.7 years	
Gender	Male	56	67
	Female	28	33
Education	Certificate/Diploma	10	12
	Bachelor Degree	46	55
	Masters/PhD	28	33

### 3.6. Analysis of Data

To aggregate, reduce, analyse, and interpret the data a matrix analysis was employed (Miles and Huberman 1994). Matrices can be descriptive, outcome-oriented, or process-

oriented. This approach helps identify elements unique and common across all respondents (Goodman and Steckler 1989), and recognises themes and patterns related to a particular research question (Miles and Huberman 1994). Two test interviews were conducted to check content of the interview and timing. All interviews took place in Ireland and were recorded. The sample is a purposeful, targeted one, therefore, it is difficult to say how representative it is. In order to analyse the qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data was then analysed with the help of NVivo (version 10). NVivo is a comprehensive qualitative data analysis software package that was used to organise and analyse the interviews conducted as part of this research. NVivo allowed the interview transcripts to be easily classified, sorted and arranged. This helped to establish relationships in the data, and cross-examine information in a multitude of ways using search engine and query functions.

A multi-step content analytic approach was employed to analyse the nascent entrepreneur-mentor functions and interactions from an emotion, behaviour, and agency perspective. The first round of the analytical process began by a reading of all interview transcripts highlighting each respondent's description of the mentor functions and utilised social support theory categories (psychological, information, network) to categorise the responses. During this process it was identified that a number of supports were also being provided at venture level as well as individual level. The data was reviewed and examined for sub-categories while keeping an open mind with respect to the categorisation of the extracts. This analyses process is similar to thematic analyses which is a common approach used to uncover themes and sub-themes in interview textual data (Braun and Clarke 2006). It also allows researchers to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. During this analysis stage the data was analysed to explore different types of support within each social support category from both the nascent entrepreneurs' perspective and the venture perspective. The literature was revisited in order to conceptualise and justify the sub-categories identified: support; develop; steer; plan; share; and filter. The data was then categorised using the following conceptual understanding and depicted in the second

column of Table 6 labelled *Sub-Category*. The mentoring function *Support* is conceptualised as psychosocial support provided by the mentor to a nascent entrepreneur. The mentoring function *Develop* is conceptualised as developmental support provided by the mentor to a nascent entrepreneur during the venture creation process. The mentoring function *Steer* is conceptualised as the provision of focus and direction to a nascent entrepreneur to complete a multiplicity of tasks. In the context of nascent entrepreneurs, this includes the performance of effective work habits and direct task behaviours that help an entrepreneur to achieve both personal and venture goals. The mentoring function *Share* is conceptualised as knowledge, advice, information, and know-how of operating a business venture. It is viewed as a form of knowledge transfer (both explicit and tacit) and a mechanism through which nascent entrepreneurs reflect on and construct new knowledge, which is central to the entrepreneurial process. The mentoring function *Plan* is conceptualised as helping a nascent entrepreneur to plan including resource and business planning and project management. Planning in the context of new venture creation has a number of important symbolic, learning, and efficiency functions. The mentoring function *Filter* is conceptualised as helping a nascent entrepreneur to filter important information that is vital to the success of the new venture. Incorporated into the iterative process was a search for key words that would convey support from the mentor: support (e.g. self-esteem, self-confidence); develop (e.g. knowledge, experience, information, ability); steer (e.g. resource management, planning, anticipation); plan (e.g. anticipate, plan, question, analyse); share (e.g. social capital, network, resources); and filter (e.g. assess, analyse). Utilising an iterative process, it was necessary to move back and forth between the data and literature on mentoring functions to add to and adjust the approach where necessary. Sub-themes were deleted from further analyses where they were represented by a single comment made by a participant. The final set of sub-categories were then compared with the existing literature. In the final coding round, round 3, the codebook was given to an

independent coder who was then requested to re-categorise each of the extracts into defined sub-categories. On completion of this coding process kappas<sup>20</sup> (Cohen 1968) were calculated for the five sub-categories from two independent observers. The calculated kappas are: 0.78 (support), 0.74 (develop), 0.72 (steer), 0.69 (plan), 0.81 (share), and 0.68 (filter). Following extensive discussion between the two observers<sup>21</sup> adjustments were made to the classification of extracts. This occurred through discussion, questioning and clarification. The unweighted kappas increased to: 0.98 (support), 0.91 (develop), 0.89 (steer), 0.88 (plan), 0.98 (share), and 0.93 (filter). The extracts presented are illustrative of the 504 interviews<sup>22</sup> conducted with both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors over the three phases of the research are included in the data findings.

In round two, each respondent description was further analysed and the interaction categorised (i.e. power or status) using interaction ritual chain theory. In descriptions where the mentor became the order-giver and the entrepreneur the order-taker these were classified as power rituals, consistent with the literature (Collins 2004). Descriptions that lacked any obvious order-giver or order-taker were classified as status rituals, consistent with the literature (Collins 1990). In round three, the emotions associated with the mentor functions and interaction ritual were identified. In classifying the emotions associated with mentor functions, the emotional tone of respondents' accounts was examined, and the statements related to the functions interpreted. This interpretive process involved assessing evaluative statements about interactions and labelling the emotions according to the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012). Nascent entrepreneurs used many positive words to describe mentor interactions, such as, 'frank', 'honest', 'involved', 'insightful', 'precise', 'friendly', 'open', 'brilliant', 'willing', and 'spot-on'. Trust, while not considered an emotion, appeared directly or indirectly to be linked to the emotions in the majority of accounts.

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<sup>20</sup> Statistics used to determine inter-rater reliability (Cohen 1968)

<sup>21</sup> *Observer 1*: Janice O'Connell *Observer 2*: Prof. Thomas Garavan

<sup>22</sup> Eighty-four mentors and nascent entrepreneurs, interviewed separately at three distinct times in relationship.

Positive emotions lay the groundwork for the development of trust, and in order to identify a nascent entrepreneur's trust in their mentor, the interview transcripts were analysed for accounts referring to: emotional investment in the relationship, honest care for, and personal interest in, the nascent entrepreneur (Chun et al. 2010); reliability and dependability (Bouquillon et al. 2005); and voluntary cooperative behaviour (Ferrin et al. 2007). The fourth round involved analysing the identified emotions and associating behaviours with the positive emotions. Three different types of behaviour were identified, namely: bonding, sharing, and cooperative. Bonding behaviours were associated with accounts of friendship, confirmation, and encouragement. Sharing behaviours were identified through descriptions of understanding, knowledge transfer, introductions to a wider social network, and the provision of guidance. Cooperative behaviours were identified through accounts of responsiveness, goal development, risk encouragement, identification of critical information, and anticipation of outcomes. The fourth round involved detecting dimensions of entrepreneurial agency linked to the identified behaviours. This involved analysing descriptions for accounts that referred to the ability to: act, plan, and strategise (i.e. intentionality); set goals, monitor progress, and make sense of setbacks (i.e. forethought); take risks, develop new approaches, and understand consequences (i.e. self-reactiveness); reflect, prioritise, and make corrective decisions (i.e. self-reflectiveness). All coding rounds involved several iterations, revisions, modification and discussion to reach consensus. Table 9 provides a direct summary sample of the respondents accounts (column 2), the categorisation of the associated mentoring functions (column 3), the interaction ritual (column 4), the emotions identified (column 5), the resulting behaviour (column 6), the entrepreneurial agency that directly resulted from the behaviour (column 7), and the related entrepreneurial agency.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter provided a reflection of existing research philosophies, approaches, strategies and techniques, and justified the methodology chosen for this research. The data gathering and research methods were outlined and sample characteristics provided. The next

chapter concentrates on the analyses of this data and highlights the research findings. It takes into consideration that each unique interview is not isolated, but has meaning in terms of comparison with other interviews. Therefore, a key concept underpinning this research is that there is not one single, objective reality, but rather there is a series of multiple realities that need to be taken into account and valued as unique artefacts (Remenyi and Williams 1998).

## **Chapter 4 Research Findings**

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this research study. Existing mentoring studies have been largely based on Kram's work on organisational mentoring have been deductive in nature (St-Jean 2011). This study adopts an inductive approach where results have been shown to differ from existing studies based on Kram's conceptualisation of mentoring as a two dimensional construct composed of career-related and psychosocial functions (Levesque et al. 2005; Fowler and O'Gorman 2005). Given the uniqueness of nascent entrepreneurs and the multitude of tasks they are required to perform (Reynolds et al. 2004), there are difficulties applying the organisational research findings to the entrepreneurial context. Much of the mentoring literature assumes that mentee development is distinct and discrete from the organisation (Allen et al. 2004; Underhill 2006; Eby and Lockwood 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Wanberg et al. 2006), however in an entrepreneurial context the entrepreneur is the *primus inter pares* of an entrepreneurial venture. In the current context, this is significant as it is virtually impossible to separate the business venture and the nascent entrepreneur. Therefore, there is a need to reassess the two support functions (career-related and psychosocial) inductively in the context of mentoring nascent entrepreneurs. It is important to seek to discover mentoring functions and how they might differ in the context of the unique nascent entrepreneurial situations. Understanding these functions may influence the design and development of mentoring programmes and help reduce the current discontinuous rates (between forty and fifty percent) highlighted by GEM (2015).

The interactions between nascent entrepreneurs and mentors, is another area worthy of investigation, in particular how these interactions impact behaviours, emotions, and ultimately entrepreneurial agency. The interactions between the mentor and the mentee are involved and emotional (Evans 2008) and help enhance psychological characteristics such as entrepreneurial motivation, self-efficacy, and clarity of personal goals (Frese and Gielnik 2014). While the characteristics of mentoring interactions are important (duration and frequency, focus, initiation, type, and interaction ritual type), the impact of mentor

interactions on emotions are not well understood. The entrepreneurial mentoring literature has recently begun to focus on emotions (Baron 2008; Cardon and Kirk 2013; Patzelt and Shepherd 2011; Shepherd et al. 2009), and has linked emotions to risk perceptions (Podoyntsyna et al. 2012) and perceptions of business failure (Shepherd et al. 2009; Ucbasaran et al. 2010; Ucbasaran et al. 2013). Mentors play a key role in the production of emotions (Kemper 1978; Roseman 1984; Fearon 2004), and the interactions that occur within mentoring relationships also influence emotions (Frijda and Batja 1994; Kemper 1978; Goss 2005). Certain emotions motivate individual and interactive behaviours that enable individuals to form social bonds (Bowlby 2008; Watson et al. 1988; Watson 1988). The emotions demonstrated by entrepreneurs in the context of mentor interactions, and the impact of such interactions, are not well understood in the existing research on nascent entrepreneurs (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Lichtenstein et al. 2007; Zanakis et al. 2012; Davidsson and Honig 2003; Dimov 2010; Grossman et al. 2012b) and research on mentoring (Barrett 2006; Cull 2006; Gravells 2006; Kyrgidou and Petridou 2013; Miettinen 2006; Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012; St-Jean 2011; St-Jean 2012; St-Jean and Audet 2009; St-Jean and Audet 2012). The importance of nascent entrepreneurs' interactions with mentors, the emotional impact of those interactions and the resulting behaviour cannot be underestimated.

The originally devised interview structure had specific emphases on perceptions about the primary mentoring relationships. Seeking data from multi-site formal mentoring experiences occurring as contextually distinct forms of mentoring, is a valuable approach that attempts to satisfy significant gaps in the literature and a paucity of deep understanding in the extant mentoring and entrepreneurial research literature. Much has been learned from quantitative research about the antecedents and consequences of mentoring relationships at work (Kram 1985; Scandura and Pellegrini 2007; Chandler et al. 2011). However, comparatively little is understood about how unique mentoring relationships operate in terms of the support functions in the context of mentoring nascent entrepreneurs. The role of the researcher in this qualitative research study involved substantial interpretation and detailed

description of the data gathered, bearing in mind the subjective nature of perceptions as perceived by the respondents. Furthermore, the qualitative in-depth semi-structured interview approach and subsequent data analyses required cognisance that each unique interview was not isolated, but had meaning in terms of comparison with other interviews. Therefore, a key concept underpinning the research findings, as outlined by Remenyi and Williams (1998), is that there is not one single, objective reality, but rather there is a series of multiple realities that need to be taken into account and valued as unique artefacts.

## **4.2. Research Findings**

The findings that are discussed below emerged from an analysis of the interviews which were open and explorative in nature. The findings presented are based on all three phases of the mentoring relationship and report on the characteristics of mentoring, content of the mentoring functions, the interactions that occurred and their relationship to emotions, and finally, the behaviour resulting from the emotions and their impact on entrepreneurial agency.

### ***4.2.1. Content of Mentoring Functions over Phases of Relationship***

During the interviews both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors were asked to evaluate the importance of different mentoring functions over the eighteen months of the research study. These functions were categorised by the researcher by utilising social support theory categories: psychological; information; and network and tangible assistance. Table 6 summarises the perspectives of the provision of mentor functions by both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors, and depicts the number of both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors who evaluated the mentor function as a four or five<sup>23</sup>. It is important to state from the outset that the function sub-categories (support, develop, steer, plan, share, and filter) and their content descriptions as defined in Table 6 were defined by the researcher. The key findings are interesting with respect to the *Total Overall References per phase*: in phase 1, the mentors

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<sup>23</sup> Respondents rated evidence of provision of function based on ratings (5=Fully provided; 1=Not Provided)

made a similar number of overall references (555) as nascent entrepreneurs (508) to the six function sub-categories. This figure decreased in phase 2 even though the time period of the phase doubled with nascent entrepreneurs (459) referring to the six function sub-categories less than their mentors (498). In the final phase the number of references continued to significantly decrease for nascent entrepreneurs (377) with only a slight decrease for mentors (435).

From a social support perspective, the psychological issues identified that pose significant issues for nascent entrepreneurs were outlined in Section 2.2.1. and 2.5.2 and include: lack of confidence and self-efficacy (Dimov 2010), over-confidence (Koellinger et al. 2007), ability to maintain perseverance (Zhao et al. 2005b), mitigate strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005), take risks, and manage uncertainty (Cascio and Gasker 2001), reduce work-family conflict, and lower rates of job exhaustion (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001). The key findings related to the *Total Psychological References*, show that mentors (217) made significantly more references in phase 1 compared to all other sub-categories (develop 132, filter 44, steer 48, plan 46, share 68), and they consistently made more references than nascent entrepreneurs in phase 2 (psychological 156, develop 112, filter 37, steer 47, plan 54, share 74) and phase 3 (psychological 105, develop 88, filter 32, steer 44, plan 60, share 76) with respect to psychological support. Nascent entrepreneurs also made significantly more *Total Psychological References* in phase 1 (189) compared to all other sub-categories (develop 119, filter 50, steer 45, plan 36, share 48), and they consistently made more references than nascent entrepreneurs in phase 2 (psychological 125, develop 120, filter 48, steer 43, plan 44, share 34) and phase 3 (psychological 88, develop 88, filter 35, steer 35, plan 49, share 84) with respect to psychological support.

From a social support perspective, the informational challenges facing nascent entrepreneurs were highlighted in Section 2.2.1. and 2.5.3. and include their lack of: tacit and contextual knowledge (Dimov 2010), information and resources (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000), and their liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000). Other

information support addressed nascent entrepreneurs' ability to: filter pertinent information (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007), make effective decisions (Longnecker et al. 2013), anticipate problems and prepare contingencies (Delmar and Shane 2003; Dimov 2010; deJanasz et al. 2003). In the current study, the *Information* category is the social support category with the largest number of *Total References*, and was the most consistent category with more or less equal references at each sub-category and each phase by both nascent entrepreneurs (235 phase 1, 211 phase 2, and 158 phase 3) and mentors (224 phase 1, 214 phase 2, and 164 phase 3). However, the majority of references were relative to the *Develop* sub-category. The *Total Develop References* decreased at each phase, but remained relatively equally referenced by both nascent entrepreneurs (119 phase 1, 120 phase 2, and 88 phase 3) and mentors (132 phase 1, 112 phase 2, and 88 phase 3) across all phases.

The challenges that relate to network and tangible assistance from a social support perspective were addressed in Section 2.2.1. and 2.5.4. and include: network connections (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009), entrepreneurial behaviour (Gartner and Carter 2005), and social/political skills (Witt and Ferris 2003). The social support category *Network* is the only support that increases at each phase for both nascent entrepreneurs (84 phase 1, 123 phase 2, and 131 phase 3) and mentors (114 phase 1, 128 phase 2, and 166 phase 3). In particular, the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs to the sub-category *Share* almost double by phase 3 (84) relative to phase 1 (48). The next section discusses the findings relating to each function sub-category and their associated function descriptions in greater detail. Table 7 provides a full summary of function sub-categories along with sample extracts of the functions across each phase of the mentoring relationship.

#### **4.2.1.1. Psychological Support: Support sub-category**

During the first three months of joining the mentoring relationship both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors referred to the provision of *psychological support* greater than any other functions. The broad category *psychological support* captured function descriptions: coping with fear and concern; accepting/confirming emotional strain or tension; encouraging

and generating enthusiasm; encouraging self-reliance; promoting self-belief; and creating a positive self-image.

Support1 - Coping with fear and concern: Many nascent entrepreneurs are embedded in challenging roles, requiring long hours, demanding workloads, and often a lack of clear direction, resulting very often in destructive thoughts and emotions. Nascent entrepreneurs stated that the dyadic mentoring pairs provided supportive environments to help them examine thoughts and causes of fear (e.g. failing, trying something new, the unknown) and concern (e.g. resources, knowledge gaps, personal decisions): ‘if there was anything that was kind of worrying me or troubling me I could bounce it off them [mentor]’. This is consistent with the literature on mentor supports highlighted by Sullivan (2000) and the mentor supports in reducing self-doubt and emotional uncertainty discussed by Nielson et al. (2001). Mentors helped nascent entrepreneurs examine scenarios from different perspectives and replaced these thoughts with realistic, balanced alternatives: ‘but I think what it [dyadic relationship] has done is that it’s given me [nascent entrepreneur] good structures and it has made me very vigilant about not jumping into things too quickly, to take a measured approach’. This type of mentor support is similar to what Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013) referred to as managing uncertainty and dealing with taking risks. In phase 1, coping with fear and concern was referenced by a significantly high number of nascent entrepreneurs (35) relative to the number referenced by mentors (25). This finding shows that nascent entrepreneurs perceived that they received more support relating to *coping with fear and concern* than the mentors realised they were giving. This echoes nascent entrepreneurs’ opportunity feasibility and start-up self-efficacy beliefs, as highlighted by Dimov (2010). In phase 2, the findings revealed a significant drop, with less than half the number of nascent entrepreneurs (15) referencing *coping with fear and concern* support, however the mentor references (18) did not decrease to the same extent. This is consistent with an increase in nascent entrepreneurs’ self-efficacy and perseverance which was highlighted by Cardon and Kirk (2013) as an important mentor support, and the mentors experience in guiding nascent entrepreneurs through the early stages

of venture emergence (Parker and Belghitar 2006; Kessler and Frank 2009; vanGelderen et al. 2011). In phase 3, the trend continued with fewer nascent entrepreneurs (8) referring to support *coping with fear and concern*, while the mentors' (12) perspective did not reflect the same decrease. The findings indicate that the nascent entrepreneurs' perception of their ability to *cope with fear and concern* is greater than the mentors' as the phases of the mentoring relationship evolved.

Support2 - Accepting/confirming emotional strain or tension: Nascent entrepreneurs by definition are new to their entrepreneurial roles and many are also new to different feelings of emotional strain and work related tension. Mentors highlighted supporting nascent entrepreneurs to manage these feelings by being flexible and available (through formal meetings or informal contact), which was reflected in one nascent entrepreneur's comment: 'he [mentor] is always there at the end of a phone'. This form of support is consistent with socio-emotional support and confidence building referred to by Nielson et al. (2001). Other forms of support mentioned included providing access to information, advice, guidance and other types of assistance: 'he has brought knowledge into me that I didn't have and that I wasn't going to learn from a book or going on the internet or even from trainers'. This echoes St-Jean's (2012) reference to mentor support through the process of validation, encouragement, role model behaviour and the mentor's perceived status. It can also be linked to Sullivan's (2000) reference to mentor supports, guide and advice. In phase 1, this was the highest function description referred to by nascent entrepreneurs (42), however, even though mentors (36) referred to it on a similar scale, they did not consider it the highest function from their perspective. This echoes the level of problems that occur during the initial stages of early start-up entrepreneurs as pointed out by Townsend et al. (2010) and Dimov (2010), which result in risk and uncertainty. Mentors play a crucial role in mitigating the stresses associated with these problems through helping entrepreneurs deal with risks and uncertainty as discussed by Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013). In phase 2, the findings revealed a significant decrease in those nascent entrepreneurs (27) referencing *accepting/confirming emotional*

*strain or tension*, demonstrating that many no longer required this support, however the drop was not as significant from the mentors' (25) perspective. Interestingly, both mentors' and nascent entrepreneurs' references were similar in number indicating an equal understanding of the function description provided. The decrease in references by nascent entrepreneurs may be due to increased levels of self-efficacy and confidence in the business venture, which is consistent with the mentor's role in helping nascent entrepreneurs to maintain self-efficacy and confidence as highlighted by Kram (1985), St-Jean (2012) and Cardon and Kirk (2013). In phase 3, the number of nascent entrepreneurs (10) referring to *accepting/confirming emotional strain or tension* dropped more than mentor references (15). This indicates that there is a disparate understanding between the nascent entrepreneurs' interpretation of the support and that of mentors' during the final stage. This is consistent with an increase in nascent entrepreneurs' confidence in the business venture, which Brown et al. (2005) suggest helps mitigate psychological strain and stress.

Support3 - Encouraging and generating enthusiasm: Nascent entrepreneurs described learning by observation and through mentors sharing their own experience and knowledge, providing feedback, and encouraging nascent entrepreneurs to embrace constant learning. One nascent entrepreneur stated that: 'I realised very quickly how experienced he was and you know, huge experience of business, good business, and he knew his stuff'. This is consistent with St-Jean's (2012) reference to the role of the mentors' perceived status, and their role model behaviour. Mentors also recognised their crucial responsibility in promoting the role and importance that learning plays in the development of nascent entrepreneurs. According to one mentor: 'I think in terms of a business owner being able to develop them [nascent entrepreneur], guide them, bring them forward, it's massively important'. This is consistent with the literature which highlighted the importance of utilising learning opportunities (Sullivan 2000). In phase 1, this function description is referred to less by nascent entrepreneurs (21) than mentors (28), which shows that mentors assume they are *encouraging and generating enthusiasm* more than it is perceived to be received. This is not surprising as a

crucial component of mentoring is to maintain self-efficacy which is often achieved through encouragement behaviour (St-Jean 2012). In phase 2, the findings revealed a slight decrease in those nascent entrepreneurs (18) referencing *encouraging and generating enthusiasm*, while the number of references from the mentors' (19) perspective decreased significantly to the same level as nascent entrepreneurs. This indicates an equal understanding of the *encouraging and generating enthusiasm* provided during phase 2. This may be in part related to increased confidence of the nascent entrepreneur in the business venture, as referred to by Brown et al. (2005). In phase 3, the number of nascent entrepreneurs (17) referring to encouraging enthusiasm/stimulus more or less remained the same, while the mentor (15) references decreased a little more. This indicates that mentors perceived that they provided less *encouraging and generating enthusiasm* support in the final phase than the respective nascent entrepreneurs perceived. The decrease in reliance on this form of support by nascent entrepreneurs in phase 2 and 3 may be due to the focus of the mentoring relationship shifting from a one-way helping relationship in phase 1 (*Initiation* stage), to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity in phase 2 and 3 (*Cultivation* stage) (Kram 1985).

Support4 - Encouraging self-reliance: Mentors observed that many nascent entrepreneurs seemed to lack self-reliance. An example of this is one mentor's comment that: '[the nascent entrepreneur] feel under-confident because they really haven't thought their business idea through'. The findings revealed that an important aspect of the mentoring relationship is the empowerment of nascent entrepreneurs with belief in themselves and their business venture. This is consistent with Shepherd et al.'s (2000) reference to entrepreneurs' liability of newness, and the crucial role that mentors play in building self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity (Kram 1985; Nielson et al. 2001; St-Jean 2012). This was echoed by a nascent entrepreneur: 'I feel a quite confident person, but he gave me that confidence to go out and meet the marketplace and he's also given me great confidence in my brand, and where I'm at, that has been huge benefit; he has given me great confidence in my own brand'. In phase 1 this *encouraging self-reliance* is referred to the exact same number of times by

both nascent entrepreneurs (39) and mentors (39). This demonstrates that both the nascent entrepreneurs' interpretation of the level of *encouraging self-reliance* support was the same as the mentors'. It is interesting to note that *encouraging self-reliance* is the second highest reference by nascent entrepreneurs during phase 1, indicating that in the initial phase, the nascent entrepreneurs perceived that they received this form of support more than any other sub-category description. This is possibly due to their opportunity feasibility and start-up self-efficacy beliefs referred to by Dimov (2010). In phase 2, the findings revealed a noteworthy decrease in nascent entrepreneurs (31) referencing *encouraging self-reliance*, while the number of references from a mentors' (37) perspective reflected only a slight change. This may be in part related to increased confidence of the nascent entrepreneur in the business venture, as referred to by Brown et al. (2005). This indicates no noticeable change to the perception of encouragement of self-reliance by mentors during phase 2, while nascent entrepreneurs referred to a reduced level of support. In phase 3, the number of nascent entrepreneurs (27) and mentors (25) referring to *encouraging self-reliance* was similar. This indicates that both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs reflect the same level of understanding of this type of psychological support.

Support5 - Promoting self-belief: Nascent entrepreneurs frequently cited doubting themselves and their business ventures. One nascent entrepreneur noted that the provision of support through the initial stages of venture emergence was crucial in instilling self-belief that their venture was worthwhile. This is consistent with Dimov's (2010) reference to start-up self-efficacy beliefs of nascent entrepreneurs which represent their confidence in the pursued opportunity. Nascent entrepreneurs also cited that investigating all options prior to making a decision provided self-belief and confidence in their judgement: 'if I make a decision to do something, before I actually stick to that decision, I go through what I think of the different scenarios that they will return'. In phase 1, this function description is referred to significantly less by nascent entrepreneurs (26) than by their mentors (35), indicating that mentors perceive that they are *promoting self-belief* more than the nascent entrepreneurs perceive they are

receiving it. This may be an awareness by mentors of the importance of self-belief in the decision to become and persevere as an entrepreneur (Bandura 1982), and the necessity of entrepreneurs to have high levels of belief in their entrepreneurial abilities as described by Markman et al. (2003). In phase 2, the findings revealed a decrease in the mentor (25) references to *promoting self-belief* with a slight decrease in the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (22). By phase 3, the number of nascent entrepreneurs (18) and mentors (18) referring to *promoting self-belief* were the same, signifying the exact same understanding by both parties of the function description provided. The decrease in phase 2 and 3 may be due to the focus of the mentoring relationship shifting from a one-way helping relationship in phase 1 (*Initiation* stage), to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity in phase 2 and 3 (*Cultivation* stage) (Kram 1985).

Support6 - Creating a positive self-image: The findings revealed that how nascent entrepreneurs perceived themselves was directly related to their success in life and business. Entrepreneurs by nature are leaders and the combined belief in themselves, their abilities and the resources available to them, contribute to making their vision a reality. The findings showed that mentoring functions such as friendship, confirmation and role modelling helped build entrepreneurial self-confidence and portray a positive self-image, which is vital for an entrepreneur in order to instil trust in their business and confidence in their ability. This is consistent with the socio-emotional support mentors provide through friendship, confirmation and encouragement behaviour (Nielson et al. 2001). One nascent entrepreneur reflects on the mentoring process: ‘She [mentor] is able to cut through all the detail and focus on what is important. She continually provides me with a clear cut sense of direction and a strategic framework that I can work with. It was very valuable when I went to a development agency to secure funding’. Building confidence was highlighted by Kyrgidou and Petridou (2013) and Nielson et al. (2001). Portraying a positive self-image is vital for an entrepreneur in order to instil trust in their business and confidence in their ability. In phase 1, this *creating a positive self-image* is referred to considerably less by nascent entrepreneurs (26) than by their mentors

(54), in fact more than double the number of mentors referred to *creating a positive self-image* than nascent entrepreneurs. This represents a significant misunderstanding between nascent entrepreneurs and their respective mentors on the type of support provided. Even though the number of references decreases in phase 2 for both nascent entrepreneurs (12) and mentors (32), the same misunderstanding on the type of support provided is mirrored. Phase 3, echoes the exact same trend as phase 2 with the number of references to *creating a positive self-image* decreasing for both nascent entrepreneurs (8) and mentors (20) with the same outcome. Kram (1985) originally highlighted the important role of mentors in building self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity. It is interesting that nascent entrepreneurs seem unaware that mentors are attempting to build their self-image throughout all phases of the mentoring relationship.

#### **4.2.1.2. Information Support: Develop sub-category**

The broad category *Develop* captured four function descriptions: providing feedback; motivating continuous learning and development; stimulating development and openness to new experiences; and encouraging dedication and focus. The following sections provide evidence of how social support theory lends itself to develop nascent entrepreneurs.

Develop1 - Providing feedback: The majority of nascent entrepreneurs in this study had experience in some aspects of the business and considered themselves knowledgeable in their area of expertise. However, as one mentor explained that when ‘you are starting own company you have to view it through a number of different lenses, however you don’t have the experience to look through some of the lenses as you don’t have the knowledge or don’t have the experience to do that’. This quote reflects nascent entrepreneurs’ liability of newness as referred to by Shepherd et al. (2000). Thus, the entrepreneurial and industrial experience of the mentor is crucial as a means of disseminating, providing feedback and guidance: ‘he [mentor] has brought knowledge into me that I didn’t have and that I wasn’t going to learn from a book or going on the internet or even from trainers’. This is consistent with Unger et al.’s (2011) reference to mentors’ crucial role in the provision of knowledge, advice,

information and know-how. In phase 1, *providing feedback* is referred to more by nascent entrepreneurs (27) than by mentors (22), representing an indication that nascent entrepreneurs perceive they received more *feedback* than their mentors perceive they are providing. This is possibly due to the findings in the literature that highlighted nascent entrepreneurs' lack of: tacit and contextual knowledge (Dimov 2010), information and resources (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000), and their liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000). During phase 2, this perception balances out through a decrease in the number of nascent entrepreneurs (23) referring to the provision of *feedback* support, and a slight decrease in the number of mentors (20) referring to the provision. This is echoed again in phase 3 with a slight decline in both nascent entrepreneur (18) and mentor (16) references. The continued decrease in feedback support may be due in part to nascent entrepreneurs continually building their knowledge and skills, and their confidence in their business venture and their own self-efficacy.

Develop2 - Motivating continuous learning and development: Mentors and nascent entrepreneurs both learn throughout the mentoring process, as one mentor commented 'it is a constant learning process'. Some nascent entrepreneurs mentioned that their mentors continuously encouraged them to work harder, aim higher, and address the skills and knowledge that they needed to improve on. Phase 1 highlights *motivating continuous learning and development* as the second highest form of support referred to by nascent entrepreneurs (39) and the highest of all function descriptions referred to by mentors (47). This represents the significant importance and relevance of *motivating continuous learning and development* by both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs. This is consistent with the literature which highlights increasing skills and knowledge as a determining factor of venture survival during the first five years (Gartner et al. 1999). In phase 2, there is a significant decline in the number of references by mentors (36) relative to the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (32). This is reflective of a similar perception of the importance of being motivated to learn in the eyes of nascent entrepreneurs during the second phase. While there

were less references recorded in phase 3 the number of references were the exact same for both nascent entrepreneurs (28) and mentors (28) indicating a similar level of understanding of the function description *motivating continuous learning and development* by both. The decline in references to *motivating continuous learning and development* may be that the motivation exists and is instilled in the nascent entrepreneur as a crucial factor of nascent entrepreneurial success and therefore the requirement to continue to motivate becomes reduced.

Develop3 - Stimulating continuous development and openness to new experiences: Interviews with both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs revealed that continual learning and development are considered essential to the success of a new business venture. Nascent entrepreneurs described how their mentors continuously motivated them to work smarter, set higher goals, think outside the box, and learn new skills and competencies. This mirrors the literature on effective mentoring which Gravells (2006) referred to as facilitating the development of more realistic venture goals and helping nascent entrepreneurs identify the tasks that support the achievement of venture goals. As one mentor stated ‘I think in terms of a business owner being able to develop them, guide them, bring them forward, it’s massively important’. This type of support is consistent with Rigg and O’Dwyer’s (2012) reference to nascent entrepreneurs’ utilisation of mentors’ knowledge to help reflect on and construct new knowledge. In phase 1, mentors refer to *stimulating continuous development and openness to new experiences* more than nascent entrepreneurs (27) which highlights that mentors (34) perceive they offer more of this form of support than was apparent to nascent entrepreneurs. Interestingly, in phase 2, the references increase for nascent entrepreneurs (29) and decrease for mentors (28) to a point of more or less equilibrium. This is reflective of a similar perception of the importance of *stimulating continuous development and openness to new experiences*. While there was a significant decrease in the references to this form of information support by both nascent entrepreneurs (21) and mentors (20) in phase 3, they remained number of references remained relatively high in comparison to other forms of

support provided. This is significant as Rigg and O'Dwyer (2012) highlighted the importance of the interpretation and understanding of new information as central to the identification of business opportunities.

Develop4 - Encouraging dedication and focus: The analysis highlighted the feelings of loyalty and devotion to the mentoring relationships that both dyadic pairs share, as evidenced by the quotation: 'from the very first meeting I felt a good bounce, I knew that we, that we were operating on a similar wave length that our, we just synched'. This is consistent with Cutrona and Russell's (1990) reference to support from similar others and Thomas and Lankau's (2009) reference to high quality relationship being based on mutual liking, trust and respect. However, compatibility is a vital component of dedication, and underwritten by the salient nature of trust: 'without full trust and without sharing the full picture with the mentor you're going nowhere'. Phase 1 findings indicated a relatively similar number of references between nascent entrepreneurs (26) and mentors (29) with respect to *encouraging dedication and focus*. This is consistent with the literature on the initial interactions (i.e. *Initiation* stage) between mentor and nascent entrepreneur where the focus is on gaining respect for one another (Weinburg and Lankau 2010). However, in phase 2 this dramatically increases from the nascent entrepreneurs' (36) perspective, with relatively no change to the number of mentor (28) references. This finding shows that nascent entrepreneurs observe that they received more information support related to *encouraging dedication and focus* than mentors perceived they were giving. In the final phase, the references by nascent entrepreneurs (21) drop significantly to a similar number of those referenced by mentors (24) with both assuming the same level of *encouraging dedication and focus*.

#### **4.2.1.3. Information Support: Filter sub-category**

The broad category *Filter* captured two function descriptions: creating an environment for reflection; and promote attentiveness to the venture creation process. The following illustration evidence shows how social support theory lends itself to support nascent entrepreneurs to filter information.

Filter1 - Creating an environment for reflection: The findings revealed that many of the dyadic pairs referred to compatibility as vital to the success of the mentoring relationship. Nascent entrepreneurs described how their relationship with their mentor was very productive as they both had similar mind-sets which is consistent with the literature on similar others (Cutrona and Russell 1990): ‘from the very first meeting I felt a good bounce, I knew that we, that we were operating on a similar wave length that our, we just synced’. Other important characteristics that were also referred to were honesty and respect in the relationship in order to create a bond and good chemistry between the mentor and nascent entrepreneur. One nascent entrepreneur stated that ‘without full trust and without sharing the full picture with the mentor you’re going nowhere’. This is echoed in the literature on high quality relationships which are based on mutual liking, trust and respect (Thomas and Lankau 2009). In phase 1, the findings showed that both nascent entrepreneurs (21) and mentors (20) reflected the same number of references to *creating an environment for reflection*. However, in phase 2 the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (26) increased meaningfully, while mentor (18) references slightly decreased. This may be related to Rigg and O’Dwyer’s (2012) reference to nascent entrepreneurs’ utilisation of mentors’ knowledge to help reflect on and construct new knowledge. It may also be due to the mentors ability to highlight pertinent information (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007), and help make effective decisions (Longnecker et al. 2013). Phase 3 reflects another meaningful shift in references, with nascent entrepreneur (14) references dropping significantly, mentor (16) reference dropping slightly, but both returning to a similar level.

Filter2 - Promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process: Nascent entrepreneurs often referred to the facilitator role of the mentor during the initial phases which helped them to focus and plan for their immediate needs and future requirements. One nascent entrepreneur noted that their mentor helped them in ‘identifying the things that needed to be done moving forward, and then weekly conversations around what the priorities are and what needed to be done’. This is consistent with what Gravell’s (2006) referred to as helping nascent

entrepreneurs identifying the tasks that support the achievement of venture goals. Phase 1 findings revealed a slight disparity between the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (29) to *promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process* and the number of references by mentors (24). This disparity approaches equilibrium in phase two with the number of nascent entrepreneur (22) references decreasing more than the number of mentor (19) references. Interestingly in phase 3, the number of references by mentors (16) decreases significantly compared to the number of nascent entrepreneurs (21). Overall, the findings demonstrate a relatively consistent understanding of *promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process* across all phases of the relationship.

#### **4.2.1.4. Information Support: Steer sub-category**

The broad category *Steer* captured two function descriptions: providing support and venture information; and supporting the direction of the venture. The following illustration evidence shows how social support theory lends itself to support nascent entrepreneurs in steering their venture.

Steer1 – Providing support and venture information: The mentoring relationship centres on the provision and acceptance of support. As one mentor explained, it is important to know ‘where are you [the nascent entrepreneur]?, what do you [the nascent entrepreneur] want to achieve?’. This is consistent with Unger et al.’s (2011) reference to the crucial provision of mentor knowledge, advice, information and know-how. The analysis revealed that mentors who have a solid understanding of the nascent entrepreneurs’ goals and capabilities are better positioned to provide appropriate support. One nascent entrepreneur commented on the mentors support in avoiding mistakes: ‘he [mentor] was trying to impede falls on things that I would have walked blindly into without him saying that ‘do you realise if you this, then, there is the likely outcome’. This is consistent with the literature on mentor support on anticipating problems that may arise with the realisation of a venture (Gollwitzer 1996), and facilitating quicker decision-making (Honig and Karlsson 2004). Phase 1 indicates a significant difference in the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (27) and their perception of

the provision of *support and venture information* versus the lower number recorded by mentors (22). This indicates that fewer mentors than nascent entrepreneurs thought their offers of *support and venture information* were received. This may be due to the liability of newness of nascent entrepreneurs referred to by Shepherd et al. (2000). In phase 2 similar numbers of references for *support and venture information* were referred to by both nascent entrepreneurs (22) and mentors (21). However, phase 3 inverts the findings from phase 1 with more mentors (20) perceiving that their offers of *support and venture information* were received than were perceived by nascent entrepreneurs (16).

Steer2 - Supporting the direction of the venture: Mentors frequently referred to guiding and empowering nascent entrepreneurs' decision making through investigating all possible options in advance: '[mentoring is about] getting them [nascent entrepreneur] trying to look at different angles or consider different options'. This is consistent with Stam et al.'s (2014) reference to mentors challenging entrepreneurial cognitive structures and encouraging new insights. Crucial to supporting direction of a nascent entrepreneur is the flexibility and availability of their mentors to support critical decisions. Central to this is the rapport between the nascent entrepreneur and the mentor and the establishment of trust in the relationship which is consistent with Thomas and Lankau's (2009) theory of high quality relationships. Mentors provide support as a confidant and act as a sounding board. As one nascent entrepreneur described their relationship: 'He [mentor] wanted to get as much out of me as possible. He would have seen things that I would not have seen. I leaned on him a lot... He was brilliant, he was absolutely brilliant!' In phase 1, there is a noticeable difference between *supporting the direction of the venture* perceived by nascent entrepreneurs (18) and that perceived to be provided by mentors (26). There is a clear misinterpretation of the type of support provided by mentors and perceived by nascent entrepreneurs. This misinterpretation was evident again in phase 2 with the number of nascent entrepreneurs (21) referring to *supporting the direction of the venture* less than mentors (26). This was echoed again in phase 3 with less nascent entrepreneurs (19) referring to the support than mentors (24).

#### 4.2.1.5. Network Support: Plan sub-category

The broad category *Plan* captured two function descriptions: supporting resource gathering; and encouraging preparation of plans and goals. The following illustration evidence shows how social support theory lends itself to support nascent entrepreneurs in planning activity required during the venture emergence process.

Plan1 - Supporting resource gathering: A key form of support for nascent entrepreneurs is the attainment of key capital: 'it's not just the idea, it's having the funding and all of the key elements in place'. This is consistent with Hall and Chandler's (2007) reference to mentors' access to diverse developmental networks which can support the development of the nascent entrepreneur and business venture. Nascent entrepreneurs described how their mentors provided crucial guidance: 'I was negotiating with investors and he went through, he helped me to structure what I, my approach to the investors'. This echoes Lefebvre and Redien-Collet's (2013) reference to mentors support and navigation through the successive phases of the entrepreneurial process. In phase 1, mentors (22) refer to *supporting resource gathering* more than nascent entrepreneurs (12) which highlights that mentors perceived they offered more of this form of network support than was apparent to nascent entrepreneurs. Interestingly, in phase 2, the references increased by a similar level for both nascent entrepreneurs (26) and mentors (36). The exact same relative increase occurs in phase 3 with the same perception that mentors (44) offered more of this form of support than was perceived by nascent entrepreneurs (31). It is interesting that mentors perceive themselves to *support resource gathering* more than nascent entrepreneurs. It may be that this form of support is expected by nascent entrepreneurs as a core support function of mentors.

Plan2 - Encouraging preparation of plans and goals: The findings demonstrated that nascent entrepreneurs who prepared for, and engaged in a planning process increased their ability to identify critical missing information, anticipate and rehearse various contingencies, and thus make faster decisions. This is consistent with the literature on action planning which is highlighted by Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) as an important element of successful new

venture formation. Many nascent entrepreneurs stated that their mentors continuously encouraged them to stop and reflect, and on the basis of this reflection, to plan for the future: ‘identifying the things that needed to be done moving forward, and then weekly conversations around what the priorities are and what needed to be done’. This form of support is referred to by Frese (2009) in enhancing entrepreneurial persistence, goal intentions and new venture creation. Similar reference accounts are referred to in phase 1 for both nascent entrepreneurs (26) and mentors (24) with respect to *encouraging preparation of plans and goals*. In phase 2 the number of references equalised for both nascent entrepreneurs (18) and mentors (18). In phase 3 the number of mentor (16) references slightly decreased compared to the number of entrepreneurs (18). This finding indicates a clear understanding by both parties of the function description.

#### **4.2.1.6. Network Support: Share sub-category**

The broad category *Network* captured three function descriptions: providing counselling and advice; providing access to business associates and networks; and accessing support and resource availability. The following illustration evidence shows how social support theory lends itself to the support provided to nascent entrepreneurs from a sharing perspective.

Share1 - Provide counselling and advice: The findings revealed that nascent entrepreneurs experience a multitude of emotions particularly during the emergence stages, some of which can be quite destructive. Mentors discussed how the relationship with their nascent entrepreneur evolved, and how important it was to understand the nascent entrepreneur. Many nascent entrepreneurs highlighted communication and listening as form of support which occurred in a manner appropriate to the context and their specific needs: ‘the mentoring relationship is all about listening and understanding the client’. This is consistent with the literature on active listening skills as well as mentor skills in: conflict management, active discussions, clarity brought to team conflicts, and the promotion of positive attitudes (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001). In phase 1, mentors (28)

refer to *providing counselling and advice* more than nascent entrepreneurs (18) which highlights that mentors perceive they offer more of this form of network support than was apparent to nascent entrepreneurs. Interestingly, in phase 2, the number of references remain the exact same as phase 1 for nascent entrepreneurs (18) and decreases significantly for mentors (22). This reflects a distinct drop in the level of support perceived to be provided by the mentor with respect to *providing counselling and advice*. This level of network support from mentors' (18) perspective continues to drop in phase 3 but not by much, while it increases slightly for nascent entrepreneurs (22).

Share2 - Providing access to business associates and networks: Growing a business relies heavily on the contribution of others and interpersonal relationships. The findings revealed that mentors frequently exposed nascent entrepreneurs to a variety of business contacts: 'I would be an excellent networker so I would have a huge bank of contacts to be able to pull from to be able to introduce them to different people '. Mentors referred to the wealth of knowledge that the key stakeholders brought to business ventures: 'individually we mightn't know everything but collectively we know everything'. Nascent entrepreneurs recognised the importance of having a pool of business contacts particularly in 'areas that I didn't have knowledge in I was able to phone somebody in the industry, in fact I would have done that now on one of the days, I needed specific information on a retail margin of a particular product category and I was able to phone the contact, and get that particular detail on the spot'. This is consistent with Ozdemir et al.'s (2014) reference to mentor support through sharing their networks and social capital. During phase 1, nascent entrepreneurs (12) referenced lower numbers of accounts of *providing access to business associates and networks* than mentors (18) perceived they provided. While the level of mentor (18) references remains the same in phase 2, it dramatically increases, by more than double, for nascent entrepreneurs (27). This finding indicates a significant perceived increase in this form of network support by nascent entrepreneurs during the second phase. This dramatic increase is reflected again in phase 3 for both nascent entrepreneurs (36) and mentors (29), however

the discrepancy still remained. This finding highlights the increased awareness by nascent entrepreneurs of the importance of *providing access to business associates and networks* as the phases evolved. This may also reflect a shift from the *Initiation* stage of the mentoring relationship to the *Cultivation* stage, or what Gray and Gray's (1985) referred to as the third and fourth levels of mentoring where detailed guidance and shaping of shared values is provided.

Share3 - Accessing support and resource availability: The findings demonstrated that widening the social capital network of nascent entrepreneurs contributed to the development of their business venture. Mentors acknowledged the power of these business contacts particularly in sourcing key resources: 'I made contact with my own contacts, my own reliable suppliers put them [the nascent entrepreneur] in contact in terms of getting the equipment and the materials and things like that'. This is consistent with Ozdemir et al.'s (2014) reference to mentor support through sharing their networks and social capital. In phase 1, the number of references by nascent entrepreneurs (18) is slightly lower than that of mentors (22) with respect to *accessing support and resource availability*. During phase 2, this dramatically increases for both nascent entrepreneurs (34) and mentors (34) to an equal level reflecting the high importance associated with *accessing to support and the availability of resources*. Interestingly, this importance decreases in phase 3 for nascent entrepreneurs more than mentors. This indicates that mentors (29) still perceive this form of network support to be of significant importance however, this is not reflected to the same extent by nascent entrepreneurs (26).

**Table 6: Content analysis of both nascent entrepreneur and mentors' perspectives of provisions of mentor functions over duration of relationship**

SOCIAL SUPPORT CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION CONTENT	PHASE 1		PHASE 2		PHASE 3	
				0-3 months		3-9 months		9-18 month	
				NE	M	NE	M	NE	M
Psychological	Support	Coping with fear and concern	Mentor helps nascent entrepreneur to look at situations in new and less frightening ways. Nascent entrepreneur develops coping mechanisms and ability to rationalise fears.	35	25	15	18	8	12
Psychological	Support	Accepting/confirming emotional strain or tension	Mentor assists nascent entrepreneur to develop better coping and problem solving skills. Nascent entrepreneur develops coping mechanisms and enhances business survival skills.	42	36	27	25	10	15
Psychological	Support	Encouraging and generating enthusiasm	Mentor fosters nascent entrepreneurs' passion and drive. Nascent entrepreneur increases confidence and desire to realise venture.	21	28	18	19	17	15
Psychological	Support	Encouraging self-reliance	Mentor provides assurance and belief in nascent entrepreneur's capability to realise venture. Nascent entrepreneur increases confidence and realises their own ability and potential.	39	39	31	37	27	25
Psychological	Support	Promoting self-belief	Mentor endorses and complements nascent entrepreneur's ability and achievements. Nascent entrepreneur builds self-confidence and assurance of business venture.	26	35	22	25	18	18
Psychological	Support	Creating a positive self-image	Mentor helps create stability, realism and a positive belief. Nascent entrepreneur enhances self-esteem and their perception of themselves as an entrepreneur.	26	54	12	32	8	20
<b>Total Psychological References</b>				<b>189</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>105</b>

<b>Information</b>	<i>Develop</i>	Providing feedback	Mentor provides constructive praise and criticism on plans and activities. Nascent entrepreneur adjusts plans, goals, and milestones	27	22	23	20	18	16
<b>Information</b>	<i>Develop</i>	Motivating continuous learning and development	Mentor encourages continuous development of nascent entrepreneur's knowledge, skills and competencies. Nascent entrepreneur builds knowledge, skills, competencies, and know-how.	39	47	32	36	28	28
<b>Information</b>	<i>Develop</i>	Stimulating continuous development and openness to new experiences	Mentor promotes constant growth and identification of nascent entrepreneur's insights and experience. Nascent entrepreneur broadens awareness to new opportunities and experiences	27	34	29	28	21	20
<b>Information</b>	<i>Develop</i>	Encouraging dedication and focus	Mentor instils sense of obligation in nascent entrepreneur to achieve the goals of the venture. Nascent entrepreneur commits to the venture and increases motivation.	26	29	36	28	21	24
<b>Information</b>	<i>Develop</i>	<b>Total Develop References</b>		119	132	120	112	88	88
<b>Information</b>	<i>Filter</i>	Creating an environment for reflection	Mentor and nascent entrepreneur share reflection upon their experience and draw insights. Nascent entrepreneur builds awareness and better understanding of experiences.	21	20	26	18	14	16
<b>Information</b>	<i>Filter</i>	Promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process	Mentor encourages nascent entrepreneur to give full attention to specific tasks. Nascent entrepreneur realises importance of task commitment and dedication.	29	24	22	19	21	16
<b>Information</b>	<i>Filter</i>	<b>Total Filter References</b>		50	44	48	37	35	32
<b>Information</b>	<i>Steer</i>	Providing support and venture information	Mentor offers guidance and direction to nascent entrepreneur. Nascent entrepreneur improves clarity and understanding of venture vision	27	22	22	21	16	20
<b>Information</b>	<i>Steer</i>	Supporting the direction of the	Mentor gains assistance through third parties to guide nascent entrepreneur. Nascent entrepreneur	18	26	21	26	19	24

		venture	expands network and builds confidence in venture						
<b>Information</b>	<i>Steer</i>	<b>Total Steer References</b>		45	48	43	47	35	44
<b>Total Information References</b>				<b>235</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Network</b>	<i>Plan</i>	Supporting resource gathering	Mentor supports nascent entrepreneur in identifying resources and skills. Nascent entrepreneur increase resources and skills.	12	22	26	36	31	44
<b>Network</b>	<i>Plan</i>	Encouraging preparation of plans and goals	Mentor promotes nascent entrepreneur to anticipate future environment and challenges in business. Nascent entrepreneur creates milestones, future objectives and contingencies	26	24	18	18	18	16
<b>Network</b>	<i>Plan</i>	<b>Total Plan References</b>		36	46	44	54	49	60
<b>Network</b>	<i>Share</i>	Provide counselling and advice	Mentor connects nascent entrepreneur with third party who provides guidance and direction. Nascent entrepreneur increases network, know-how, and experience.	18	28	18	22	22	18
<b>Network</b>	<i>Share</i>	Providing access to business associates and networks	Mentor makes their personal contacts available to the nascent entrepreneur. Nascent entrepreneur increases network.	12	18	27	18	36	29
<b>Network</b>	<i>Share</i>	Accessing support resource availability	Mentor seeks resource support for nascent entrepreneur. Nascent entrepreneur increases access to resources.	18	22	34	34	26	29
<b>Network</b>	<i>Steer</i>	<b>Total Share References</b>		48	68	79	74	84	76
<b>Total Network References</b>				<b>84</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>TOTAL OVERALL REFERENCES</b>				<b>508</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>435</b>

**NOTE1:** NE=Nascent Entrepreneur; M=Mentor

**NOTE2:** Data numbers refer to the number of references to function content by NE and M

**Table 7: Sample extracts of functions across each Phase from the perspective of the mentor and nascent entrepreneur**

SUB-CATEGORY	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	PHASE 1 SAMPLE EXTRACT	PHASE 2 SAMPLE EXTRACT	PHASE 3 SAMPLE EXTRACT
<i>Support</i>	Coping with fear and concern	NE-'if I do have a down day sometimes and knowing that sometimes I'm being a bit wobbly about something or whatever, and then he'll [mentor] just stand back and say 'right, take a deep breath, go on move on this and don't get feeling down', because it can be very lonely running your own business and you've staff and you've all the worries of the world and you're the one that has to deal with them or else tough you're.. you know.. I've been very lucky always there as a support for you at the end of the phone and that makes [mentoring] it's worth its weight in gold'	NE-'I have become less preoccupied with how I am perceived by others/ I have become more effective in handling difficult relationships. I have gained lots of insights about what pushes my buttons. He [the mentor] made me feel more secure about myself'	NE-'I feel that I am now the master of my own destiny to a greater extent than say two years ago. I have a different set of constraints but it is up to me to deal with them. I find that I can things done much quicker. I love that sense of freedom.'
<i>Support</i>	Accepting/ confirming emotional strain or tension	NE-' he was trying to impede falls on things that I would have walked blindly into without him saying that "do you realise if you this, then, there is the likely outcome"  NE-'if I make a decision to do something, before I actually stick to that decision, I go through what I think of the different scenarios that they will return'	NE-'I had a set of responsibilities to make my business plan a reality. However to be honest I initially struggled. One of my developers was particularly strong in finance. He put me right on a lot of issues like to negotiate with the banks and suppliers. It was very useful. I call on him many times'	
<i>Support</i>	Encouraging and generating enthusiasm	NE-'after three months of business he came out and he looked at my books, and he was able to see it growing, and growing, and growing, and he was like able to say 'yeah, that's it, that's it, now keep going, you can do better you know'	NE-'He [mentor] is extremely open, honest and most important of all believe in what I am doing. He continually acknowledges my success and failures. The failure aspect is important to me because it shows he is not judgemental ( )'	
<i>Support</i>	Encouraging self-reliance	NE -'I feel a quite confident person, but he [mentor] gave me that confidence to go out and meet the marketplace and he's also given me	NE-'We discussed all the targets I had proposed in my plan. She was very insightful in what she said to me. I asked her for some additional	NE -'I am much more confident and resilient than say one year ago – I have encountered many difficult start up

		great confidence in my brand, and where I'm at, that has been huge benefit; he has given me great confidence in my own brand'	information and this was particularly valuable. My confidence in the plan is much greater as a result'	issues, some good, some bad... One professional person in particular has helped me get a better perspective on things. I now feel empowered to act, to know what I am comfortable at and what I am not comfortable with...I have broadened my skills so much.'
<i>Support</i>	Promoting self-belief	NE -'[mentor's] given me the confidence to say 'yes' you can deal with Tesco's, go and approach them to go separate distribution as opposed to through the back door, and, you know'	NE -'He [mentor] taught me the value of a strong work ethic. I always hear it as it is, he never dresses up things.'	
<i>Support</i>	Creating a positive self-image	M-'it's all about their business to see how they're performing against best practice'  M-'where are you?, what do you want to achieve?, this is how I operate, this is what I think we need to do'	NE -'She [mentor] is able to cut through all the detail and focus on what is important. She continually provides me with a clear cut sense of direction and a strategic framework that I can work with. It was very valuable when I went to a development agency to secure funding ( )'	
<i>Develop</i>	Providing feedback	NE -'I had to do [real/re/pre-runs] with him [mentor] and of course he was quite severe in his criticism which was excellent and you know if something was wrong it was wrong and that was it just do it again'  m-'what he did was he challenged the current way of thinking'	NE -'He is willing to sit with me to discuss what I am doing well and what I should change... He is an invaluable source of counsel and advice ( )'	
<i>Develop</i>	Motivating continuous learning and development	NE-'[managing a business] it's a constant learning process'	NE -'You have to learn a lot very quickly; to know what is possible and what will work and not work'	
<i>Develop</i>	Stimulating continuous development and openness to new	NE-'I was continuously challenged to think differently... sometimes I found it difficult particularly when he made me doubt my venture idea'	M-'My role was to continuously challenge my mentee who to be honest was sometimes to take on board my suggestions'	

	experiences			
<i>Develop</i>	Encouraging dedication and focus	M-‘ hold him to account pretty regularly because, ahm you know, I know from what he’s got going on, what’s he’s got to do and deliver, so even if I’m talking to him on other matters I can you know, ahm, hop into, well, how’d you get on with X, Y, Z?’	NE -‘Well when I started out I was not too sure as to why I had had launched into starting a business. However, thinking back I now realise that it was through observing an experienced entrepreneur that made me realise I wanted to do something like start a business and run with it.’	
<i>Filter</i>	Creating an environment for reflection	M-‘[mentoring is about] getting them [nascent entrepreneur] trying to look at different angles or consider different options basically, their problems is that they are the decision makers at the end of the day’	NE -‘I discussed all my business plan targets with an experienced entrepreneur. He was very honest and frank in his assessment of what I was trying to do. He definitely made me rethink my time plan and what could be achieved in the current economic environment’	
<i>Filter</i>	Promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process	NE -‘but I think what it has done is that it’s given me good structures and it has made me very vigilant about not jumping into things too quickly, to take a measured approach’	NE -‘For me strategy was all hairy fairy things. I wanted everything to be black and white and not grey. He [mentor] gave me a sense of perspective and a set of tools and a framework that got me to be more ambitious in how I thought the business could go ... all very liberating ( )’	
<i>Steer</i>	Providing support and venture information	M-‘entrepreneurs generally, the one’s that I have met, and that’s over eighty or so projects in Ireland, generally need a mentor to direct their thoughts and their actions’  m-‘discerning what he knows and, and, giving me advice, he’s telling me what to listen to, what sources to go to, to get the information that I should be listening to, and that’s actually been a very big help’	NE -‘It was only really after four to five months into the process that I began to realise I could make a difference. I was greatly influenced by an experienced entrepreneur and a professional, who I sought advice from.’	
<i>Steer</i>	Supporting direction of the	NE-‘Sometimes found it difficult to plan, to commit and take action. My mentor was particularly focused on how I could advance the		M-‘I found my entrepreneur to be too big picture and not very realistic. He frequently lost sight of the practicalities

	venture	venture. He was always made very good and constructive suggestions'		of realising the venture'
<i>Plan</i>	Supporting resource gathering	NE -'I was negotiating with investors and he [mentor] went through, he helped me to structure what I, my approach to the investors'	NE -'I soon began to realise the importance of sound, technical advice and access to information. I took a lot from two individuals who provided me with lots of product and marketing advice...To be honest I stupidly believed that I could do it all myself.'	
<i>Plan</i>	Encouraging preparation of plans and goals	NE -' identifying the things that needed to be done moving forward, and then weekly conversations around what the priorities are and what needed to be done'	NE -'He always challenged me to think of all the alternatives and I had regular milestones to achieve. We regularly talked about what the end result is going to look like'	
<i>Share</i>	Provide counselling and advice	M-'you think you're going in to do a financial projection, and you actually end up being a minder and somebody to listen to them guide them around; so I think good listening is vital'	NE -'He was very effective a getting me to think about my feelings and to work out issues, thinking aloud. I did not over rely on him but felt challenged while at the same time feeling protected...I am a much more robust emotionally as a result of that relationship'	NE -'During the first eighteen months, we experienced many problems that, potentially could have closed down the business...I think having the protection of a mentor during this time kept me going and prevented me from falling over a cliff'
<i>Share</i>	Providing access to business associates and networks	M-'I would have invited her to networking events if I thought they were suitable or if I thought someone could help her or she could help somebody or get a bit of business" M-'I would be an excellent networker so I would have a huge bank of contacts to be able to pull from to be able to introduce them [nascent entrepreneur] to different people'	NE -'I found it invaluable to be able to tap into networks that were established by my experienced entrepreneur mentor. He had stork g relationships with a variety of agencies. He opened doors and let me take it from there ( )'	
<i>Share</i>	Accessing support and resource availability	M-' I made contact with my own contacts, my own reliable suppliers put them [nascent entrepreneur] in contact in terms of getting the equipment and the materials and things like that'	NE -'I have learned that it is important to have a strong team behind you and I don't mean a work team... I mean individuals who can help you to keep things in perspective while you pursue your dream'	

**NOTE: NE=Nascent Entrepreneur M=Mentor**

#### ***4.2.2. Characteristics of Mentoring Interactions over Phases of Relationship***

In total, over 8,000 mentor interactions were reported over an eighteen-month period across all nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. This represents an average of 106 interactions per nascent entrepreneur-mentor pairing, during the mentoring relationship as shown in Table 8 (note: all findings in this section are relative to the data supplied in Table 8). It is important to state from the outset that the labels used to describe the interactions outlined in Table 8 were defined by the nascent entrepreneurs, except for the *behaviours demonstrated* which will be discussed in the next section. All figures in this section refer to average figures. The largest number of interactions between nascent entrepreneurs and mentors occurred during phase 1 (46), this decreased in phase 2 by twenty-seven percent to an average of thirty-four interactions, and further decreased in phase 3, to twenty-six interactions, a decrease of twenty-four percent. This may in part be due to the nascent entrepreneurs liability of newness referred to by Shepherd et al. (2000), low levels of confidence and self-efficacy (Dimov 2010), lack of tacit and contextual knowledge (Dimov 2010), and limited information and resources (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000). The significantly larger number of interactions during phase 1 (46) are related to the *venture-focused interaction, planning* (34). This is echoed in phase 2 where again the majority of all interactions (34) (*venture or person-focused*) are attributed to *venture-focused planning* (20). The level of planning interactions may be reflected in Frese and Gielnik's (2014) argument that business plans legitimise the business venture or Honig and Karlsson's (2004) argument that they provide evidence that the venture is feasible. However, in phase 3 (average interactions 26) surprisingly none of the *venture-focused interactions* (16) relate to *planning*, and *resources* (10) become the focus of attention. This may simply be related to the venture plan being completed and focus turning to the implementation of the plan, and focus turning to resources. The *venture-focused interactions* relating to *visioning* follow a similar declining pattern to *venture planning* over the three phases, albeit at a much lower level of interaction. *Venture implementation* is interesting as the interactions seem to indicate importance during

phase 1 (average 4), which decreases in phase 2 (average 2), and increases threefold in phase 3 (average 6). Again this may be due to the focus being concentrated on planning in phase 2 and changing to implementation in phase 3. From a *person-focused perspective* (average 12), addressing the *self-confidence* of the nascent entrepreneur is a substantial focus during phase 1 (average 8), which begins to diminish in focus in phase 2 (average 4), and is completely non-existent in phase 3. *Relationship building* remains a constant throughout all phases (average 2). Notably, as the mentoring phases evolve, learning becomes (0 phase 1, 6 phase 2, and 8 phase 3) more dominant from a person-focused perspective (12 phase 1, 12 phase 2, and 10 phase 3). From a venture perspective, *venture-focused interactions* reduce over the three phases (34 phase 1, 20 phase 2, 16 phase 3) and the focus shifts from predominately planning in phase 1 (average 20) and 2 (average 14), to resources (average 10) and implementation (average 6) in phase 3. The *person-focused interactions* (12 phase 1, 12 phase 2, and 10 phase 3) remain relatively the same throughout each phase, however, focus does shift from *self-confidence* (phase 1 is 8, phase 2 is 4, and phase 3 is 0) to *learning* (phase 1 is 0, phase 2 is 6, and phase 3 is 8). This is consistent with Dimov's (2010) reference to start-up self-efficacy beliefs of nascent entrepreneurs which represent their confidence in the pursued opportunity.

The *duration* and *frequency* of interactions has an important effect on the perception of the relationship. The findings show that the average duration of the interactions decreased at each phase (1.25hr in phase 1, 45min in phase 2, 26min in phase 3), however, a significant decrease in duration was observed between phase 1 (1.25hrs) and phase 2 (45 min) of nearly half the interaction time. During the initial phase (i.e. *Initiation* stage) mentors and nascent entrepreneurs may interact more to help build what Thomas and Lankau (2009) refer to as high quality relationships which are based in mutual liking, trust and respect. In general, the high duration in phase 1 was associated with planning interactions and resources. This is consistent with the literature on action planning which is highlighted by Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) as an important element of successful new venture formation. When the

average of these interaction types decreased in phase 2 the associated duration also lowered. This decrease in interactions is also mirrored in the number of *interactions initiated by the nascent entrepreneur* which decreased significantly between phase 1 (average 36) and phase 2 (average 24). There were significantly more *interactions initiated by the nascent entrepreneur* across all phases (average 80) of the relationship which reflect the nascent entrepreneurs' proactive role and instigated need for mentoring functions and social support. Higgins and Kram (2001) referred to this form of support as developmental help seeking behaviour (Higgins and Kram 2001) and it is considered an important characteristic associated with the entrepreneur. Less interactions are initiated by the mentor (average 26) indicating that the mentor adopts a reactive role to the mentoring relationship. Interestingly, a similar decreasing pattern was found in the *methods of interactions* (average 116). *Face to face* interactions (average 58) are the highest form of interaction and decrease on average at each phase (26 phase 1, 18 phase 2, and 14 phase 3). *Telephone* interactions (average 30) also reduce at each phase (14 phase 1, 10 phase 2, and 6 phase 3), however *email* interactions remained constant across all three phases (average 6 per phase). The range of interactions is consistent with Memon et al. (2014). The *location* of the interactions outlined is surprising, with *face to face* meetings occurring at either the venture premises or the *mentors' business premises*, while *email* and *telephone* conversations occurred at all locations. The findings indicate that the majority of *face to face* (46 phase 1, 34 phase 2, and 26 phase 3) interactions were located at the *mentors' business premises* during phase 1 (24) and phase 2 (18). This demonstrates a significant dependence by the nascent entrepreneur during phase 1 and 2 through their willingness to travel and allocate additional time and expenses to meet with their respective mentor. Finally, the categorisation of interaction rituals (46 phase 1, 34 phase 2, and 26 phase 3) largely reflected *power* rituals at the beginning of the mentoring relationship phase (38 phase 1) and decreased rapidly at each subsequent (18 phase 2, and 7 phase 3). This reflects the nascent entrepreneurs' initial situation where they relied heavily on the mentor for guidance and knowledge transfer. The opposite is the case for the *status* rituals (8 phase 1, 16 phase 2, and 19 phase 3) where the entrepreneur felt equal with respect to the

level of contribution and input into the interaction. This is consistent with the literature on the shift from the *Initiation* stage to the *Cultivation* stage which is marked by strengthened interpersonal bonds and a shift from a one-way helping relationship, to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity (Kram 1985). However, interestingly some accounts referred to interactions that reflected both types of rituals simultaneously. In these situations, the mentor demonstrated superior knowledge with respect to the venture emergence process steering and guiding the nascent entrepreneur, however at the same time, and during the same phase, the nascent entrepreneur had greater knowledge and capability with respect to the core technical aspects of the venture concept. Sample extracts are provided in Table 7 and also in section 4.2.3.

**Table 8: Characteristics of Mentoring Interactions over Duration of Mentoring Relationship**

Interaction Characteristic	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Average number of interactions	46	34	26
Average duration of interactions	1.25hr	45min	36min
Average nascent entrepreneur initiated interaction	36	24	20
Average mentor initiated interaction	10	10	6
Average venture focused interaction:	(34)	(20)	(16)
- Visioning	4	2	0
- Planning	20	14	0
- Resources	6	2	10
- Implementation	4	2	6
Average person-focused interaction:	(12)	(12)	(10)
- Self-confidence	8	4	0
- Reassurance	2	0	0
- Relationship building	2	2	2
- Learning	0	6	8
Methods of interaction:	(46)	(34)	(26)
- Face to face	26	18	14
- Telephone	14	10	6
- Email	6	6	6
Location of interaction:	(46)	(34)	(26)
- At venture premises	4	6	10

- At mentor business	24	18	4
- External location	6	7	2
- In home of mentor or nascent entrepreneur	12	5	10
Categorisation of interactions:			
- Power based	38	18	7
- Status based	8	16	19
Behaviours demonstrated during interactions:			
- Insightful sharing	22	19	16
- Deliberate sharing	8	14	12
- Responsive cooperation	10	8	9
- Anticipatory cooperation	8	10	8
- Supportive Bonding	28	14	12
- Confirmation Bonding	12	16	10

#### 4.2.2.1. Content of Power and Status Interaction Rituals

Interactions with mentors were a constant over the duration of the venture emergence process. Mentors provided a sounding board and were an invaluable resource (“Always gets me thinking and reflecting on my current situation” NE25). In some interactions entrepreneurs felt novice compared to their mentors, thus reflecting power rituals as highlighted in the literature by Collins (1990). These rituals were revealed in accounts that referred to their vulnerability, uncertainty, dearth of knowledge, lack of expertise, and scarcity of connections (“To be honest I stupidly believed that I could do it all myself”, NE21). Another example is where nascent entrepreneurs described mentors as dependable, trustworthy, and not motivated by any self-gain (“[mentor] was extremely involved in preparing my business plan. He did all the finance because to be honest I was useless with numbers. He came with me to meet bankers and potential investors. This was all done for little or nothing in terms of financial benefit’ NE3). In other cases, nascent entrepreneurs felt equal to their respective mentors as highlighted in the literature by Collins (1990) as status rituals. These rituals were revealed in accounts that referred to nascent entrepreneurs’ feelings of security, control, support and assurance (“We discussed all the targets I had proposed in my plan. She was very insightful in what she said to me’ NE4). Respondents’ accounts revealed

mentor actions that created these emotions include being committed, supportive, encouraging the nascent entrepreneur and expressing belief in the venture ('She really listened to me and helps me to work through issues. In fact, she is a great friend who is willing to share her experiences with me. I always feel better after meeting her' NE23).

Pride is considered a self-conscious emotion and generally viewed as a secondary emotion (Lewis et al. 1989). Self-conscious emotions are thought not to have associated expressions and are not possible to assess through quantifiable, observable behaviour (Tracy and Robins 2007a). Pride is too broad a concept to be considered a single, unified emotion (Ekman 2007). Indirect responses were identified during the analysis, through accounts referring to: personal accomplishments, achievements and confidence; feelings of success; and relationship-oriented pro-social means ('getting along'). Nascent entrepreneurs provided accounts of mentor interactions being responsible for pride, this in turn led to enhance their self-esteem, confidence, ability to bond, and create lasting friendships with the mentors ('I had a set of responsibilities to make my business plan a reality. However, to be honest I initially struggled.... He [mentor] put me right on a lot of issues like negotiation with the banks and suppliers. It was very useful. I called on him many times' NE6). Therefore, pride also led to bonding, sharing and cooperative behaviours.

Some nascent entrepreneurs, during phase 2 and 3 of the relationship, referred to situations in which the interactions resembled both power and status rituals. For example: 'I have become less preoccupied with how I am perceived by others/ I have become more effective in handling difficult relationships. I have gained lots of insights about what pushes my buttons. He [the mentor] made me feel more secure about myself'. In this example, the nascent entrepreneur refers to the mentor instilling security and gaining insights, examples of power rituals where the mentor is the order-giver. The nascent entrepreneur at the same time refers to taking control and becoming less preoccupied with self-perception and more effective in relationships. This is an example of status rituals where the nascent entrepreneur views themselves as equal and the interaction does not have an order-giver or taker. This is an

interesting finding as it highlights that interactions can be either power based, or status based, or they can be both at the same time.

#### ***4.2.3. Content and Findings of Emotions and Behaviours***

During the analysis stage of this research the statements about the recorded interactions between a nascent entrepreneur and mentor were labeled according to the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012). The findings revealed that interactions with mentors were an important source of positive emotions. Nascent entrepreneurs' accounts revealed positive emotions (such as pride, elation, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, interest, and surprise) during both types of interaction rituals, power and status. An important finding related to positive emotions is that they lay the groundwork for the development of trust, and accounts revealed strong feelings associated with trust. Trust, while not considered an emotion, appeared directly or indirectly to be linked to emotions in the majority of accounts. The findings revealed that feelings of trust were a crucial component of positive emotions. Building trust in the mentoring relationship was evident from accounts that referred to mentors as honest, dependable, reliable, involved, frank, insightful, valuable, knowledgeable, positive, supportive, flexible, open, friendly, and protected.

Six forms or patterns of behaviour emerged from the analyses of emotions: insightful sharing; deliberate sharing; responsive cooperation; anticipatory cooperation; supportive bonding; and confirmation bonding. Accounts of these behaviours were recorded relative to the interaction accounts of nascent entrepreneurs (average 46 phase 1, 34 phase 2, 26 phase 3) (see Table 8). The findings revealed that in the first form *Insightful Sharing* (average 22 phase 1, 19 phase 2, and 16 phase 3) nascent entrepreneurs' accounts reflected feelings of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, and satisfaction. They felt empowered and they spoke of reflecting on venture development through active thinking, prioritising, viewing tasks differently, and setting milestones. This is consistent with Stam et al.'s (2014) reference to mentors challenging entrepreneurial cognitive structures and encouraging new insights. The findings reflect high levels of *insightful sharing* behaviours recorded in phase 1 (average 22)

and phase 2 (average 19) (Table 8), which refer to business goals, strategies, and assessing personal objectives. The findings revealed that this is directly related to the significantly larger number of *venture-focused planning* (Table 8) interactions that occurred during phase 1 (average 20), and again in phase 2 (average 14) where the majority of all interactions (*venture* or *person-focused*) are attributed to *venture-focused planning*. This is possibly due to the findings in the literature that highlighted nascent entrepreneurs' lack of: tacit and contextual knowledge (Dimov 2010), information and resources (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007; Shepherd et al. 2000), liability of newness (Shepherd et al. 2000). The findings revealed that the high level of accounts of *insightful sharing* in phase 3 (average 16) were directly related to the *person-focused interaction, learning* (average 8)(Table 8). This is consistent with Unger et al.'s (2011) reference to mentors' crucial role in the provision of knowledge, advice, information and know-how.

The second form *Deliberate Sharing* (average 8 phase 1, 14 phase 2, and 12 phase 3) centered on feelings of trust and predominately the emotions of pride, happiness, and satisfaction, however emotions such as relief, hope and interest were also expressed. Respondents spoke of careful sharing of significant amounts of practical knowledge by their mentor, which drew on past experience, skills, knowledge, and social capital. Interestingly, this form of behavior was higher in phase two than any other phase. This may be a result of the lack of trust in phase 1. The *deliberate sharing* behaviour recorded in phase 3 (average 12) (Table 8) directly related to the sharing of social networks (i.e. *venture-focused resources*), and practical intelligence based on experience, skills, and tacit knowledge (i.e. *person-focused learning*). Sharing social networks is consistent with Hall and Chandler's (2007) reference to mentors' access to diverse developmental networks which can support the development of the nascent entrepreneur and business venture. Practical intelligence sharing echoes Dimov's (2010) reference to the importance of tacit, contextual knowledge gained through prior industry experience which is a valuable resource in guiding nascent entrepreneurial efforts towards venture emergence.

The third pattern of behavior that emerged, *Responsive Cooperation* (average 10 phase 1, 8 phase 2, and 9 phase 3), reflects nascent entrepreneurs' accounts of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, and interest. Accounts reveal that mentors reacted to the needs and requirements of nascent entrepreneurs in a consistent manner throughout all phases of the relationship (Table 8) and is reflected in the constant *person-focused relationship building* (Table 8). This is consistent with the literature which highlights the crucial role (see Kram (1985), Nielson et al. (2001) and St-Jean (2012)) that mentors play in building self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity.

The fourth pattern of behavior that emerged, *Anticipatory Cooperation* (average 8 phase 1, 10 phase 2, and 8 phase 3), reflects nascent entrepreneurs' accounts of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, and interest. Respondents' accounts reveal that in interactions they talked about proactive approaches to future events and the implementation of measures to avoid business failure or to secure resources. *Anticipatory cooperation* remains consistent throughout each of the three phases (Table 8) and is reflected in the constant *person-focused relationship building* (Table 8). This is consistent with the literature on mentors and their role in supporting entrepreneurs to filter pertinent information (Dimov 2007; Shepherd et al. 2007), make effective decisions (Longnecker et al. 2013), anticipate problems and prepare contingencies (Delmar and Shane 2003; Dimov 2010; deJanasz et al. 2003).

The fifth pattern of behavior *Supportive Bonding* (average 28 phase 1, 14 phase 2, and 12 phase 3) reflected feelings of trust and predominately the emotions pride, and hope, however, similar accounts of satisfaction relief, and interest were also recorded. Respondents' accounts reveal that the mentor had their best interests at heart, displayed genuine loyalty, and understanding of the venture. The number of recorded accounts of *supportive bonding* behaviours during phase 1(average 28) is particularly high (Table 8), and is reflected in the reliance on the mentor to address *person-focused interactions* of *self-confidence* and *reassurance* (Table 8). The accounts of *supportive bonding* behaviours begin to diminish in

phase 2 (average 14) and phase 3 (average 12) (Table 8), which is directly related to the reduction in *person-focused interactions* addressing the *self-confidence* and *reassurance* of the nascent entrepreneur (Table 8). The decrease in reliance on this form of interaction by nascent entrepreneurs in phase 2 and 3 may be due to the focus of the mentoring relationship shifting from a one-way helping relationship in phase 1 (*Initiation* stage), to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity in phase 2 and 3 (*Cultivation* stage) (Kram 1985).

The sixth pattern of behavior *Confirmation Bonding* (average 12 phase 1, 16 phase 2, and 10 phase 3) was reflected in accounts about feelings of trust and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, hope, and interest. Respondents felt a sense of approval, validation, and that mentors endorsed the venture. While accounts referring to *confirmation bonding* (Table 8) reflect significant importance, surprisingly, it is the high accounts of *confirmation bonding* during phase 2 (average 16) that seem to increase nascent entrepreneurs' realisation and validation of their business venture. This is consistent with the mentor's role described in the literature (St-Jean 2012) as helping to maintain high levels of self-efficacy through the process of validation, encouragement, role-model behaviours, and the mentors' perceived status. The *venture-focused implementation* interactions (Table 8) which seem to indicate importance during phase 1 (average 4) but decrease in phase 2 (average 2). The findings revealed that high levels of *confirmation bonding* (Table 8) in phase 2 (average 16), in turn drove the nascent entrepreneur to increase focus on *implementation* during phase 3 (average 6), which increased threefold compared to phase 2 (average 2). This is reflected in the *venture-focused implementation* interactions (Table 8) which increases threefold in phase 3 (average 6). This may be a reflection of the literature that referred to the mentors role in the development of perceptions of self-efficacy and perseverance (Cardon and Kirk 2013), increased confidence, and a reduction in self-doubt and emotional uncertainty (Nielson et al. 2001).

#### ***4.2.4. Content and Findings of Behaviours and Entrepreneurial Agency***

The findings demonstrated that the bonding, knowledge sharing, and cooperative behaviour that occur as a result of positive emotional outcomes from mentor interactions, enhanced the core properties of entrepreneurial agency identified by Bandura (2006) namely, intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness. From an intentionality perspective, nascent entrepreneurs referred to increased ability to present business plans and outline strategies for the future. Evidence of forethought was highlighted through accounts of an increased awareness and ability to monitor the implementation of the business plan. Nascent entrepreneurs referred to their courage to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing the business, and to anticipate the consequences of the potential risks. This is consistent with self-reactive entrepreneurial agency. Increased ability to stand back from day-to-day realities of the venture and focus on important strategic priorities was evident in accounts by nascent entrepreneurs and consistent with self-reflectiveness. Interestingly, none of the properties of entrepreneurial agency were evident in phase 1 and only began to become apparent in phase 2, with the majority of accounts referred to during phase 3. Illustrations from the behaviours demonstrated and the link to entrepreneurial agency are provided below.

##### **4.2.4.1. Self-Reflectiveness Agency**

Insightful sharing occurs in response to a self-reflective metacognition focused on appraising one's efficacy, the appropriateness of business goals, the strategies for realising them, and assessing the meaning of desired personal and business pursuits. Nascent entrepreneurs described being challenged and supported to engage in reflection and assess their ability to achieve venture goals and objectives, thereby achieving a better understanding of personal strengths and limitations. An increase in self-confidence and self-awareness was evident in most accounts, exemplified by the account of how the interactions enhanced the ability to stand back from day-to-day realities and focus on important strategic issues. NE25 stated: '[mentor] Always gets me thinking and reflecting on my current situation. I can let my defenses go down and go with the flow'. This describes an increase in confidence, resilience

and enhanced empowerment: 'I am much more confident and resilient than say one year ago – I have encountered many difficult start up issues, some good, some bad...One professional person [mentor] in particular has helped me get a better perspective on things. I now feel empowered to act, to know what I am comfortable at and what I am not comfortable with...I have broadened my skills so much.' The emotional tone of NE25's accounts included a mixture of trust, pride, elation, happiness, and satisfaction. NE25's accounts reflected both status and power rituals. He expressed feelings of being in control while also lacking control, feeling supported and assured, but also a realisation that he lacked knowledge and expertise. NE25 described his ability to assess strengths, limitations, and awareness of what he could personally achieve. This is an example of insightful sharing, and in NE25's case is linked to self-reflectiveness. This behaviour is consistent with the core dimension of entrepreneurial agency, self-reflectiveness (Bandura 2006).

Nascent entrepreneurs derived emotional support from supportive bonding behaviours that emphasised friendship, honest feedback, assistance, and guidance. NE6 for example, described his mentor as an 'invaluable source of advice and counsel'. In this case, NE6 expressed his concerns and inexperience (i.e. novice) as an entrepreneur, which produced a heightened sense of trust in the mentor. Nascent entrepreneur accounts revealed feelings of support, friendship, and assurance, however, it was also found that positive emotions coincided with vulnerability and frustration — negative emotions. Some nascent entrepreneurs expressed vulnerability where they were new to the business area and frustrated at the knowledge gap that existed. Mentor interactions helped alleviate feelings of isolation and the liability of newness. This mirrors Bandura's (2006) agency dimension - self-reflectiveness. NE15's accounts reveal the supportive quality of her mentor interactions, particularly in relation to personal vulnerabilities. Her mentor interactions helped her deal with these issues through the availability, proximity, and responsiveness of the mentor when faced with personal difficulties. These interactions led to supportive bonding behaviours that provided stepping-stones to deal with setbacks and vulnerabilities. NE15 provides an account

that describes this situation: 'He [mentor] was very effective at getting me to think about my feelings and to work out issues, thinking aloud. I did not over rely on him but felt challenged while at the same time feeling protected...I am a much more robust person emotionally as a result of that relationship.' NE15 felt more secure when faced with difficulties, she was better at coping with the unknown, and more skilled at dealing with conflicting priorities.

**Table 9: Linking Nascent Entrepreneur-Mentor Functions, Interactions, Emotions, Behaviours and Agency**

NE#	Entrepreneurs accounts of interactions with mentors over the course of the mentoring relationship (direct quotes)	Function: Mentor Interaction that elicit positive emotions	Ritual: Power, Status	Emotions connected to interactions	Interaction Behaviour connected to positive emotions	Entrepreneurial Agency connected to behaviour and positive emotions
NE1	I would give him an update on where we were with the venture in terms of product development, sales, marketing, and finance and would outline things that worked for us. He would ask probing questions to investigate what was already underway in terms of the plan...He was not providing the answers but analysing what I was proposing	<b>Plan:</b> Mentor reacts to the ideas and goals articulated in the business plan, and provides perspective on their feasibility.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured	Pride Satisfaction  Trust	Insightful	Ability to present business plan that sets out future of the venture and the entrepreneur's confidence in the venture INTENTIONALITY SELF-REFLECTIVE
NE2	He was very frank and honest in his assessment of what I was trying to do. He definitely made me rethink my time plan and what could be achieved in the current economic environment	<b>Plan:</b> Mentor reacts to the ideas and goals articulated in the business plan, and provides perspective on their feasibility.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling supported, assured	Happy Satisfaction  Trust	Insightful	Ability to present business plan that sets out future of the venture and the entrepreneur's confidence in the venture INTENTIONALITY FORETHOUGHT
NE3	[mentor] was extremely involved in preparing my business plan. He did all the finance because to be honest I was useless with numbers. He came with me to meet bankers and potential investors. This was all done for little or nothing in terms of financial benefit.	<b>Plan:</b> Mentor gets actively involved in the development of the business plan and shapes its content and focus	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, dearth of knowledge, uncertain, vulnerable, lack of know-how	Relief Hope  Trust	Responsive Deliberate Supportive	Ability to present business plan that sets out future of the venture and the entrepreneur's confidence in the venture INTENTIONALITY
NE4	We discussed all the targets I had proposed in my plan. She was very insightful in what she said to me. I asked her for some additional information and this was particularly valuable. My confidence in the plan is much greater as a result	<b>Plan:</b> Mentor gets actively involved in the development of the business plan and shapes its content and focus	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured, dearth of knowledge	Pride Happiness Satisfaction  Trust	Insightful Deliberate	Ability to present business plan that sets out future of the venture and the entrepreneur's confidence in the venture INTENTIONALITY
NE3	She shared a lot of valuable technical knowledge that was vital to us getting the product to market.	<b>Share, Develop:</b> Mentor shares relevant technical knowledge	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, dearth of knowledge	Satisfaction Relief	Deliberate	Ability to monitor progress on the implementation of the new venture business

		and perspective, and helps the entrepreneur to be realistic about progress.		Trust		plan and to make sense of setbacks. FORETHOUGHT
NE4	He always looked at things differently... always left of centre. I find him extremely precise and he cuts through the detail.	<b>Filter, Develop:</b> Mentor questions progress, challenges assumptions and brings clarity to the thinking of the entrepreneur.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, supported, assured	Pride Happiness  Trust	Insightful Responsive	Ability to monitor progress on the implementation of the new venture business plan and to make sense of setbacks. FORETHOUGHT
NE5	She always responded in a positive way to what I was trying to do ... continually supporting my vision, even when it was going pear-shaped.	<b>Support:</b> Mentor demonstrates responsiveness to the situation of an entrepreneur and acknowledges the significance of success and failures.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling supported, vulnerable	Hope Interest  Trust	Responsive Supportive Confirming	Ability to monitor progress on the implementation of the new venture business plan and to make sense of setbacks. FORETHOUGHT
NE6	I had a set of responsibilities to make my business plan a reality. However, to be honest I initially struggled.... He [mentor] put me right on a lot of issues like negotiation with the banks and suppliers. It was very useful. I called on him many	<b>Steer:</b> Mentor demonstrates responsiveness to the situation of an entrepreneur and acknowledges the significance of success and failures.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, dearth of knowledge, uncertain, vulnerable, lack of know-how, scarce connections	Relief Hope Interest  Trust	Responsive Deliberate Supportive	Ability to monitor progress on the implementation of the new venture business plan and to make sense of setbacks. FORETHOUGHT
NE7	It took a few meetings to build trust ... to reach a situation where she was sensitive to my concerns. [Name] is a very open person, a friendly person, and she never judges me.	<b>Support:</b> The mentor encourages an entrepreneur to propose new ideas and is open to all ideas, irrespective of their feasibility	<b>Status:</b> Feeling assured, uncertain, vulnerable	Hope Interest  Trust	Responsive Supportive	Ability to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE8	I trusted my formal mentor. He is extremely open, honest and most	<b>Support, Develop:</b> The	<b>Status:</b> Feeling in	Pride	Confirming	Ability to take risks,

	important of all believes in what I am doing. He continually acknowledges my success and failures. The failure aspect is important to me because it shows he is not judgemental	mentor encourages an entrepreneur to propose new ideas and is open to all ideas, irrespective of their feasibility	control, supported, assured	Happiness Trust	Supportive Anticipatory	experiment with new approaches to developing the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE9	He is very effective at getting me to think about my feelings and to work out issues, thinking out loud. I did not over rely on him but felt challenged while at the same time feeling protected ... I am a much more robust emotionally as a result of the relationship	<b>Support:</b> Mentor provides an entrepreneur with opportunities to voice vulnerabilities and fears, and provide an entrepreneur with an emotional sounding board	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, vulnerable	Pride Trust	Insightful Supportive	Ability to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE10	I could tell her everything. My fears, nightmares, and panic attacks. She listened and never judged me. In fact, it is her willingness to listen that I found most reassuring.	<b>Support:</b> Mentor provides an entrepreneur with opportunities to voice vulnerabilities and fears, and provide an entrepreneur with an emotional sounding board	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, vulnerable	Relief Hope Trust	Supportive	Ability to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE11	I continually receive very honest feedback from one individual. It is always spot-on and takes into account my situation outside of the venture.	<b>Steer:</b> Mentor provides an entrepreneur with feedback that extends beyond venture issues and is often advice based on personal experience.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling supported, assured, vulnerable	Satisfaction Trust	Deliberate Supportive	Ability to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE12	He taught me the value of a strong work ethic. I always hear it as it is, he never dresses up things. He is willing to sit with me to discuss what I am doing well and what I should change ... He is an	<b>Support, Develop:</b> Mentor provides an entrepreneur with	<b>Power:</b> Feeling secure, supported, dearth of knowledge, uncertain,	Hope Interest	Deliberate Confirming Supportive	Ability to take risks, experiment with new approaches to developing

	invaluable source of counsel and advice.	feedback that extends beyond venture issues and is often advice based on personal experience.	vulnerable, lack of know-how	Trust		the business and to understand the consequences of the potential risks SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE13	One particular individual is brilliant at telling stories that really help me to think in different ways about my business. He links things in a way that I understand.	<b>Steer:</b> Mentor discusses long-term strategic issues, options and dilemmas facing the business and is able to link strategic options to past experiences	<b>Status:</b> Feeling in control, assured, supported	Pride Happiness Trust	Insightful Supportive	Ability to stand back from day-to-day realities of the venture and focus on important strategic priorities SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE14	She is able to cut through all the detail and focus on what is important. She continually provides me with a clear cut sense of direction and a strategic framework that I can work with. It was very valuable.	<b>Steer:</b> Mentor discusses long-term strategic issues, options and dilemmas facing the business and is able to link strategic options to past experiences	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured	Pride Happiness Satisfaction Trust	Insightful Deliberate	Ability to stand back from day-to-day realities of the venture and focus on important strategic priorities INTENTIONALITY SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE15	For me strategy was all hairy fairy things. I wanted everything to be black and white and not grey. He gave me a sense of perspective and a set of tools and a framework that got me to be more ambitious in how I thought the business could go ... all very liberating.	<b>Steer:</b> Mentor discusses long-term strategic issues, options and dilemmas facing the business and is able to link strategic options to past experiences	<b>Power:</b> Feeling in control, supported, dearth of knowledge, lack of know-how	Pride Satisfaction Trust	Insightful Responsive Anticipatory	Ability to stand back from day-to-day realities of the venture and focus on important strategic priorities INTENTIONALITY SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE16	She is totally open to my ideas ... always telling me that what I am doing is the right way to go. She always provides me with the perspective I need to go beyond the detail.	<b>Steer, Support, Develop, Plan:</b> Mentor accepts and confirms what an entrepreneur is doing through the sharing of perceptions	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured	Pride Happiness Trust	Insightful Deliberate Anticipatory	Ability to stand back from day-to-day realities of the venture and focus on important strategic priorities INTENTIONALITY SELF-REFLECTIVENESS

		and perspectives on strategic issues.				
NE17	I found it invaluable to be able to tap into networks that were established by my experienced entrepreneur [mentor]. He had stork relationships with a variety of agencies. He opened doors and let me take it from there	<b>Steer, Share, Develop:</b> Mentor links issues and problems to goals and objectives of the venture and provides a deep understanding of the complexity of context.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling in control, supported, scarce connections	Pride Satisfaction Trust	Responsive Deliberate Confirming Supportive	Ability to tackle complex implementation issues and address significant obstacles to the success of the venture SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE18	She is excellent always putting things in context. Totally anchored everything and linked my bigger goals ... never have to question what she is telling me.	<b>Steer, Develop:</b> Mentor links issues and problems to goals and objectives of the venture and provides a deep understanding of the complexity of context.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured	Pride Happiness Satisfaction Trust	Insightful Deliberate Anticipatory	Ability to tackle complex implementation issues and address significant obstacles to the success of the venture SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE19	She opened many doors for me. I got in front of a development agency official as a result of her contacts and relationship with that person. It proved to be crucial to me getting the business of the ground	<b>Share:</b> Mentor opens doors for the entrepreneur and facilitates the development of relationships with key individuals who will support the business.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling secure, in control, supported, assured, lack of know-how, scarce connections	Pride Happiness Satisfaction Trust	Responsive Deliberate Confirming Supportive	Ability to tackle complex implementation issues and address significant obstacles to the success of the venture SELF-REACTIVENESS
NE20	During the first eighteen months, we experienced many problems that potentially could have closed down the business ... I think having the protection of a mentor during this time kept me going and prevented me from falling over a cliff	<b>Support, Develop, Steer:</b> Mentor acts as a sounding board for self-discovery and exploration. Provides examples of personal experiences and uses a variety of interpersonal strategies to help an entrepreneur solve	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, uncertain, vulnerable	Hope Interest Trust	Responsive Anticipatory Supportive	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS

		problems.				
NE21	I soon began to realise the importance of sound technical advice and access to information...To be honest I stupidly believed that I could do it all myself	<b>Support, Develop, Steer:</b> Mentor acts as a sounding board for self-discovery and exploration. Provides examples of personal experiences and uses a variety of interpersonal strategies to help an entrepreneur solve problems.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, dearth of knowledge, vulnerable, lack of know-how	Relief Hope Interest Trust	Deliberate	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE22	You have to learn a lot very quickly, to know what is possible and what will work and not work. He [mentor] always challenged me to think of all the alternatives and I had regular milestones to achieve. We regularly talked about what the end result was going to look like.	<b>Support, Develop, Steer:</b> Mentor acts as a sounding board for self-discovery and exploration. Provides examples of personal experiences and uses a variety of interpersonal strategies to help an entrepreneur solve problems.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling supported, dearth of knowledge, vulnerable, lack of know-how	Hope Interest Trust	Insightful Anticipatory Confirming Supportive	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE23	She really listened to me and helps me to work through issues. In fact she is a great friend who is willing to share her experiences with me. I always feel better after meeting her.	<b>Support, Develop, Steer:</b> Mentor acts as a sounding board for self-discovery and exploration. Provides examples of personal experiences and uses a variety of interpersonal strategies to help an entrepreneur solve problems.	<b>Status:</b> Feeling supported, assured	Relief Hope Trust	Responsive Deliberate	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE24	I value her because she is always loyal and herself. We have worked through a lot of difficult situations.	<b>Support:</b> Mentor focuses on developing	<b>Status:</b> Feeling supported, assured,	Pride Satisfaction	Responsive Supportive	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to

		a relationship with an entrepreneur, which is authentic in what is said and done.	uncertain, vulnerable	Trust		know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS
NE25	[mentor] Always gets me thinking and reflecting on my current situation. I can let my defences go down and go with the flow.	<b>Develop:</b> Mentor helps an entrepreneur to engage in reflection, strip away defences and confront issues.	<b>Power:</b> Feeling secure, supported, vulnerable	Satisfaction Trust	Insightful	Ability to assess strengths, personal limitations and to know what can be achieved SELF-REFLECTIVENESS

## **Chapter 5 Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion**

## **5.1. Introduction**

The chapter presents a summary of the research undertaken in this thesis. In addition, it reflects on the contributions of the research to the knowledge base from theoretical, empirical, and conceptual perspectives. Finally, the chapter outlines the implications of this research with respect to theory, policy, and practice, and reviews the limitations of the research and outlines suggestions for future research.

The main objective of this study was to examine nascent entrepreneur-mentor formal relationships in an attempt to identify the specific mentoring functions and characteristics of mentoring interactions. How these mentoring functions and interactions impact emotions, behaviour and interplay to affect entrepreneurial agency was also of significant interest. The literature review, which drew on both entrepreneurship and mentoring literatures, revealed the lacuna of research regarding formal mentoring relationships in the context of entrepreneurs. In particular, the scarcity of inductive research on the functions performed in the unique context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor formal relationships. Emotions are influenced by situational factors and there is a distinct lack of understanding of the impact of mentoring interactions on emotions and behaviour, and their effect on entrepreneurial agency in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. To address these gaps, this research utilised relational theories to review the relational process of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context. Social support theory emerged as particularly salient and viewing the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship through this lens helped contribute to understanding the ideal mentoring conditions and functions through which the relationship can flourish.

The initial motivation for the research originates from the increased reliance on entrepreneurs globally, which has brought significant attention to mentoring in the context of entrepreneurs (McKevitt and Marshall 2015; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013). The entrepreneurial focus of this research concentrated on a particular type of entrepreneur, the nascent entrepreneur. The rationale in this regard was the high discontinuance rates highlighted within the first five years which are between forty and fifty percent (GEM 2015).

It is well acknowledged that levels of entrepreneurship activity are heavily influenced by environmental, societal, and economic conditions (Gartner 1985; Liao and Gartner 2006; Wennekers et al. 2005; Acs 2006). However, the process of mentoring in an entrepreneurial context varies depending on many other factors including network elements and dyad member characteristics (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013). Mentoring is not a simple process and the research highlights the complicated and delicate nature of interpersonal relationships. Formal mentoring programmes for entrepreneurs are of particular interest to the current study as they are considered an important source of support available to entrepreneurs during different stages of venture emergence (Ozgen and Baron 2007; Newbert et al. 2012). These programmes are a world-wide phenomenon with governments around the world supporting mentoring programmes (Deakins et al. 1997; Kempster and Cope 2010; St-Jean 2011; Westanmo 2000; St-Jean 2012; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Stevenson and Lundström 2001). Much of the existing research has focused on the outcomes of mentoring relationships, and very few have considered the impact of the interpersonal relationship between mentors and entrepreneurs. Additionally, the functions of mentoring relationships have been generically categorised across all types of mentoring and fail to take into consideration the individuals involved, the relationship, and the specific nature, context and purpose of the mentoring. However, a significant influential factor of the type of functions that occur in an entrepreneurial mentoring context is the type of entrepreneur, which in the current context is the nascent entrepreneur. Characteristics of mentors and nascent entrepreneurs have been well researched and play a significant role in the mentoring relationship and the type of functions provided (St-Jean and Mathieu 2015; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Hopp and Sonderegger 2014; Davidsson and Gordon 2009). However, the interpersonal nature of the relationship dynamic and the impact of the relationship functions and interactions remains under-researched. Ragins and Verbos (2007) highlighted the importance of mutual or reciprocal interactions as the foundation of positive and meaningful mentoring relationships. To investigate the significance and impact of mentoring functions and interactions this research sought to address the research question posed in Chapter 1:

*In a nascent entrepreneur-mentor mentoring relationship context, what are the functions and characteristics of interactions, and how do these impact positive emotions, behaviour, and entrepreneurial agency?*

In pursuit of this research question, a number of research objectives were identified:

**Objective 1:** Identify the mentoring functions and characteristics of interactions in a formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship.

**Objective 2:** Examine the emotions and behaviours derived from mentor interactions with nascent entrepreneurs.

**Objective 3:** Analyse the interplay of functions, interactions, emotions and behaviour on enabling entrepreneurial agency.

In order to answer the research question, and address the research objectives, Chapter 3 provided a reflection of possible research methodologies and justification for the chosen research philosophy (interpretive), approach (inductive), strategies (longitudinal and content analysis), techniques (in-depth interviews and internal documents) and sampling selection (convenience sampling). Semi-structured interviews were conducted at three points over the eighteen-month study period with a sample of 122 dyadic mentoring pairs (84 interview sets were included in the final study). All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the data was then analysed with the use of NVivo (version 10). A multi-step content analytic approach was employed to analyse the nascent entrepreneur-mentor functions and interactions from an emotion, behaviour, and agency perspective. The data was analysed to explore different types of support within each social support category and the literature was revisited in order to conceptualise and justify function sub-categories identified. Mentoring interactions were analysed based on interaction type (using interaction ritual chain theory). Interaction characteristics were recorded (over 8,000 in total) and calculated per phase (e.g. number of interactions, duration, initiator, focus, method, and location). The data provided a rich base upon which to investigate the research question and objectives.

This chapter brings together the main findings and discusses the contributions of the research from theoretical, methodological, and empirical perspectives. Possible redirections for policy and practice are provided, and details of the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research are discussed. The last section provides a final conclusion to the research.

## **5.2. Summary, Key Findings and Contribution to Research**

Based on the literature review provided in Chapter 2, there is clear evidence that formal mentoring programmes play an integral role in the emergence of nascent entrepreneur ventures. Entrepreneurship theory was examined theoretically from individual and structural perspectives. The individual perspective is based on the development of: human capital (Davidsson and Honig 2003; Rauch and Frese 2005), psychological/traits (Krueger 2003), social capital (Burt 2005; Manev et al. 2005; Birley 1985; Grossman et al. 2012a; Grossman et al. 2012b), and behaviours (Misra and Kumar 2000; Gartner and Carter 2005). The structural perspective is based on economic development (Wennekers et al. 2010), technological advances (Acs 2006; Wennekers et al. 2010), culture (Aoyama 2009; Hopp and Stephan 2012), institution support (Wennekers et al. 2005; Freytag and Thurik 2007), and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Mason and Brown 2014). Mentoring on the other hand is a relational process and the theoretical examination required investigation from many different perspectives: social capital theory; social exchange theory and relational cohesion theory; self-in-relation theory, attachment theory; and interaction ritual chain theory. Each of these theories brought a different and important dimension to the review of mentoring relationships in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. Social support theory emerged as particularly relevant in the context of formal mentoring relationships and three categories of social support were identified as crucial to the investigation of mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs: psychological; information; and network and tangible assistance. Viewing the mentoring relationship through the lens of social support theory helped to construct and represent the relationship as dynamic structures of social support. The literature review culminated in a

proposed multilevel conceptual framework and model (Figure 4) of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship to highlight internal (dyad members and dyad relationship) and external (environment, societal, economic, and network elements) factors that shape and influence the entrepreneurial mentoring relationships. This multilevel conceptual framework and model considers how multiple contexts within the entrepreneurial system potentially work together. It brings together the individual and environmental levels in an integrative manner. The introduction of the multilevel conceptual framework and model perspective helped to theorise formal mentoring relationships as a highly contextual multilevel process. It is particularly valuable in an entrepreneurial context because it considers how multiple contexts within an entrepreneurial system potentially work together.

The theoretical review revealed that the multifaceted nature of mentoring has led to a broad and accepted categorisation of two mentoring support functions (psychosocial and career) (Kram 1985; Bisk 2002; Wanberg et al. 2003). Mentoring, in the context of entrepreneurs, for the most part continues to provide support based on the two mentoring support functions, and focuses on the antecedents and outcomes of mentoring relationships (positive or negative) rather than the dynamic nature of mentoring and the processes within the mentoring relationship (St-Jean and Audet 2013; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Hamlin and Sage 2011; Wanberg et al. 2003; Clutterbuck 2003). However, studies based on Kram's (1985) original categorisation of mentoring functions were deductive in nature. Where an inductive approach was adopted, the functions identified differ. For example, Levesque et al. (2005) asked mentees to rank mentor behaviour according to their perceived importance, mentees considered informational support as a very important behaviour, however, Kram's (1985) functions ignore this aspect. Fowler (2002) also identified seven functions which differ from Kram's. Indisputably, mentoring functions in the entrepreneurial context are distinct from those in the organisational context, since entrepreneurs manage their own business and mentors have no hierarchical position above them (St-Jean 2011). This suggested the need to reassess the mentor functions inductively from an entrepreneurial

perspective. The current research focuses on a specific type of entrepreneur, the nascent entrepreneur, is due to the large discontinuance rates associated with this type of entrepreneur (Parker and Belghitar 2006; Kessler and Frank 2009; vanGelderen et al. 2011). Understanding the contextual and heterogeneous factors that impact the mentoring relationship and the effects they have on the nascent entrepreneurs is of considerable economic, policy and academic interest. The literature review also revealed that the entrepreneurial mentoring literature has begun to focus on entrepreneur-mentor interactions (Raffo 2000; Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), emotions (Wainwright et al. 2015; Ndinguri et al. 2014), behaviour (Hamlin and Sage 2011; St-Jean and Mathieu 2015; Ebbers 2014), and entrepreneurial agency (Pyysiäinen 2011; Bøllingtoft and Ulhøi 2005; Chandra 2007; Welter and Smallbone 2011). Despite these developments, the literature review highlighted that the interplay between these aspects of mentoring which are currently under separate investigation remains uninvestigated.

To complement the emerging debate on mentoring in the context of different types of entrepreneurs and to overcome the limitations of the traditional two function provision of mentoring, this research extends the provision of mentoring to incorporate a holistic approach by investigating the interplay of various aspects of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. The main contribution of this study lies in the identification of the specific mentoring functions that are provided during the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship: support, develop, steer, filter, plan and share. This complements the existing research by further categorising the traditional mentoring functions. The clarification of the mentoring interactions that occur during each phase of the relationship, their frequency, and the focus of the interactions at each phase provide important insights and contributions. In particular, the significant difference in the number of interactions, and the shift in focus of the interactions as the relationship evolves. Finally, the discovery that the positive emotions derived from mentor functions and interactions reinforce particular behaviours (bonding, sharing, and cooperative) that can result in enhanced entrepreneurial agency is a substantial contribution. The study answers a number of calls for research to explore emotions and entrepreneurial opportunity (Foo 2011), to investigate entrepreneurial behaviour associated with emotions

(Goss et al. 2011; Goss 2005) and to better understand the value of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneur context (St-Jean and Audet 2012). The contribution of the findings of this study will be explored in detail in the next section.

### **5.2.1. Contribution to Theory**

Two theories underpinned this research, *Social Support Theory* and *Interaction Ritual Chain Theory*. In each case, the contribution to the literature by the current study is highlighted below. Table 10 provides a summary comparison of the existing literature and the research findings.

#### **5.2.1.1. Social Support Theory Contribution**

The concept of social support theory adopted in this thesis views social support from a relationship perspective. This approach attributes social support to relationship processes associated with psychological, information, and network and tangible assistance. This research adds to the theoretical debate on social support theory by narrowing the support elements into further sub-categories relative to the current context: psychological (*Support*); information (*Develop*, *Filter*, and *Steer*); and network and tangible assistance (*Plan* and *Share*). Narrowing the elements provides a social support based approach to the mentoring relationship which identifies the specific supports provided in the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship. The existing mentoring literature on psychological support, in the context of entrepreneurs, is linked to supporting or building self-esteem (Boyd and Vozikis 1994), self-confidence (Fielden and Hunt 2011) self-efficacy (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b), perseverance (Zhao et al. 2005b), strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005), risk taking and managing uncertainty (Cascio and Gasker 2001), work-family conflict, and job exhaustion (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001). It could be argued that the promotion of self-belief, and the creation of a positive self-image are already identified in the literature through the link to self-esteem (Boyd and Vozikis 1994), self-confidence (Fielden and Hunt 2011), and self-efficacy (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b). The findings revealed that the psychological social support sub-category *Support* is

additionally linked to coping strategies, and the encouragement and generation of enthusiasm. The identification of specific supports that are provided during nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships can help design, guide and influence mentoring programmes in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the business venture and the nascent entrepreneur, therefore improving the awareness of the required mentoring supports may improve the quality of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship and decrease the discontinuance rates in the first five years highlighted by GEM (2015).

The current research suggests that, in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, the information category of social support can be sub-divided into *Develop*, *Filter* and *Steer* support functions. The existing mentoring literature on information support, in the context of entrepreneurs, is linked to performance feedback, social information (Mullen 1994; Mullen and Noe 1999), and specific knowledge (Unger et al. 2011). The findings associated with the information social support sub-category *Develop* further expands the literature through its association with providing feedback in the form of criticism and constructive praise which differs from the performance feedback highlighted in the literature (Mullen 1994; Mullen and Noe 1999). The findings revealed that mentors help nascent entrepreneurs by encouraging continuous learning and development which has been highlighted by Gartner et al. (1999) as a determining factor of venture survival during the first five years. According to the literature, feedback is considered a form of tailored learning in a mentoring context (Noe 1988; Saffold 2005; Ballout 2009), which assists entrepreneurs to acquire both explicit and tacit knowledge (St-Jean and Audet 2012), and reflect on and construct new knowledge (Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012). The findings of this research concur with the literature, in particular through the supports identified that relate to motivating continuous learning, and stimulating continuous development. The current research adds to the existing literature through the inclusion of support for openness to new experiences, and encouraging dedication and focus. Openness to experience reflects a degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and novelty. Mentors' ability to encourage openness to new experiences

in vital in the context of nascent entrepreneurs particularly given the dynamic (Ensley et al. 2006; Hmieleski and Ensley 2007), highly unpredictable (Gunther-McGrath and MacMillan 2000), and rapidly changing (Lichtenstein, Dooley, & Lumpkin, 2006) environments they work in. These environments require dedication, determination, perseverance, and focus, which are particularly important traits in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. Directly targeting the development of these traits and raising awareness of their importance, may help to reduce the risk and uncertainty and support the continuity of the business which Townsend et al. (2010) and Dimov (2010) have highlighted. The sub-category *Filter* highlighted information support for creating an environment for reflection, and promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process. Creating an environment for reflection is referenced in the literature in the form of knowledge transfer through which nascent entrepreneurs reflect on, and, construct new knowledge (Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012). While the literature with respect to filtering important information is vital to the success of the new venture (Ardichvilli et al. 2003), it focuses on developing cognitive frameworks to interpret complex information, recognise emerging opportunities and make sense of market changes (Ozgen and Baron 2007). However, the findings of the current research are more specific and relate to filtering information relative to particular tasks, thus adding to the literature. A mentor's ability to help nascent entrepreneurs to filter information is a significant factor in overcoming the liability of newness described by Shepherd et al. (2000) and it also supports effective decision making. These are crucial skills in overcoming the emotional aspects of the liability of newness experienced by nascent entrepreneurs and may help increase the continuance rates highlighted by GEM (2015). The literature with respect to the information sub-category *Steer* is quite substantial and makes references to the provision of experienced-based skills and tacit knowledge by mentors which help entrepreneurs make more accurate decisions, act swiftly (Baum and Bird 2010), form perceptions of what is feasible with respect to the creation of a new venture (Stam and Elfring 2008), and make assessments of the feasibility of behaviours necessary to achieve the goals of the venture (Schlaegel and Koenig 2013). The current research does not address any new findings with respect to this sub-category other than

clarifying that the function provision in the context of nascent entrepreneurs. Therefore, based on the current findings the sub-category *Steer* appears to reflect similar functions and support for nascent entrepreneurs as those identified for the general classification of entrepreneurs.

The current research suggests that, in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, the network and tangible assistance category of social support is sub-divided into *Plan* and *Share*. The findings of the network sub-category *Plan* highlight the importance of supporting resource gathering, and encouraging preparation of plans and goals. According to the literature, Patel and Terjesen (2011) concluded that an entrepreneur will only have access to important resources in the presence of strong ties. The current research findings highlight the contribution by mentors to the acquisition of resources, however, it is difficult to confirm whether or not these are attributed to the strong, or weak, network ties of the mentor. The findings on encouragement of plans and goals, reflect the literature particularly in relation to mentor support for enhancing the ability to build a permanent business project (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013), planning (Castrogiovanni 1996), and the important legitimising nature of a business plan (Frese and Gielnik 2014). The current research adds to the existing literature by specifically linking the *Plan* mentoring function to nascent entrepreneurs and highlight the level of engagement of this form of support. This is an important finding as the majority of interactions during phase 1 and 2 focused on venture-focused planning. This highlights the venture as the focus of the mentoring function and not the nascent entrepreneur. The network sub-category *Share* highlights the important contributions of providing counselling, advice, access to business associates, and resources. This support complements the existing literature which acknowledges the role of mentors in sharing their networks and social capital (Ozdemir et al. 2014). The literature makes reference to the active avoidance of women in networks (Fielden and Hunt 2011), however this is not supported by the current findings. Further investigation is required to establish if this is specific to the nascent entrepreneurial context, the particular sample, the Irish culture or other reasons.

### 5.2.1.2. Interaction Ritual Chain Theory Contribution

*Interaction Ritual Chain Theory* (Collins 1981; Collins 2004) contends that emotional energy is the outcome of interaction rituals. Two types of rituals were identified as relevant in the context of this research namely, *power rituals* and *status rituals*. The findings of the current study revealed that in some interactions nascent entrepreneurs felt inexperienced compared to their mentors. This reflected power rituals in accordance with the literature (i.e. the mentor becomes the order-giver and the nascent entrepreneur the order-taker) (Collins 1990: 35). The contribution to the literature lies in the findings that certain feelings were linked to power rituals, namely feelings of vulnerability, uncertainty, dearth of knowledge, lack of expertise, and scarcity of connections. The findings also revealed that in some interactions nascent entrepreneurs felt equal to their mentors which reflected status rituals in accordance with the literature (Collins 1990). The mentoring literature contends that the second phase of the mentoring relationship (*Cultivation* phase) is marked by strengthened interpersonal bonds and a shift from a one-way helping relationship (i.e. power ritual), to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity (i.e. status) (Kram 1985). However, the findings on power rituals revealed a decrease in phase 2 (see Table 5) but they still remained the dominant ritual type. In phase 3, the findings suggest that the interactions are more status-ritual in context. This indicates that the timelines of the current phases (1, 2 and 3) may differ from the *Cultivation* stage timelines identified in Kram's (1985) four stage sequence of mentoring. The findings also revealed that interactions could be both power and status in nature at the same time. This adds to the current literature which assumes power and status rituals are distinct. The contribution to the literature lies in the findings that certain emotions and feelings were linked to power and status rituals, namely feelings of security, control, support and assurance. Through the use of the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012), the findings linked positive emotions (pride, elation, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, interest, and surprise) to power and status rituals. These emotions lay the groundwork for the development of trust. Trust appears to be a crucial component of positive emotions derived from power and status rituals. This is an important finding as it

links trust to the emotions that result from interactions and not the interactions themselves. This reflects the literature on affect-based trust which develops through close emotional connections (Lewicki and Bunker 1995; McAllister 1995). Given that trust is the foundation of any relationship, an awareness of the impact of emotions on the development of trust plays an important role in the provision of effective mentoring relationships.

### ***5.2.2. Mentoring Dyadic Characteristics***

Dyadic mentoring plays a crucial role in supporting nascent ventures through the different stages of venture emergence. This research investigated the various aspects of mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context to help answer why, when, and how, mentoring works best, which has been questioned by numerous authors in the past (Bisk 2002; McKevitt and Marshall 2015; St-Jean and Audet 2012; Ragins and Kram 2007). Genuine openness, honesty and belief in the business venture were mentor characteristics highlighted by nascent entrepreneurs, particularly in the initial phase. Similar characteristics were mentioned in the literature from a generic mentoring perspective: open-mindedness, patience, honesty (Allen et al. 1997; Wanberg et al. 2003), and competency (Higgins and Kram 2001). The findings also highlighted the importance of mentors' willingness to provide support, listen, and demonstrate flexibility. This is consistent with the literature on active listening, questioning contextual awareness and understanding (Hoigaard and Mathisen 2009). The findings associated with psychological support highlighted mentor characteristics of dependability, reliability, and competence, as particularly salient. These characteristics were addressed by McAllister (1995) from an organisational perspective. The contribution of the current research is the association of these characteristics to mentors in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Mentors that are aware of the personal characteristics that nascent entrepreneurs' desire in a mentor, can utilise this information and incorporate such characteristics into their mentoring style thereby enhancing the mentoring relationship.

The content analysis (Table 6) of the mentoring functions revealed that the information sub-category function *Develop* was the highest provision of support during phase 1 of the mentoring relationship and became less required as the relationship evolved. Interestingly, the information function *Develop*, while consistently high throughout the relationship, did decrease slightly at each phase. This is surprising, as according to the literature, increasing skills and knowledge is a determining factor of venture survival during the first five years (Gartner et al. 1999). There is an increase in phase 2, from the nascent entrepreneurs' perspective, of assistance from third parties to provide guidance. This is consistent with the literature on mentor characteristics which include human capital (Baum and Locke 2004), industry experience (Shepherd 1999), venture experience (Baum et al. 2011), explicit (Davidsson and Honig 2003) and tacit knowledge (Hedlund et al. 2003). The network functions (plan, share) were the least required during phase 1, but increased at each subsequent phase. This is very reassuring and is consistent with the literature which contends that nascent entrepreneurs who prepared for, and engaged in a planning process increased their ability to identify critical missing information, anticipate and rehearse various contingencies, and thus make faster decisions (deJanasz et al. 2003). The findings revealed that the most important function by the end of the mentoring relationship in phase 3 was access to the mentor's personal contacts (i.e. share). While the ability to share knowledge is highlighted in the literature (Pegg 1999; Dymock 1999) as a significant mentoring function, the contribution of this finding is the confirmation of the phase this function is most needed and most valued. This provides both the mentor and the nascent entrepreneur with the awareness of when this function is most required. Knowing when a function is most required can support a mentor to prepare for the function by seeking the most appropriate contacts in advance to help support the new business venture and the development of the nascent entrepreneur.

During phase 1, building trust was seen to be a crucial factor and foundation of mentoring relationships. Trust was specifically mentioned by almost all the dyadic mentoring

pairs. It appears to be a critical component of the mentoring relationship, particularly during phase 1 and 2 when the psychological function *Support* was the highest recorded function, and in phase 2 and 3 where network share function was the highest recorded function. This resonates with emotional support in the context of mentoring which involves the provision of trust (Heaney and Israel 2008). The behaviour descriptions outlined in the content analysis table (Table 6) echoed the literature (Nielson et al. 2001) in its emphasis on friendship, confirmation, encouragement behaviour, confidence building and support to reduce self-doubt and emotional uncertainty. The results demonstrate that the provision of psychological support during this initial phase helped to mitigate the psychological stress and strain and resulted in feelings of control, assurance, and support. This is a welcome finding as the literature has highlighted self-efficacy as an important factor in the decision to become and persevere as an entrepreneur (Zhao et al. 2005b). Thus, the provision of mentoring support in creating positive feelings and increasing self-efficacy is significant as it helps mitigate against the stress and strain of starting a new business venture.

### ***5.2.3. Mentoring Interactions***

Duration and frequency of interactions was highlighted in the findings as an important effect on the perception of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship. This is echoed in the mentoring and entrepreneurship literature (Waters et al. 2002; Nandram 2003). The contribution lies in the finding that both duration and frequency decrease at each phase of the mentoring relationship. The literature which contends that a mentee's perception of the value of the support received from a mentor is also attributed to the frequency of meetings (Cull 2006; Smallbone et al. 1998). According to the literature, mentors who communicate with their mentee more frequently tend to provide more professional, psychosocial, and role modelling support (Allen et al. 2006). The current findings however cannot verify this contention in the literature. More frequent meetings do not necessarily reflect more support, it is also difficult to quantify if more frequent communication resulted in more professional, psychosocial and role modelling support or if it could be related to specific tasks (e.g.

business plan). To establish this, more in-depth interviews would be required and further investigation necessary.

It is interesting to note that the gender imbalance of the mentoring interactions in the current study reflect the literature (Braidford et al. 2013; Ndinguri et al. 2014; O'Brien et al. 2008; Sosik and Godshalk 2000). The breakdown of the nascent entrepreneurs reflects three times more male participants than females. Likewise, there are twice the number of male mentors than female. While the study did find a significantly large number of male nascent entrepreneurs mentored by male mentors, the relationship to cross-gender mentorships was roughly 3:1. This is consistent with the literature which refers to same-gender mentorships typically outnumbering cross-gender mentorships (Allen and Eby 2003; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Sosik and Godshalk 2000). The focus of the interactions (Table 5) and the content analysis (Table 6) demonstrate the changing nature of the focus of the relationship. This is consistent with the literature that refers to the dynamic and changing nature of mentoring relationships over time (Garvey and Alred 2003; Kram 1985; Roberts 2000).

According to the literature, the initial interactions between the mentor and mentee allow both parties to gain respect for one another (Weinburg and Lankau 2010). The current findings reflect this in two ways, first, the significant number of reported interactions in phase 1 (average 46 – see Table 5), and the significant number of face to face interactions in phase 1 (average 26 – see Table 5). However, according to the literature, significant time is spent during this initial phase getting to know one another, leaving less time to concentrate on providing mentoring (Weinburg and Lankau 2010). While the findings do indicate more interactions during phase 1, which are possibly attributed to getting to know one another, there is no indication that this left less time to concentrate on providing mentoring. In fact, the findings report that a significantly larger number of interactions during phase 1 and 2 are related to the venture-focused, planning (Table 5), while in phase 3 venture-focused resources become the focus of attention. While the timeline of the mentoring stages referred to by Gray and Gray (1985) cannot be guaranteed to be an exact match to the phases of the current

findings, the focus on detailed guidance and shaping of shared values is evident through the concentration of venture-focused interactions on resources and implementation.

#### **5.2.4. Interactions, Emotions, Behaviour and Agency**

During the analysis stage of this research, the statements about the recorded interactions between a nascent entrepreneur and mentor were associated with emotions (pride, elation, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, interest, and surprise) according to the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012). The findings revealed that interactions with mentors were an important source of positive emotions. Nascent entrepreneurs' accounts revealed positive emotions during all interactions and that these led to bonding, sharing, and cooperative behaviours, consistent with the research (Frijda and Batja 1994; Cialdini 2000). The main contribution to the literature lies in the emergence of distinct forms of bonding (supportive, confirmation), sharing (insightful, deliberate), and cooperative (responsive, anticipatory) behaviours. The specific link of these behaviours to emotions and trust is important, and the link to entrepreneurial agency that is significant. *Insightful Sharing* reflected feelings of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, and satisfaction, while self-reflectiveness was revealed as the dominant property of entrepreneurial agency through nascent entrepreneur accounts of empowerment, the ability to reflect on venture development through active thinking, prioritising, viewing tasks differently, and setting milestones. Outcomes of *Deliberate Sharing* focused on feelings of trust and predominately the emotions of pride, happiness, and satisfaction. Intentionality was the main property of entrepreneurial agency referred to in actions referring to the sharing of practical knowledge by their mentor, which drew on past experience, skills, knowledge, and social capital. *Responsive Cooperation* reflected trust and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, and interest, while the main property of entrepreneur agency referred to was self-reactiveness. This was evident in nascent entrepreneurs' ability to construct, motivate and regulate their actions which is vital to personal and venture goals. *Anticipatory Cooperation* reflected feelings of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, hope, and interest. The most associated property

of entrepreneurial agency was forethought which was evident through ability to anticipate the future, make sense of the current state of a venture, and realise what is required to attain future goals. *Supportive Bonding* reflected feelings of trust and the emotions pride, and hope. Self-reflectiveness was the most dominant associated agency property evident through the ability to deal with set-backs and vulnerabilities. Finally, *Confirmation Bonding* was reflected in accounts related to feelings of trust and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, hope, and interest, while the main property of entrepreneur agency referred to was intentionality through the ability to see achievable venture tasks and success.

An important finding related to positive emotions is that they lay the groundwork for the development of trust. Trust, while not considered an emotion, appeared directly or indirectly to be linked to emotions in the majority of accounts. The findings revealed that feelings of trust were a crucial component of positive emotions. Building trust in the mentoring relationship was evident from accounts that referred to mentors as honest, dependable, reliable, involved, frank, insightful, valuable, knowledgeable, positive, supportive, flexible, open, friendly, and protected. This is consistent with the literature on affect-based trust (St-Jean and Audet 2009). According to the literature, entrepreneur behaviour can also help develop cognition-based trust by taking charge of the relationship, clearly expressing their needs and developmental goals, and actively seeking input from their mentor (Klasen and Clutterbuck 2002), however, this did not seem to be evident from nascent entrepreneur accounts. The importance of trust is highlighted in relational social capital theory as a vital relationship dimension in guiding how individuals behave and the resulting impact of their exchanges (Uzzi 1996; Tsai and Ghoshal 1998).

**Table 10: Contribution of Research to Understanding Mentor Functions, Interactions, Emotions, Behaviour, and Agency**

	Existing Literature	Contribution of Thesis
Kram	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Existing mentoring studies have been largely based on Kram’s work on organisational mentoring have been deductive in nature (St-Jean 2011).</li> <li>2. Conceptualisation of mentoring as two dimensional construct composed of career-related and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1985).</li> <li>3. Much has been learned from quantitative research about the antecedents and consequences of mentoring relationships at work (Kram 1985)</li> <li>4. Mentor plays important role in self-efficacy and confidence (Kram, 1985).</li> <li>5. According to the literature there the shift from the <i>Initiation</i> stage to the <i>Cultivation</i> stage which is marked by strengthened interpersonal bonds and a shift from a one-way helping relationship, to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity (Kram, 1985).</li> <li>6. Crucial role mentors play in building self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity (Kram, 1985).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This study adopts an inductive approach where results have been shown to differ from existing studies based on Kram’s conceptualisation of mentoring as a two dimensional construct composed of career-related and psychosocial functions (Levesque et al. 2005; Fowler and O’Gorman 2005).</li> <li>2. Study necessitated the conceptualization of mentoring in the context of nascent entrepreneurs as a six dimensional construct composed of support, share, filter, steer, plan, and develop.</li> <li>3. Comparatively little is understood about how unique mentoring relationships operate in terms of the support functions in the context of mentoring nascent entrepreneurs</li> <li>4. <i>Support2-Accepting/confirming emotional strain or tension</i> highlights a decrease in references nascent entrepreneurs may be due to increased levels of self-efficacy and confidence in the business venture, which is consistent with the mentor’s role in helping to maintain self-efficacy and confidence of mentee (Kram, 1985).</li> <li>5. <i>Support3-Encouraging and generating enthusiasm</i> highlights a decrease in reliance on this form of support after phase 1 (i.e. 3 months) to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity in phase 2 and 3 similar to Kram’s (1985) <i>Cultivation Phase</i>.</li> <li>6. <i>Support4-Encouraging self-reliance</i> echoes the role mentors play in building self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity as highlighted by Kram (1985).</li> </ol>
Functions	<p><u>Psychological Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associated with self-esteem (Boyd and Vozikis 1994), self-confidence (Fielden and Hunt 2011), self-efficacy (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b), supporting perseverance (Zhao et al. 2005b), mitigating strain and stress (Brown et al. 2005), developing an ability to take risks, and managing uncertainty (Cascio and Gasker 2001), reducing work-family conflict, and lowering rates of job exhaustion (Nielson et al. 2001; Higgins 2000; Scandura 1997; Kleinman et al. 2001)</li> <li>• Important mentor characteristics include: active listening, and</li> </ul>	<p><u>Psychological Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings from Literature:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of self-belief, and the creation of a positive self-image are already identified in the literature through the link to self-esteem (Boyd and Vozikis 1994), self-confidence (Fielden and Hunt 2011), and self-efficacy (Chen et al. 1998; Zhao et al. 2005b).</li> </ul> <p><i>Findings emerging from Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Support</i> sub-category function is the most referenced function in all phases</li> </ul>

	<p>questioning contextual awareness and understanding (Hoigaard and Mathisen 2009); Open-mindedness, patience, honesty (Allen et al. 1997; Wanberg et al. 2003), and competency (Higgins and Kram 2001)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust: important emotional support in the context of mentoring (Heaney and Israel 2008)</li> </ul> <p><u>Information Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associated with performance feedback, social information (Mullen 1994; Mullen and Noe 1999), specific knowledge (Unger et al. 2011)</li> <li>• Considers feedback a form of tailored learning in a mentoring context (Noe 1988; Saffold 2005; Ballout 2009) that assists entrepreneurs to acquire both explicit and tacit knowledge (St-Jean and Audet 2012), reflect on, and, construct new knowledge (Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012)</li> <li>• Transfers knowledge through which entrepreneurs reflect on, and, construct new knowledge (Rigg and O'Dwyer 2012)</li> <li>• Filtering information considered vital to the success of the new venture (Ardichivilli et al. 2003), as it develops cognitive frameworks to interpret complex information, recognises emerging opportunities and makes sense of market changes (Ozgen and Baron 2007)</li> <li>• Provision of experienced-based skills and tacit knowledge help entrepreneurs make more accurate decisions and swift actions (Baum and Bird 2010), form perceptions of what is feasible with respect to the creation of a new venture (Stam and Elfring 2008), and make assessments of the feasibility of behaviours necessary to achieve the goals of the venture (Schlaegel and Koenig 2013).</li> <li>• Developing skills and knowledge is a determining factor of venture survival during the first five years (Gartner et al. 1999)</li> <li>• important mentor characteristics include human capital (Baum and Locke 2004), industry experience (Shepherd 1999), venture experience (Baum et al. 2011), explicit (Davidsson and Honig 2003) and tacit knowledge (Hedlund et al. 2003)</li> </ul> <p><u>Network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to important resources in the presence of strong network ties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional links to coping strategies, and the encouragement and generation of enthusiasm.</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into specific supports: Coping with fear and concern; Accepting/confirming emotion strain or tension; Promoting self-belief; Creating positive self-image</li> <li>• Important mentor characteristics: genuine openness, honesty and belief in the business venture particularly in the initial phase; mentor's willingness to provide support, listen, and demonstrate flexibility</li> <li>• Study verified mentor characteristics in nascent entrepreneurial context: active listening, and questioning contextual awareness and understanding</li> <li>• Building trust was seen to be a crucial factor and foundation of the mentoring relationships</li> </ul> <p><u>Information Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most referenced category of social capital support in all phases</li> <li>• Proposed sub-categorisation into <i>Develop, Filter</i> and <i>Steer</i></li> <li>• Additional link with providing feedback in the form of criticism and constructive praise and support for openness to new experiences, and encouraging dedication and focus.</li> </ul> <p><u>Develop Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional link with providing feedback in the form of criticism and constructive praise and support for openness to new experiences, and encouraging dedication and focus</li> <li>• Inclusion of support for openness to new experiences, and encouraging dedication and focus</li> <li>• Sub-category decreases at each phase, but remains is high throughout all phases</li> <li>• Increase in assistance from third parties to provide guidance from nascent entrepreneurs' perspective in phase 2</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into specific supports: Providing feedback; Motivating continuous learning and development; Stimulating continuous development and openness to new experiences; and Encouraging dedication and focus</li> </ul>
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	<p>(Patel and Terjesen 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances the ability to build permanent business project (Lefebvre and Redien-Collet 2013), planning (Castrogiovanni 1996) and the important legitimising nature of a business plan (Frese and Gielnik 2014)</li> <li>• Support by mentors in sharing networks and social capital (Ozdemir et al. 2014)</li> <li>• Active avoidance of women in networks (Fielden and Hunt 2011)</li> <li>• Important mentor characteristic is the ability to share knowledge (Pegg 1999; Dymock 1999)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Filter Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current research brings narrower focus to filtering with respect to specific tasks</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into: Creating an environment for reflection; Promoting attentiveness to the venture creation process</li> </ul> <p><u>Steer Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current research does not address any new findings with respect to the sub-category <i>Steer</i> other than narrowing the context to that of nascent entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into: Providing support and venture information; Supporting direction of the venture</li> <li>• Lowest ranked sub-category function in phase 1, but increased in importance at each subsequent phase</li> </ul> <p><u>Plan Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research did not associate strong ties with the acquisition of resources</li> <li>• Proves mentoring is also linked to enhancing business projects, planning, and the legitimisation of business plan, in the context of nascent entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into: Supporting resource gathering; Encouraging preparation of plans and goals</li> </ul> <p><u>Share Support</u></p> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proves mentoring is linked to sharing of networks and social capital in context of nascent entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Does not support literature on active avoidance of women in networks</li> <li>• The findings revealed that the most important function by the end of the mentoring relationship in phase 3 was access to the mentor's personal contacts (i.e. share).</li> <li>• Sub-categorised function into: Providing counselling and advice; Providing access to business associate and networks; Accessing support and resource availability</li> </ul>
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Interactions	<p><i>Findings from Literature:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional energy is the outcome of interaction rituals (Collins 1981; Collins 2004)</li> <li>• Power rituals: individuals unequal in their resources and the interactions in such situation focusing on the giving and taking of orders (Collins 1990: 35)</li> <li>• Status rituals: individuals equal in their resource (Collins 1990)</li> <li>• Cultivation phase of the mentoring relationship marked by strengthened interpersonal bonds and a shift from a one-way helping relationship (i.e. power ritual), to a relationship entailing more mutual exchange and reciprocity (i.e. status) (Kram 1985)</li> <li>• Duration and frequency of meetings have important effect on relationship (Waters et al. 2002; Nandram 2003)</li> <li>• Perception of the value of the support received from a mentor is attributed to the frequency of meetings (Cull 2006; Smallbone et al. 1998) which is typically thought that more frequent interaction between mentor and mentee will translate into the provision of greater mentoring (Allen 2008)</li> <li>• Mentors who communicate with their mentee more frequently tend to provide more professional, psychosocial, and role modelling support (Allen et al. 2006)</li> <li>• Same-gender mentorships typically outnumbering cross-gender mentorships (Allen and Eby 2003; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Sosik and Godshalk 2000)</li> <li>• Dynamic and changing nature of mentoring relationships over time (Garvey and Alred 2003; Kram 1985; Roberts 2000)</li> <li>• Initial interactions between the mentor and mentee allow both parties to gain respect for one another (Weinburg and Lankau 2010)</li> <li>• Significant time is spent during this initial phase getting to know one another leaving less time to concentrate on providing mentoring (Weinburg and Lankau 2010)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Findings from Literature:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings concur with literature on the effect of duration and frequency of meetings</li> </ul> <p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The findings revealed that nascent entrepreneurs could adopt both power and status ritual characteristics during the same mentoring function interactions, while mentors adopted either power or status characteristics.</li> <li>• During phase 1 mentors were nearly four times more likely to be the order-giver (i.e. power ritual) in interactions than nascent entrepreneurs</li> <li>• During phase 2 mentors and nascent entrepreneurs demonstrated equal power and status ritual types</li> <li>• During phase 3 nascent entrepreneurs were nearly three times more likely to adopt an equal status (i.e. status ritual) in interactions than mentors</li> <li>• Links feelings of vulnerability, uncertainty, dearth of knowledge, lack of expertise, and scarcity of connections, to power rituals</li> <li>• Links feelings of feelings of security, control, support and assurance, to status rituals</li> <li>• Power rituals decrease in phase 2 but remain the dominant ritual type, which is inconsistent with the literature on the <i>Cultivation</i> phase</li> <li>• Possibility that that timelines between current research <i>Phases</i> and Cultivation stage differ</li> <li>• Links positive emotions (pride, elation, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, interest, and surprise) to power and status rituals</li> <li>• Trust appears to be significantly important in phase 3 when sharing resources</li> <li>• Study found duration and frequency decrease at each phase of the mentoring relationship</li> <li>• Study did not support literature with respect to more frequent interactions leading to greater provision of mentoring</li> <li>• Current study did not find that more frequent communication led to more professional, psychosocial, or role modelling support</li> <li>• Study found a significantly large number of male nascent entrepreneurs mentored by male mentors, and the relationship to cross-gender mentorships was roughly</li> </ul>
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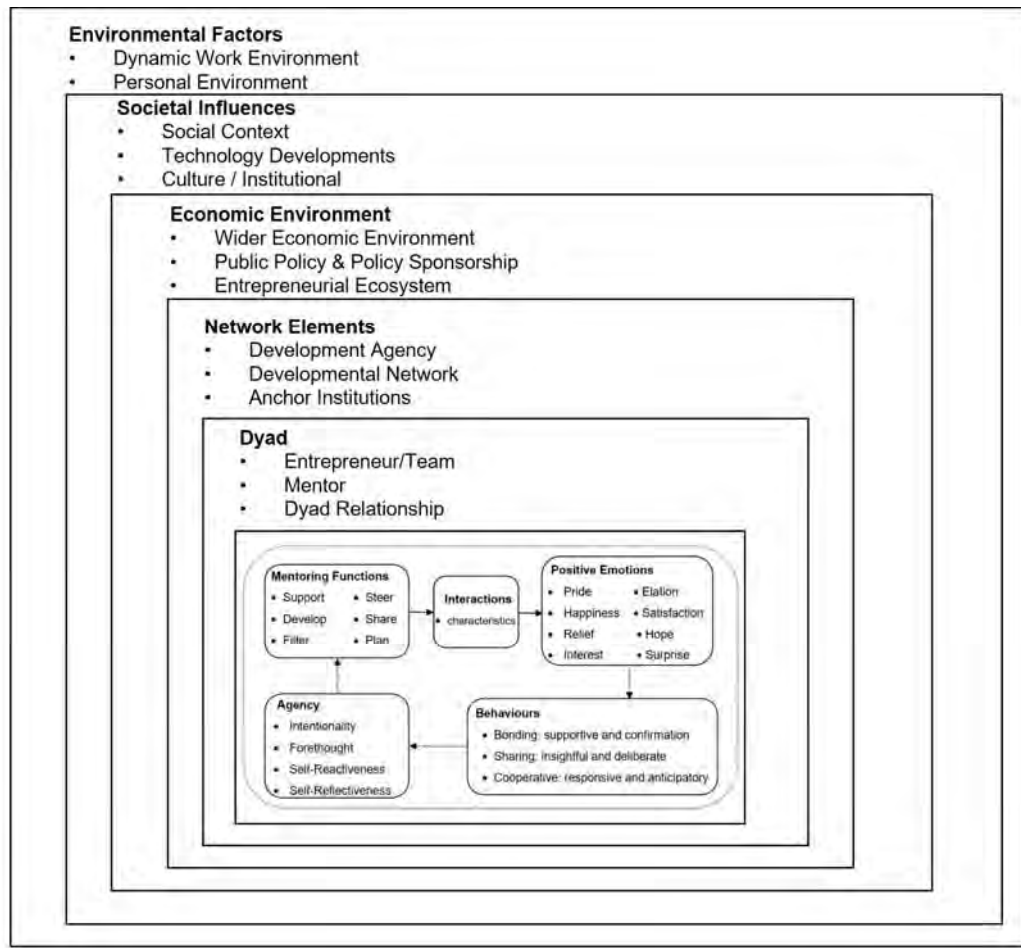
		<p>3:1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of type and importance of interactions changed over each phase</li> <li>• Findings found significantly higher number of reported interactions, and face to face interactions in phase 1, relative to other phases</li> <li>• Findings indicate more interactions during phase 1, which are possibly attributed to getting to know one another, there is no indication that this left less time to concentrate on providing mentoring</li> <li>• Findings report a significantly larger number of interactions during phase 1 and 2 are related to the venture-focused interaction, planning</li> <li>• Venture-focused <i>resources</i> become the focus of interactions in phase 3</li> </ul>
<p>Interactions, Emotions, Behaviour and Agency</p>	<p><i>Findings from Literature:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) positive emotions labeled pride, elation, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, interest, and surprise (Sacharin et al. 2012)</li> <li>• Positive interactions lead to bonding, sharing, and cooperative behaviours (Frijda and Batja 1994; Cialdini 2000)</li> <li>• Positive emotions have particular importance with respect to interactions. They function to broaden and build dynamics that enhance the capacity of individuals to act (Fredrickson 1998), strengthen resilience (Hayward et al. 2010; Bullogh and Renko 2013), improve overall well-being (Fredrickson 2001; Fredrickson and Joiner 2002), and overcome negative emotions (Bullogh and Renko 2013).</li> <li>• Experiencing success leads to feelings of pride and over time and with repetition, these feelings may promote positive feelings and thoughts about their global self, leading to the high self-esteem (Tracy and Robins 2007a)</li> <li>• Mentor need to build affect-based trust and cognition-based trust (St-Jean and Audet 2009; Klasen and Clutterbuck 2002)</li> <li>• Properties of agency identified as: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura 2006)</li> <li>• Experiencing success leads to feelings of pride and over time and with repetition, these feelings may promote positive feelings and thoughts</li> </ul>	<p><i>Findings emerging from the Data:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings revealed that interactions with mentors were an important source of positive emotions</li> <li>• Positive emotions lay the groundwork for the development of trust</li> <li>• Trust, while not considered an emotion, appeared directly or indirectly to be linked to emotions in the majority of accounts</li> <li>• The findings revealed that feelings of trust were a crucial component of positive emotions</li> <li>• Positive emotions experienced during all interactions and led to bonding, sharing, and cooperative behaviours</li> <li>• Main contribution to the literature lies in the emergence of distinct forms of behaviour: bonding (supportive, confirmation), sharing (insightful, deliberate), and cooperative (responsive, anticipatory) behaviours</li> <li>• <i>Insightful Sharing</i> behavior reflected feelings of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, and satisfaction</li> <li>• <i>Insightful Sharing</i> was associated with self-reflectiveness agency through nascent entrepreneur accounts of empowerment, the ability to reflect on venture development through active thinking, prioritising, viewing tasks differently, and setting milestones. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial actions and thoughts to the existing literature on the self-reflectiveness.</li> <li>• <i>Deliberate Sharing</i> was reflected in feelings of trust and predominately the emotions pride, happiness, and satisfaction,</li> </ul>

	<p>about their global self, leading to the high self-esteem (Tracy and Robins 2007a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deliberate Sharing</i> was associated with intentionality agency reflected actions referring to the careful sharing of significant amounts of practical knowledge by their mentor, which drew on past experience, skills, knowledge, and social capital. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial actions to the literature on the self-reflectiveness.</li> <li>• <i>Responsive Cooperation</i> reflected trust and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, relief, hope, and interest,</li> <li>• <i>Responsive Cooperation</i> was associated with self-reactiveness agency, which was evident in nascent entrepreneurs' ability to construct, motivate and regulate their actions is vital to both personal and venture goals. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial actions to the existing literature on the self-reactiveness.</li> <li>• <i>Anticipatory Cooperation</i> reflected feelings of trust, and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, hope, and interest.</li> <li>• <i>Anticipatory Cooperation</i> was associated with forethought agency and evident through ability to anticipate the future, make sense of the current state of a venture, and realise what is required to attain future goals. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial actions and realisations to the existing literature on the forethought.</li> <li>• <i>Supportive Bonding</i> reflected feelings of trust and the emotions pride, and hope.</li> <li>• <i>Supportive Bonding</i> was associated with self-reflectiveness agency and evident through the ability to deal with set-backs and vulnerabilities. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial actions and reactions to the existing literature on the self-reflectiveness.</li> <li>• <i>Confirmation Bonding</i> was reflected in accounts about feelings of trust and the emotions pride, happiness, satisfaction, hope, and interest</li> <li>• <i>Confirmation Bonding</i> was associated with intentionality agency and evident in the ability to see achievable venture tasks and success. The findings add specific nascent entrepreneurial thoughts and aspirations to the existing literature on the intentionality.</li> </ul>
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### **5.2.6. Revised Multilevel Framework and Model of Mentoring Relationship**

The research findings have highlighted a number of new perspectives on functions, interactions, emotions, behaviours and agency. This necessitated the redesign of the proposed combined framework and model (Figure 4). In particular, the mentoring functions career and psychosocial highlighted in the proposed combined framework and model (Figure 4) did not adequately reflect the functions in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. These were updated in the *Mentoring Functions* box to reflect the functions *Support, Develop, Filter, Steer, Plan, and Share* (Figure 7). The *Interactions* box did not refer to the specific interactions in Figure 4, this was updated slightly to reflect *interaction characteristics* in the revised model (Figure 7) to reflect the findings. The number of interaction characteristics were considered too numerous to include individually, however they specifically refer to duration, frequency, power rituals, status rituals, gender, location, number of interactions, and interaction type (venture-focused, person-focused). The original proposed framework and model included an *Emotions* box, however, it did not specify the actual emotions (Figure 4). These are included in the revised combined framework and model (Figure 7) after confirmation from the findings that the interactions lead to positive emotions. This necessitated a name change to the box from *Emotions* in Figure 4 to reflect positive emotions (negative emotions were not considered as part of this research). The contribution to the literature of the emergence of distinct forms of bonding (supportive, confirmation), sharing (insightful, deliberate), and cooperative (responsive, anticipatory) behaviours necessitated their inclusion in the revised framework and model. These are incorporated in the box titled *Behaviours*. Finally, the original proposed framework and model included a box entitled *Entrepreneurial Agency* (Table 4), however, after confirmation in the findings section that the behaviours led to specific forms of agency, this box was updated in the revised figure (Figure 7) to include, intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. The revised combined multilevel model is presented in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Revised Multilevel Model framework and model of functions, interactions, emotions, behaviours and agency**



### 5.3. Research and Theoretical Implications

A significant amount of scholarly effort has been dedicated to the study of mentoring relationships, however, the formal mentoring literature in the context of nascent entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship generally is in its infancy (Lefebvre 2015; Redien-Collot and Lefebvre 2015). Mentoring can be a valuable development tool to help a nascent entrepreneur develop a business venture (Lefebvre and Redien-Collot 2013; Grossman et al. 2012b; Zhao et al. 2005a), and there is scope to research the following aspects in greater detail.

### ***5.3.1. Multilevel Model Research Implications***

The multilevel model perspective to formal dyadic entrepreneur-mentor relationships proposed in this research, considers how the multiple contexts within the entrepreneurial system work together. The model specifies that entrepreneurs and mentors are influenced by a number of key internal factors (dyad members and dyad relationship) and external factors (environmental, societal, and network elements). These factors are directly connected to the nascent entrepreneur and the mentor, and they promote and constrain the mentoring process. In terms of future research, there is major scope to give more scholarly attention to each level of the model. Further research is required to investigate the influence of unique entrepreneurial characteristics on formal mentoring relationships. These include entrepreneurial intentions (Bird 1988), entrepreneurial passion (Cardon and Kirk 2013), and entrepreneurial persistence (Holland and Shepherd 2013). Very little is known about entrepreneurial developmental help seeking behaviour (Studdard and Munchus 2009; Au et al. 2014), start-up commitment (Hopp and Sonderegger 2014) and self-efficacy (Cardon and Kirk 2013; Hmieleski and Baron 2008). Relatively few insights are known with respect to the characteristics of mentors in an entrepreneurial context. There is scope to investigate the impact of mentor commitment, competence and skills on the quality of mentoring relationships and the types of mentoring functions that are provided. How do various dimensions of human capital influence the mix of functions provided? A mentor may have varying levels of knowledge of the industry context. Research on nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships suggests mentors who simply give advice without high levels of commitment to relationships may lead to toxic mentoring or ineffective mentoring (Gravells 2006; St-Jean and Audet 2013), this requires further research to clarify.

The formality of the dyad mentoring relationship in the context of nascent entrepreneurs is under studied. In a nascent entrepreneur-mentor context, mentoring relationships are typically initiated by a third party in the form of a development agency or educational institution. However, the relationship itself may be less formal. Mentors may

impose varying degrees of formality on relationships because they are required to do so by the funding agency. These might include the requirement to articulate specific development goals, a requirement that the relationship will have a specified duration, and a requirement to have a minimum number of meetings. A development agency may provide a lot of guidance on what should be addressed during the relationship, however, within that relationship there may be less formality on how the mentoring process occurs. There are major gaps in the understanding of how relationship formality influences the types of mentoring functions that are performed. It is possible that where mentoring relationships are of shorter duration the focus may be more on instrumental business concerns rather than psychosocial and relational dimensions. Researchers have suggested that more informal mentoring relationships are conducive to generating more psychosocial outcomes because of the attention given to the whole-entrepreneur development (Sipe 2005). However, the relationship formality may in fact be particularly important in explaining the perceptions of the outcomes.

Although a substantial body of research has investigated dyadic mentoring relationships, this is not the case in the nascent entrepreneurial context. There is scope for more clarification and conceptualisation of the mentor functions provided within these relationships. Mentoring functions in the entrepreneurial context are distinct from those in the organisational context, since entrepreneurs manage their own business and mentors have no hierarchical position above them (St-Jean 2011). The mentoring literature assumes that mentee development is distinct and discrete from the organisation (Allen et al. 2004; Underhill 2006; Eby and Lockwood 2005; DuBois et al. 2002; Wanberg et al. 2006), however in an entrepreneurial context the entrepreneur is the *primus inter pares* of an entrepreneurial venture. Therefore, the traditional categorisation of mentoring functions into career and psychosocial functions may be a less effective fit in the nascent entrepreneurial context. Researchers have suggested career related functions are always through the mentor (St-Jean 2011; Waters et al. 2002). There is scope to understand how different characteristics of formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships differ for different types of entrepreneurs and

different relationship durations. From a relationship perspective, aspects that need investigation include the interrelationships between the dyad relationship characteristics and the dyadic functions. In particular, consideration to the pairing and compatibility of the dyad members, the ability of the mentor to perform the mentoring functions and how to analyse the success of the relationship.

Future research on the societal influences should focus on investigating the influence of formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships in different social contexts, particularly minority groups. There is scope to understand the institutional dynamics of nascent entrepreneurial mentoring, in particular the influence of entrepreneurial institutions, educational institutions, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and the role of professional groups responsible for mentoring. Further research into the support impact of technology developments and how technology shapes the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship is required.

Questions that merit investigation concern how nascent entrepreneurship-mentor functions change over the duration of the relationship, and if there are particular functions that are performed more frequently at the initial stages of a relationship. How does the expertise and specific knowledge of the mentor influence the mentoring functions that are performed? How do characteristics of the nascent entrepreneur and the business venture impact the functions that are performed? How does the gender of a nascent entrepreneur influence the mentor functions that are provided? There is very limited understanding of how different mentoring functions influence the types of outcomes that are reported by the nascent entrepreneur and the mentor. Another unexplored area in the context of nascent entrepreneurship concerns the role of a network of mentors (Dobrow and Higgins 2005). It is possible that nascent entrepreneurs who have a multiplicity of mentors with diverse skills and expertise derive specific or particular functions from different mentors. These are just some of the unanswered questions that future research should investigate.

### ***5.3.2. Nascent Entrepreneur-Mentor Interaction Research Implications***

This research helps answer calls to show how internal and external factors shape the survival of new ventures (Hmieleski 2009). However, the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships analysed in this research are located in the Irish context and further research could explore if comparable analysis exists between different countries. Further research could explore what role emotions (positive and negative) play on shaping other forms, or sub-forms, of behaviour and the extent of their effect on entrepreneurial agency. Future research should also investigate what other factors lead entrepreneurs to adopt certain behaviours and if other forms of interaction rituals play a role in the generation of these behaviours. Future research could investigate what additional factors lead nascent entrepreneurs to demonstrate dimensions of entrepreneurial agency.

The entrepreneurial participants in this study were all classified as nascent entrepreneurs. There is significant scope to extend this study to other types of entrepreneurs and indeed explore the impact of mentor interactions between different classifications of entrepreneurs. From a mentor perspective, the participants were all registered as formal mentors and participating in a development agency mentoring programme. This research focused on dyadic mentor relationships and future research should consider constellations of mentors. There is scope to explore how emotions sustain and enhance entrepreneurial outcomes such as passion and resilience in the context of venture setbacks. The nascent entrepreneur in the data sample founded one venture and focused only on those who succeeded. Therefore, future research should investigate the role of emotions and mentor interactions in the context of negative dimensions of entrepreneurial agency. Future research should investigate what additional factors lead nascent entrepreneurs to demonstrate dimensions of entrepreneurial agency.

There is major scope for research that investigates the outcomes that are derived by both nascent entrepreneurs and mentors and the nature of these outcomes. Are all of the outcomes derived from nascent entrepreneurship relationships positive ones? How long does

it take business-level outcomes to emerge? What are the differences in perceptions on outcomes between mentors and nascent entrepreneurs in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships? More sophisticated methodologies need to be utilised including more longitudinal studies to understand mentor and nascent entrepreneur outcomes.

## **5.4. Implications for Policy and Practice**

Entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed to be the engine of economic growth and employment creation spanning a broad spectrum of national, regional, and local contexts (Carlsson 1989; Thurik and Audretsch 2004; Glaeser et al. 2015; Acs 2006; Acs et al. 2015; McKeever et al. 2015). This has resulted in the redirection of policies and of a number of policy and practical considerations (Lundström and Stevenson 2001; Audretsch 2005; Audretsch and Beckmann 2007; Autio and Rannikko 2015).

### ***5.4.1. Implications for Policy***

Given the lack of research on formal mentoring in a nascent entrepreneurial context (or indeed entrepreneurial context), public policy decision makers have been limited in their ability to draw on existing research to influence their policy decisions. Knowledge gaps remain on how to strategically adapt public policy, modify existing national conditions and support agencies to enhance the nascent entrepreneur-mentor environment. The proposed multilevel model perspective provides an insight into formal nascent entrepreneur-mentor programmes and the complex interactions that exist between the internal and external factors, their respective dimensions and the dynamics of the stakeholders (i.e. mentor, entrepreneur, entrepreneurial team) involved.

This research highlighted the importance of human capital (of both the mentor and entrepreneur) as a significant contributing factor to the success of the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship. To fully capitalise on entrepreneurial opportunity, policy attention should focus on short-term and long-term policy strategies to address the needs of entrepreneurs and mentors, and also the future supply of entrepreneurs and mentors. Educational policies that have been successful in the past may not deliver all that is needed in the future and new

policies need to be formulated. Jamieson (1984), as cited in Henry et al (2005), categorised education and training into three distinct types: education *about* enterprise, education *for* enterprise; and education *in* enterprise. Policy measures should support the development of a strong enterprise support infrastructure for entrepreneurs and mentors (*in* enterprise) consisting of interlinked regional and national networks, providing practical entrepreneurship programmes. There is a need for a seamless provision of formal entrepreneurship education (sound theoretical knowledge – *about* entrepreneurship) and informal development of an entrepreneurial mindset (skills, behaviours, attitudes, and competencies – *for* entrepreneurship) (Edwards and Muir 2005). Public policy needs to address and promote entrepreneurship education at all levels of education to expose next generation entrepreneurs to entrepreneurial skills. The process of embedding entrepreneurship education in the education system requires fundamental cultural, organisational and pedagogical change (TMA 2011), the provision of which requires leadership from senior management, to provide fit-for-purpose entrepreneurial education (NCGE 2009). A national framework and coherent strategic policy for entrepreneurship education is required, which currently does not exist in many countries. Technology is continuously changing and shaping the enterprise world and how networking and communication takes place. Policy measures need to address and ensure that those empowered to advise, and guide entrepreneurs (i.e. development agencies and mentors in the current context) are fully versed and continually updated on technology shifts and trends. Mentors in particular need to be supported in their efforts to continually upskill in these areas. Policy measures need to address and support their continuous development. From a practical perspective this can be best directed through understanding the skills, competencies, and knowledge mentors require to best support their efforts and help shape their professional development.

This research suggests the need for public policy frameworks to support the development of entrepreneurs and build strong, and positive, links between and within developmental support networks. Public policy makers have cause to examine and increase their efforts to build social capital and developmental networks of both mentors and

entrepreneurs. There may be a need to develop focused policies that support mentors and entrepreneurs to meet the needs of different types of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial ventures. For example, structural holes exist between scientific research networks and industry networks that constrain opportunity recognition (Mosey and Wright 2007). Gaps also exist between academics, financiers, industry stakeholders, and sector experts (Sapsed et al. 2007; Adams and Comber 2013). There is a clear need to bridge these networks, and integrate them with development agencies thereby assisting mentors, entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurial ventures they support. Public policy that encourages cluster development helps build synergies between businesses working in the same sector, researchers, government agencies, universities, and entrepreneurs. A cluster policy approach may take different forms: a light form through the facilitation role to connect regional and local actors to support clustering, re-orientation of several policies towards prioritised clusters, supporting clusters through dedicated initiatives, and addressing framework to support prioritised clusters (OECD 2010). Furthering the understanding of these networks, how they interact, and how best to facilitate them represents an important activity for future entrepreneurial and mentoring research.

An effective entrepreneurial culture is one in which new ideas and creativity are expected, risk taking is encouraged, failure is tolerated, learning is promoted, innovations are championed, and continuous change is viewed as opportunity (Ireland et al. 2003). Policy interventions that concentrate on the supply of entrepreneurs, the pre-entry phase, the removal of barriers, and provision of support and finance (European-Commission 2008) play an integral role in facilitating entrepreneurship. Aside from these policy interventions, this research highlighted the importance of cultural dimensions to the development of entrepreneurial culture (i.e. power distance, individual-collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity and femininity). Cultural change is dependent on the commitment and dedication of schools, colleges, agencies and other local players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Cooney and Murray 2008). In order to stimulate and embed entrepreneurship into

national culture, it is vital that support for the entrepreneurial process occurs as early as possible and consider the implications of the different dimensions of culture.

Development agencies play a critical role in adopting new reforms, shaping the process and conditions, and allocating resources in support of nascent entrepreneur-mentor programmes. Given the lack of research in nascent entrepreneur-mentor programmes it would be highly beneficial to integrate these agencies with researchers in the area and to increase funding and support for such research. For example, the performance and evaluation of nascent entrepreneur-mentor programmes will help evaluate and establish what works, what does not work, and how the programmes can be modified and improved. Some studies do exist in the entrepreneurial and new firm creation context, for example in the United States (Reynolds 2007), and Australia (Davidsson and Reynolds 2009). The Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED) also provide valid and reliable data on the process of business formation with initial data from 1998-2000 and a second study in 2005-2006 (Reynolds 2007; Robb and Reynolds 2009). This, in turn, will help inform the pairing of mentors and nascent entrepreneurs, the provision of effective training for mentors and nascent entrepreneurs, and proactive monitoring of mentoring relationships. However, the ability to acquire, interpret, and use research requires adequate staff capacity, time, and expertise, as well as conducive organisational cultures and routines (Moynihan and Landuyt 2009). Policy measures are required to support the research of nascent entrepreneur-mentor programmes and also the abilities necessary for practitioners to acquire, interpret and use research.

#### ***5.4.1. Implications for Practice***

This research highlights a number of important issues for the design and implementation of nascent entrepreneurship mentoring relationships. It is important that nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships should have clear goals with a clear specification of the function or role of the mentor, a clear timeline and agreed approaches for the conclusion of the mentoring relationship. A particular challenge in the nascent entrepreneurship context concerns the boundaries between mentoring and consultancy. This

issue must be clearly specified at the outset of the relationship. It is also important to understand at the initial stages whether particular aspects of the nascent entrepreneur's business venture will place limits on the operation of mentoring relationship.

Given the multiple functions that mentors perform in the nascent entrepreneurship mentoring relationship, it is important that experienced mentors chosen are committed, experienced, and skilled in communicating. Given the dyadic nature of the relationships it is important for a mentor to have effective emotional intelligence (Huwe and Johnson 2003), effective communication skills (Johnson and Ridley 2004), and a willingness to learn from the mentee (Allen and Eby 2004). From the perspective of the nascent entrepreneur, it is also important that they are willing to learn to be challenged by the mentor, have a strong desire to achieve and be skilled in explaining their business and personal issues to the mentor (Distelberg and Schawarz 2013). The effectiveness of mentoring relationships should be evaluated on a continuous basis. Both mentors and nascent entrepreneurs can benefit from enhanced feedback and support to deal with conflicts that may emerge. Mentors and nascent entrepreneurs can also contribute to the continuous improvement of mentoring relationships by providing evaluation information. However, evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring relationships that are based within the nascent entrepreneur context is challenging, due to for example, the variety of programmes, timeframe of the relationship, diversity of mentors, range of business sectors, and profile of the mentor and mentee. The wide diversity of mentoring has made it challenging for researchers to provide a sufficient evidence base for each unique type of mentoring programme.

The findings of this research suggest that the nascent entrepreneur-mentor interactions that lead to positive emotions can have powerful behavioural and entrepreneurial agency effects. These effects lie in the mentoring interaction and the emotions they generate rather than in resource restrictions or external societal/environmental factors that influence the nascent entrepreneurial venture process. Therefore, it is the internal factors that have a stronger influence on the nascent entrepreneur venture process rather than the external factors.

In particular, this research specifically links positive emotions to bonding, sharing and cooperative behaviours and the formation of high levels of trust. From a practical perspective, positive emotions serve to facilitate sharing (insightful and deliberate), cooperative (anticipatory and responsive), and bonding (supportive and confirmation) behaviours. Understanding the impact of positive emotions on entrepreneurial behaviour and agency can significantly influence the design and development of mentoring programmes. It can help raise awareness among mentors and entrepreneurs of the powerful effects of interactions and also provide development agencies with vital knowledge to support the education and training of new mentors. Mentors who are aware of the effects of sharing, cooperative and bonding behaviour can adopt these behaviours to help increase entrepreneurial agency (intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness). A nascent entrepreneur that has visibility of the properties of entrepreneurial agency, and the personal abilities required for a venture to succeed will be far better equipped to understand what they require and need from the mentoring functions and interactions. This visibility will increase a nascent entrepreneurs' ability to assess strengths, personal limitations, address significant obstacles, focus on important strategic priorities, take risks and understand their consequences.

## **5.5. Limitations**

### ***5.5.1. Limitations of Mentoring Functions***

This research adopted social support theory to help provide an understanding of nascent-entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Existing research on entrepreneur mentoring functions focuses primarily on career and psychosocial functions. In the context of nascent entrepreneurs, the network and tangible assistance category and the associated functions are vital to the mentoring process due to the acknowledged network clean slate of nascent entrepreneurs (Milanov and Fernhaber 2009). This research conceptualises six sub-categories of the social support theory in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. This was based on the available data and it is unknown whether different data from other longitudinal studies would yield the same six categories, or if other researchers would have

classified the sub-categories differently. The lack of theoretical research that conceptualises the social support categories limits the ability of the current research to compare or contrast findings. Due to the lack of existing research on the specific functions provided in a nascent entrepreneurial context, it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions or comparisons with respect to the findings of this research.

The nascent entrepreneurs that participated in the longitudinal study and formed the data sample had all successfully founded one venture. This limited this research to investigating the role of emotions and mentor interactions in the context of successful ventures and fails to address the role of emotions and mentor interactions in those ventures that are not successful. All interactions analysed were focused on dyadic mentor relationships and did not consider constellations of mentors. This implies that the resulting entrepreneurial agency is solely attributed to the interaction with one mentor, however, it is unclear if other relationships or factors played a significant role.

### ***5.5.2. Limitations of Nascent Entrepreneur-Mentor Interactions***

The use of the Geneva Emotional Wheel (GEW) (Sacharin et al. 2012) and its fixed emotion labels ensures efficiency and consistency across the analyses of the data, however, there are several drawbacks. This research permitted the use of free response format, allowing the nascent entrepreneurs to respond freely using their own language when describing their interactions with mentors. This is not always an ideal choice as some respondents do not normally express their emotions in speech, or try to label their experience as an emotion, or use one of the GEW emotion labels to describe their experience. Therefore, one of the major drawbacks was that the researcher had to associate the best approximate emotion label to their assessment of the transcript and interview where an exact match was not obvious or available. In these situations, the emotion label chosen may have been a stronger or weaker description of the emotion than that which the nascent entrepreneur would have chosen themselves. Alternatively, if the nascent entrepreneur had been provided with the GEW emotion labels, it may have primed the entrepreneur to choose a response they may not have otherwise chosen.

The researcher did consider the option of providing a generic ‘other’ category however, the response provided would have yielded the same result and required the researcher to again best approximate the emotion label. Emotions are very difficult to define and extremely challenging to measure. Even with the provision of different emotion definitions and classifications, consensus across the research community is required in order to compare results across research studies. Subjective association of emotions is impossible to compare or contrast against other studies which limits the current research.

The literature review highlighted three core behaviours associated with positive emotions, namely: bonding, sharing, and cooperative. The analysis of the data further classified these behaviours into sub categories which helped to conceptualise and understand the behaviour of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. However, no formal sub-categorisation exists in the literature which limits the research ability to compare or contrast any findings.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

In concluding this research, this chapter reflected on the key objectives and the corresponding research questions and highlighted the research findings and contributions to knowledge. From the extensive review of the mentoring and entrepreneurship literature, the research identified a dearth of evidence regarding the specific functions associated with mentoring different types of entrepreneurs, the role of emotions in the context of entrepreneur-mentor relationships, the interplay between functions, interactions, emotions, and behavior and their effect on entrepreneurial agency. This gap led to the proposal of a multilevel framework and model (Figure 4) in the context of nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships, which is built upon an integration of theoretical perspectives from entrepreneurship and mentoring literatures and sought to understand the nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationship. Semi-structured interview questionnaires conducted with the support of eighty-four dyadic formal mentoring pairs at three stages over an eighteen-month period, provided the research with a rich dataset to investigate nascent entrepreneur-mentor

relationships located in Ireland. The results of the analyses of this data confirm the mentoring functions *Support, Develop, Steer, Filter, Plan and Share* that are performed in the context nascent entrepreneur-mentor relationships. Interaction characteristics were also identified by analysing over 8,000 interactions which provided valuable information on the number of mentor interactions, their duration, the initiator, the interaction focus, method of interaction, and the location of the mentor interactions. These interactions created positive emotions that in turn highlighted six forms or patterns of behaviour: insightful sharing; deliberate sharing; responsive cooperation; anticipatory cooperation; supportive bonding; and confirmation bonding. The findings demonstrated that the bonding, knowledge sharing, and cooperative behaviour that occur as a result of positive emotional outcomes from mentor interactions, enhanced the core properties of entrepreneurial agency identified by Bandura (2006) namely, intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness. This may be a long lasting contribution of mentoring programmes in an entrepreneurial context.

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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A – Interview Protocol**

**Interview Protocol Phase 1**  
**Nascent Entrepreneur / Mentor**

1. Could you give me a brief summary of your career history to date?  
(Entrepreneur and Mentor)
2. Could you give me a brief summary of your venture to date? When did you establish it? Why did you establish it? At what stage of growth is it at?  
(Entrepreneur) what is your venture experience/ what is your mentoring experience (Mentor)
3. Why did you decide to participate in the formal mentoring programme?  
What are you hoping to get out of the programme? (Entrepreneur AND Mentor)
4. How was your participation in the programme viewed by others?
5. Who were you matched with in the programme? How was the match made?  
How much influence did you have in the matching decision? (Entrepreneur)
6. What were your initial impressions of your mentor/entrepreneur?  
(Entrepreneur and Mentor)
7. What are your expectations and wishes from the formal mentoring programme? (Entrepreneur and Mentor)
8. What objectives did yourself and your mentor set for the formal mentoring process? (Entrepreneur and Mentor)
9. How did you and your mentor first make contact with each other? Show initiated the first contact? What did you discuss? (Entrepreneur and Mentor)
10. What ground rules did you set for the mentoring relationship? (Entrepreneur and Mentor)
11. What are your expectations for the next stage of the programme?  
(Entrepreneur and Mentor)
12. Any other comments?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

## Interview Protocol Phase 2/3

### Nascent Entrepreneur / Mentor

You are now \_\_ months into the programme. I would like you to reflect on the following questions and tell me about your experiences to date.

1. How many hours per week have you and (your mentor / protégé) spent together? How have you varied this over the first \_\_ months of the programme? What is a typical day / half-day like when you both meet?
2. What are the top five things that you have talked about? (Entrepreneur) What types of requests have your entrepreneur made of you? (Mentor)
3. How long is a typical mentoring episode or interaction? Where do you meet?
4. Has participation in the programme impacted the way you think about your ventures? (Entrepreneur) How do you think you have impacted your entrepreneur's venture? (Mentor)
5. How has your mentor influenced you personally? (Entrepreneur) What aspects of your personality, confidence and skill have been developed / not developed? (Entrepreneur) How do you think you have personally developed your entrepreneur (Mentor) In what ways? (Mentor)
6. How receptive have you been to the advice of your mentor? (Entrepreneur) How perceptive do you think your mentor has been to the advice and guidance you have provided? (Mentor)
7. How has participation in the programme affected the size and composition of your network? If so, how have those changes arose? Could you provide some examples / illustrations? If there was no significant change, why do you think that was the case? (Entrepreneur)
8. Did your mentor introduce you to any of his/her contacts? Did you introduce your entrepreneur to any of your contacts? If so, to whom? Were they internal or external contacts? If internal, what role did they perform in the entrepreneur's organisation? What was the context in which the introduction took place? Did any of these introductions lead to the formation of a new relationship? If so, how? If no, why did you think that was the case?
9. Describe how the relationship has developed to date? (Entrepreneur / Mentor) Describe how you have maintained this relationship? (Entrepreneur / Mentor) How would you describe your entrepreneur / mentor at this stage of the programme?
10. What types of information is exchanged as part of your mentoring relationship? (Entrepreneur / Mentor) What do you talk about? How does the relationship quality shape what you choose to share with each other?
11. Have you formed any relationships on as an indirect result of the programme

to date? If so, could you provide some examples? How did these relationships come about?

12. Do you believe mentor/entrepreneur has changed personally or professionally as a result of the mentoring experiences? If so, how?
13. To this point, how do you think the mentoring programme has met your objectives? Your (mentor / entrepreneur) objectives? Your venture's objectives? Describe a time you gained access to important information from your mentor that influenced you or your venture?
14. As you reflect on the experience to date as a whole, what do you think were the most helpful aspects? The least helpful aspects? What if anything would you change about the mentoring experience?
15. How did the mentoring programme conclude? What level of contact have you maintained with (your mentor / entrepreneur) since the programme ended? How would you characterise the relationship to date?

Thank you for participating in this interview.