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# Adult Educators' Views on Effective Mentoring in Greece: A Qualitative Study

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## Abstract

The aim of the present research is to record and investigate the views of the adult education educators on the effectiveness of the use mentoring in their pedagogy. The effectiveness is expressed in terms of the expected outcomes of the adult education process, as these are defined by the participants: occupational/professional, personal, and educational. A dynamic model of mentoring effectiveness is designed and applied in a qualitative research frame. More specifically a methodological tool for semi-structured interviews is used to 15 interviewees that formed a representative sample of adult educators. The transcribed texts collected were analyzed through content analysis. This analysis showed that the participants gave special importance to the need that the application of mentoring in adult education should be established and well organized. Even more, the effective characteristics of the mentoring variables were identified as well as the way they contribute to the effectiveness of adult education by using appropriate practices (cooperative and experiential) and adapting goals towards the improvement of the mentees. The complication of the mentoring process is pointed out in the research, as well as the importance of the participants' roles, especially within the increased demands and difficulties of the contemporary society.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Adult Education, Effectiveness, Contemporary Society, Qualitative Study

## 1. Introduction

The idea whether the adult education programs should include curricula and methodological room for the application of mentoring practices has been discussed upon by academics and policy makers around the world. Due to the technological, scientific, and socio-economic radical changes of nowadays, societies and individuals are forced to continuously adapt in a creative and effective way (that is a way that achieves that goals set at the higher level). Within this frame, mentoring has become a special field of investigation for a plethora of researchers. In Greece, the rather limited, but steadily rising number of studies leads to the necessity of applying mentoring at all levels of typical and not typical education lifelong. The importance of mentoring for both primary and secondary education was formally acknowledged by Greek policy makers in 2010 with specific legislation, according to which a more experienced educator leads a younger and inexperienced educator a his/her mentor. The Greek educators initially faced the mentoring establishment with disbelief (Kokkos, 2007) because they

thought that it would be related to their evaluation, an issue that had negative connotation for them. However, as policy makers started to give recognition to the effective use of mentoring and educational scientists emphasized the importance of the application of mentoring in adult education programs (Ehrich, 2013; Rogers, 1999) this has become a vital issue in the programming of effective adult education courses not only abroad, but in Greece as well (Valkanos, Papavassiliou-Alexiou & Fragoulis, 2009; Valasi, 2015).

The main goal of this paper is to explore the effectiveness of the adult mentoring courses and programs offered by the Greek adult education institutions/establishments; it aims to achieve this through the investigation of the adult educators' views. Within this framework, the paper expects to identify any issues of special importance for the effective application of mentoring as well any weaknesses in the application of mentoring in adult education. Finally, the study expects to be able to provide suggestions for improvements in the provision of adult education through mentoring. The results of the study are expected to throw light on the application of mentoring by the Greek adult educators and assist the policy and educational actors involved in taking initiatives for the betterment of adult education through mentoring.

To achieve the above, this paper aims to study the following:

- The theoretical approaches to mentoring, the description of the main roles of the people involved (mentors and mentees) and the expected outputs of the use of mentoring in adult education.
- The model of dynamic effectiveness (Greemers & Kyriakides, 2010) that is adopted and used in this study; the reasons of its adoption and the concepts, roles, and relations/interactions within this model.
- Learning gain by the mentees regarding the expected outcomes of mentoring that refer to their personal, educational, and professional development.
- The institutions that provide adult education programs, their assistance, and their contribution to effectiveness.
- Problems and other issues noted by adult educators regarding mentoring.
- Proposals that the participants offer to achieve improvements in mentoring.

## **2. The application of Mentoring in Adult Education**

Lifelong learning and especially adult education are basic fields of mentoring implementation, a situation that leads to the need for the expansion and deepening of the specific research field; most specifically regarding the role of the educators/mentors. The present research contributes to the above through the investigation of the views of adult educators on the effectiveness of mentoring, using qualitative research in the application of semi-structured interviews on a selected sample of adult educators; it provides a useful and holistic and dynamic frame for the relevant study's application. This study's contribution is innovative covering a research gap, regarding the formulation of a model of adult education effectiveness, especially in the case of Greek adult education. It is expected to show ways of improving all the stages of mentoring application (inputs, process, outputs). The isolation and description of the interactions and appropriate adjustments of the aims of adult education courses and other issues, may form the basis for the categorization and description of the specific data with the goal of formulating a frame for future studies aiming the improvement of all benefits of mentoring (Lauphlin & Yopp, 2006; Reinstein, Sinason & Fogarty).

The concept of mentoring has its roots in ancient Greece, the name of the wiseman Mentor, to whom, according to Homer, Odysseus trusted the guidance, advice, and education of his son Telemachus. Nowadays, this type of guidance and education is called mentoring (after the name of Mentor); however, there is not only one common definition of the term used, although its meaning is usually close to the concepts of "guidance", "coach", and "advice" (Gabel-Dunk & Craft). Gradually and since 1980, the concept of mentoring has started to adjust to the needs of the contemporary society. In the USA, a strict mentoring framework was developed and applied to by the mentor (a carrier of influence for the students) to the mentees, not only in the field of education, but in industry as well (Zachary, 2000). In Europe, the role of the mentor as a strong guide was clearly separated from that of the mentee (Valasi, 2015). It has been, generally, supported that a mentor advised, and guided within the learning model they used (Strong & Baron, 2004).

It is noted that a common idea across the definitions of mentoring is the hierarchical relation that exists in the effective provision of useful knowledge and the cultivation of competences (personal, educational and professional) by the educator/mentor to the student/trainee/mentee. It is often mentioned by scholars that the students participating in an adult education course seek for learning experiences that would deeply and positively affect them and contribute in allowing them to be a more reflective, and effective person, learner and professional (Nilsen & Driel, 2010). Theoretical knowledge acquired through proper mentoring processes should be blended with real life working experiences in such a way that could affect the mentee-student's career and advancement (Klinge, 2015; Iqbal, 2020). A review of the literature offers evidence that several researchers- using a wide range of methods and techniques -mostly quantitative- have explored mentoring application; some referred to the importance of the idea that the learning processes should be participatory, cooperative and holistic (Kokkos, 2008; Trotter, 2006).

### *2.1. The Importance of Investigating Mentoring in Adult Education- The Significance of the Study*

Lifelong learning and especially adult education are complex and, therefore, they need to be explored in an expanded holistic framework and through the deepening the specific research field. In this sense, the field of educational effectiveness is useful in providing a holistic and dynamic educational/learning model, which can be adjusted to mentoring in adult education (Greemers & Kyriakides, 2010); more specifically in investigating the role of the educators/mentors in relation to the students/mentees and towards the outcomes of the mentoring process. There is a limited literature of such a poly prismatic dynamic kind; the present study aims to contribute to the field of mentoring by formatting such a special adult education effectiveness model; this is accomplished through the study of the views of adult educators on the effectiveness of mentoring; as a result, it may provide a useful frame for specific studies' application. This is innovative contributing to the covering of an existing research gap, especially regarding Greek adult education. This study is expected to show ways of improving all the stages of mentoring application (inputs, process, outputs). The isolation and description of the interactions and appropriate adjustments of the aims may form the basis for the formatting and categorization of specific data with the goal of specifying modeling for the betterment of the effectiveness of mentoring (Ehrich, 2013; Lambropoulos et al., 2022). Especially in Greece, there is a need for a further and deeper study on mentoring; mostly through the mentors' views in the variety of institutions (concerning their type and the place they operate) that provide adult education.

On the above basis, several theories on adult learning have been developed and is vital that the study refers to the most influential ones; this is imperative, given the fact that the way that mentoring is applied is influenced by the theoretical framework primarily used (Kamarudin et al., 2020). It is expected that when the adult educators participating in the study are interviewed, they will express more openly their views on the learning through mentoring and assist in modelling its effectiveness. This is the reason that the main adult learning theories are presented below. They might inform the research process as well as the presentation of the research results.

### *2.2. Theoretical dimensions of adult learning and mentoring*

Kolb (1984) used, the called circle of learning, which circle, as this paper admits, reflects better the aspects of mentoring examined. The four stages that Kolb describes are based on experiential learning and critical reflection that could lead to the deepening and the expansion of scientific thought (Kokkos, 2008). In the theory of Kolb, the role of learning experiences and critical reflection in a continuous circle of the effective learning, and the promotion of the individual and social development. We consider that the theory of Kolb is closer to our model of dynamic effectiveness; however, several issues from other theories may influence its application.

The theory of social change for adult education by Paulo Freire is connected to those of Peter Jarvis and Jack Mesirov mostly regarding the central role that transformative learning has in autonomous thought as well as in the expected effective practice and everyday problem solution (Koulaouzidis, 2008; Kokkos, 2008; Valkanos, Papavasiliou-Alexiou & Fragoulis, 2009); issues that could be of special importance in our study. Freire believes that the adult educator supports the collaboration and the dialogue by using specially constructed educational materials, and by operating as a companion (mentor) to adult students; Jarvis's theory is considered complex as it

stresses the social scope of adult education (Luna & Guilen, 2011), within which the adult educator acts as a transmitter of the existing value-cultural system; the learners connect this system to their experiences as well as to the influences of their specific environment. Jarvis points out that adult educators should be effectively trained to apply a supporting Socratic method in teaching (Valkanos et al., 2009).

Mesirow's theory is a critical theory of transformative learning, within which the way that knowledge is constructed is searched. Mesirow thinks that the adult educators are responsible for the way that adult students face the social and cultural dimensions of life that may bring difficulties and obstacles to their studies. Useful to our study is the reference to Knowles' views that are completed by Roger's work, which are related to the special characteristics and the needs of the adult learners. In summary these are related to the need to know, which is connected to their self-esteem, their experiences, and their readiness in reference to their motives. Knowles created the Andragogy model for adult education, which is very popular in the field (Valkanos et al., 2009).

A lot of theoretical work was done in the field of adult education, which was gradually applied to mentoring and the roles of the participants (mentors and mentees), especially in formatting the mentoring relationship in learning. The researchers use a reflective way to involve, for example, Kolb's circles of learning with the other theories in adult learning, as well as the findings of Psychology (Kolb et al., 2006). In such a framework, mentoring is considered a professional activity that could be modeled to relate to effective adult learning.

### *2.3. Empirical Dimensions of Mentoring and Relevant Research*

A short reference to the most related to the present study's field is made in this section. Gallacher (1997) examined the qualifications of a good mentor concluding to the following: a) increased teaching experience, b) relevant scientific/pedagogic background, c) competence in using ICT, d) experience in innovative projects, and e) knowledge of the culture and special circumstances in adult teaching and mentoring. Other researchers (Athanasoula-Repa, 2017; De Mers, 2014; Loretto, 2017; Peretomode & Ikoya, 2019) focus on what they call "effective mentor" and point out the following characteristics: a) the willingness and ability for the transmission of values, knowledge and experience, b) confidence to the abilities of the mentee to learn, c) access. d) flexibility, e) willingness, f) honesty, g) obtain creative feedback, and h) objectivity, empathy, and positiveness to the mentee. Recent research searched for the identification of the stages of an effective mentoring process and the most popular are investigation of the professional, personal, and educational needs of the mentees, search for the factors of effective mentoring relation as well as for the activities and themes for discussion (Iqbal, 2020; Klinge, 2015; Krishnamurthy, 2021). Special research emphasis is given to the ways of facing any obstacles (Athanasoula-Repa, 2017), as well as to the last stage of reflection and formation of the benefits that the mentees acquire (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010; Kamarudin et al., 2020).

There is a rich literature on the specific characteristics of mentoring process; this information may be utilized in this study. The role of the organization and institutionalization/ establishment of mentoring are important and format the basis of the relation that the mentor has with the organization (Kouyioumtzis, 2018; Sofos & Kassimi, 2017). The content of mentoring depends on the learning theoretical model used, including the roles of the mentors, mentees etc. In a traditional model the role of the mentor is central. This centrality gradually moves towards participation and group work, within which the competences cultivated are beyond the close professional framework, of personal and educational kind. Nowadays, mentoring may be in person, or e-mentoring (Iqbal, 2020), refer to young, old, or mixed groups (Sofos, 2015, Ifanti, 2014). It may take place in an educational environment, or on any other wider that is chosen (Arafa et al, 2016).

The content of mentoring could be an assimilative to the ethos and culture of the leading organization or educational one to new learning objectives. Mentoring may use suitable for every case methodological frames such as the "dialogue", the "strategies", the "advice", the "competence", the "internship", as these are described in the relevant literature (Abiddin & Aminuddin, 2012; Berliner, 1992; Berkely., 2007; Furlong & Mayard, 1995; Leshem, 2012). Zachary (2000) supported a strategic and student-centered mentoring method. It is worth mentioning that Freeman (1997) gives a lot of support to the "holistic" approach to mentoring. In this sense, mentoring intervention coherently includes all its classic elements: professional development, personal

development, and continuous education; in other words, he refers to the “outputs” of the mentoring process. He considers that mentoring relation is volunteer and confidential, but typical as well since the meetings frame should be set from the beginning; however, it is continuously adjusting to the changing needs through the reflective research and evaluation to be an internal part of the process; other researchers comment that this process could be influenced by circle of learning (Kolb, 1984; Theodorou & Petridou, 2014; Tonna et al., 2017); also, even more important, is the view that mentors can connect the used mentoring techniques in the, so called, “model of applied science” (Deligianni & Mathaioudaki, 2008); such is the applied Biopedagogic theory, which considers learning to be in line to the evolution development of Home Sapiens and the development of every human (Alahiotis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2008).

#### *2.4. Models for the Effectiveness in Education and Mentoring*

Several studies in the field refer to the “benefits” of mentoring, which are often related, in an explicit mode and/or an infinitive one, to its results not only for the participants, but for the institutions as well (Zachary, 2000). There are referred i.e., some negative feelings that must be faced and replaced by the positive feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. The enrichment of knowledge and the development of competences are also considered important benefits of adult learning (Philips & Fragoulis, 2010); this must be realized through motives and risk taking towards the conquer of targets. In such cases the mentors are considered to be benefited and increase self-esteem by watching the success of his mentees (Valasi, 2015; Ehrich, 2013).

The model of 3P by Biggs (1993) is especially mentioned by Kamarudin et al. (2020). This model is characterized by three interrelated stages (3P): the Prestage (P), the Process (P) and the Product (P); these stages are consistent with those of educational effectiveness that this study is aiming to: Inputs-Process-Outputs. From a mentor’s perspective the first stage (inputs) describes the previous knowledge and competences for the promotion of the learning of new knowledge; this may or may not affect the products of the process. The process refers to the way that the mentor’s characteristics are involved in the processes. This process leads to the product of learning through mentoring, including the low and high level of cognitive results for the students of a similar or varied professional, educational, or cultural background (Kamarudin et al., 2020).

The development model (GROW) is affected by the Theory of Internal Game of Galleway (Kamarudin et al., 2020). Within this model it is considered that the mentees must develop their abilities and, gradually get independent, “unlocking” their strengths towards the fulfillment of their goals. This model is useful in cases of problem solving and effective conquering of targets and it may be connected to the dynamic effectiveness model that this study develops.

The DEDEPRO Model (De la Fuente et al., 2016) is structured like that of Biggs and introduces the points in time of design (DEsign), development and application (Development), and product (PROduct) in teaching and learning. These points/stages show more effectively the final performance and the personal satisfaction of the participants, an issue that is of significance to the research design of the present study. A cyclic process supplements the DEDEPRO model according to a model that Sofos & Kassimati (2012) present and reminds us of the learning circle of Kolb. The researchers consider the mentoring process cycling and repetitive because of the reflection and the feedback that mentoring is characterized by. In the center of the circle there are three axes that must be considered stable and refer to mentoring: the professional field, the educational field and the personal- emotional background. This information is utilized in the formation of our methodological model. The implementation of mentoring is affected by the experience, the perceptions, and the views of the mentors. All the participants in mentoring must show readiness in identifying and facing difficulties, problems, or even threads. Their expectations and experiences regarding the mentoring interventions is of special importance (Sofos & Kassimati, 2012).

As far as the results/ outputs of mentoring, the most referred are personal (reflection, self-awareness), occupational and educational development; these are related to the “benefits of mentoring”, as often recognized in the mentoring literature (Koutsoukos & Sipitanou, 2020; Philips & Fragoulis, 2010) and are related to the framework of mentoring effectiveness.

Educational effectiveness (Karatzia-Stavlioti & Lambropoulos, 2006) is referred to the effectiveness of the educational process or establishment and is concerned with the fulfillment of the goals set (outputs/results), using the necessary inputs (human resources, economic resources, institutions and organizations/structures, as well as the relevant policy at all levels). The basic educational effectiveness model may be adjusted to mentoring through the specification of every one of the three stages. In the bibliography it is written that every stage is in a dynamic interaction with the others (Greemers & Kyriakides, 2010); such a model is considered a most appropriate in the investigation of the effectiveness of a mentoring project and the betterment of the quality of the relevant educational process.

The above framework is adjusted and formatted as the basis for the present study which investigates the views of adult educators on the effectiveness of mentoring in their field. It utilizes semi structure interviews with adult educators, which it analyses with content analysis searching for responses to the research questions set. The adjusted model is shown in the diagram below; the relevant research findings are utilized in the semi-structure interview questionnaire, so that information is drawn on the parameters of the model, interrelations are identified through content analysis, and concepts and ideas are extracted from this holistic produced model. These are included in the findings of this qualitative study, which enrich the field of effective mentoring and provide a framework for future work in the general field of mentoring.

### **3. The Research Questions and their Correspondence to Research Design**

The main research question of this study is the investigation of the views of a representative sample of adult educators on the effectiveness of the use of mentoring in their educational work; through the qualitative methodology of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), it examines the content of the interviewee responses to questions of the semi structured interviews; these questions are in line to the supplementary questions presented below.

#### *3.1. Research Questions*

The supplementary research questions are seeking the views of the adult educators included in the sample on the following:

1. Which is the effectiveness of mentoring in reference to the individual characteristics, the roles of mentors and students-mentees and the relevant mentoring relationship (inputs)?
2. Which is the effectiveness of mentoring in the professional development of the participant adults in relation to the expected benefits (process and outcomes)?
3. Which is the effectiveness of mentoring in the personal development of the participant adults in relation to the expected benefits (process and outcomes)?
4. Which is the effectiveness of mentoring in the educational development of the participant adults in relation to the expected outcomes (process and outcomes)?
5. Which are the problems and difficulties that mentors face during the mentoring application process and which proposals they make to the betterment of mentoring?

#### *3.2. The Research Model*

Based on the theoretical and empirical review, a dynamic, and reflective model was developed, appropriate for the present research. The most issues related to the model have already been reported. In Diagram 2.2.1., the most important factors are presented, which were utilized in the production of the semi-structure questionnaire for the needs of the interviews that were conducted in this study. The participants were asked to talk on the effectiveness of mentoring and express their views on the various factors' effectiveness, through their experience and the relevant knowledge they had acquired; these could refer to inputs, process, or outputs of the effectiveness model.

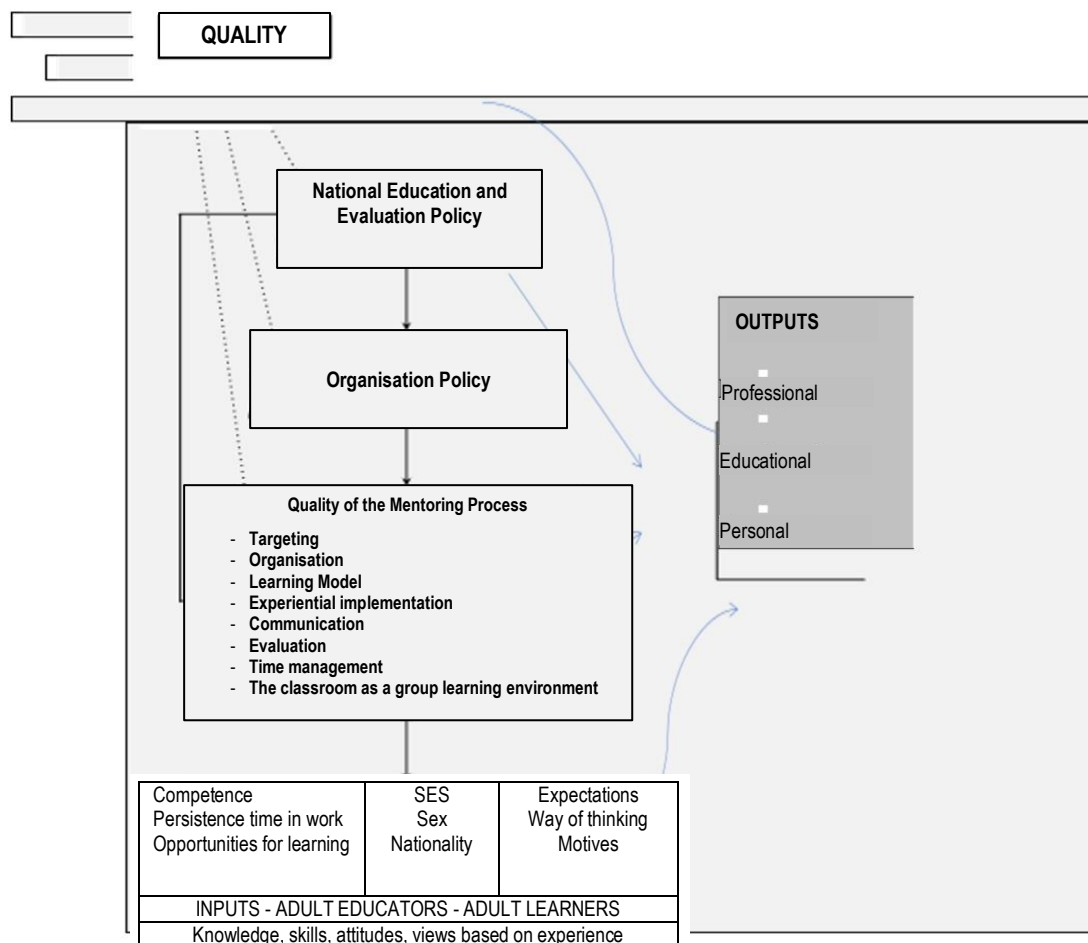


Diagram 2.2.1.: Model on the Effectiveness of Mentoring

More specifically the diagram shows:

- *Inputs* that are the preconditions all the necessary for the materialization of mentoring, such as:

The student-mentee, with his/her individual/personal characteristics, studies and experience, as well as the aims related to mentoring.

The educator-mentor with his/her individual/personal characteristics, the relevant studies as well as professional and educational experience (as these are set out by the educational and general policy of the organization/institution/establishment).

The educational institution responsible for mentoring, its culture, administration, and management as well as its experience; an important part is the human and non-human resources of the institution and their management.

- *Mentoring (educational) process* which refers to the creation and effective application of the mentoring relation and more particularly, the degree of:

Aiming at the application of roles (mentors' and mentees').

The effective interaction and communication among the participants, and

The utilization of a holistic, spherical, and experiential approach to mentoring, through an interactive learning process, appropriate to the professional, educational, and personal goals of the mentees. In the case of a mentoring process, this stage is continuously related to the other two stages, and especially, to the outputs one as this is always involved and inspired towards effectiveness.

- *Outputs* that refer to the results and impact of mentoring. That is, the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors relevant to the needs of the mentees on professional, educational and personal development levels.



#### 4. Method

A proper methodology is significantly important in the process of choosing and adjusting the techniques of collecting and analyzing a proper amount of data, so that the research questions set might be effectively answered; and the researcher must be continuously active and adjusting (Lagoumitzis et al., 2015). A qualitative research methodology is chosen as a most appropriate for the current study; this is because during the continuous careful observation of the interviewee, his/her views on effective mentoring in adult education may be investigated more deeply (Kahlke, 2014). It is supported (Cohran-Smith et al., 2011) that as qualitative research is evolving in time, the researchers try to find a balance between the strong need for methodological flexibility, and a correct methodological structure. A qualitative approach allows the researchers to think of new ways and examine ideas and issues met, so that the needs of the research are satisfied spherically and holistically (Atieno, 2009; Holloway & Todress, 2003).

Some researchers support that the (alternative) use of a quantitative methodology would provide data to answer the specific research questions (Creswell, 2016). As far as the application of a mixed methodology is concerned, this usually demands a combination of data from various sources (Bentahar and Cameron, 2015), while in the present study the data sought are from one source (mentors- with interviews), a situation for which the qualitative methodology is more appropriate.

The study (and investigation) of the adult education mentors' views on the strategies and the impact of effective mentoring is compatible with the holistic and dynamic view for adult education (Greemers & Kyriakides, 2010- Johnson, 2014); this is described as a perfect and spherical individual motivation in order to succeed the maximum result in all aspects. The above are describes diagrammatically in Diagram 2.2.1.

Qualitative methodology is generally considered better when the views of the participants are examined or their experiences relative to the problem set (Newby, 2019; Percy et al., 2015). It allows the collection of a rich and to a satisfactory depth material through reflection and a cyclic way of the learning process (Kolb, 1984).

In the sections below the methodological tool of semi-structured interviews is presented, then issues regarding the role of the researcher are commented upon, the interview guide is presented, and the sampling process is described. Then the data collection and the research process are commented upon together with the validity and reliability and the restrictions of the study.

##### *4.1. Methodological Tool*

The methodological tool used in this study is interview; an important means towards the collection of data as it is characterized by the continuous communication and interaction between the researcher and the participant, providing them with the necessary flexibility and directness in all stages (Paraskevopoulou-Kolia, 2008). Semi-structured interview (Cohen et al., 2008) was chosen as it is consistent to the goal of the present study, allowing deepening and adjustment, and change in the row of asking the questions, so that something is shown, either a connection or an idea, which were not included in the initial plan, but they are considered interesting and necessary for deepening the research. Semi-structured interview is a flexible and dynamic mean, which demands for a strict planning process and allows for open ended questions (Krippendorf, 2004; Creswell, 2016).

##### *4.2. Application of Mentoring and the Role of the Mentor*

As it is written (Cohen et al., 2008; Newby, 2019) the possible subjectivity of the method may create problems. The researcher should not lead or influence directly or indirectly the interviewee by projecting his/her ideas and views. Other issues that problematize the application of an interview refer to the place and time that it takes place, as well as the finding of the appropriate sample. Most important for the success of the interviews are the language and communicative skills of the researcher as well as of the interviewee.

The use of a tape-recorder needs to be faced (Newby, 2019), as, quite often, the mentees show a hesitation towards this, especially when the content of the interview is related to their professional level, a situation within which their role might be doubted. In case that they refuse to be recorded, the researcher must take notes of what he/she hears or sees very quickly (something especially difficult), so that a valid interview is noted.

During the interview the researcher must continuously observe the interviewee and take notes on the way he/she speaks, reacts, and moves (Newby, 2019); in this way, the data will be interpreted with more validity. The researcher must, therefore, be effectively prepared through studying the relevant literature, but, also, through the realization of a few pilot interviews.

#### *4.3. Interview protocol/guide*

In the frame of the proposed research, a guide for the interviews was designed to assist with the semi-structured interviews. The guide is based on the goal of the research and the supplementary research questions as well as on the relevant literature. It contains axes which are connected to the research questions with the enriched main and clarifying questions. The research model is dynamic, interactive with feedback; issues that are expected to be present in the content in all stages of the interviews.

For example, the view that the role of a mentor is supportive (as an input), may be connected to the anthropocentric idea in the process, which can be expressed in the three sectors of the expected results (professional, personal, educational). The last effects strengthen the initial views on the inputs in a dynamic and reflective way. In the interviews it is expected to be recognized references to the three stages of effectiveness at the same time and dynamically. The questions were grouped according to the research question and the main issue they targeted (inputs, process, outputs/results). When it was not easy to separate the elements present (i.e. which of the professional belong to the process and which to the outputs/results), the questions were expressed at a more general level and an effort is made to separate the answers during the interviews.

As already stated, the axons of the interview guide are connected to the supplementary research questions. In Axon 1 the initial inputs are searched, which are used in the development and organization of effective mentoring (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Athanasoula-Reppa, 2017). In Axon 2 the professional expectations are searched for and the roles and responsibilities of the mentees for which the mentor is responsible at all stages of the mentoring process ((Sofos & Kassimi, 2017). Within the Axon 3, elements of ethical support to the mentees, as well as cases of friendly relations development, situations of well-being and ways of encouragement.

Axon 4 content needs a methodological design with the precondition of the knowledge of the ways of investigating the educational needs of the mentees. The interviewees must refer to strategies to face the educational needs, the ways of assessing the degree of the knowledge, skill, attitude and behavior acquisition and the degree of mentoring effectiveness in this field.

Axon 5 seeks to find whether mentoring relation is developed through an educational institution, with an effective policy and useful means of professional, personal, and educational kind. The interview factors could be the experience conversations, observation, guidance, and trust development. Any problems or difficulties identified are expected to refer to the above and the aim of the interview is to have them specified in a framework of suggestions towards corrective interventions.

#### *4.4. Population and Sampling Procedure*

The population of the study belongs to the adults that are teaching in adult education courses, in the existing institutions of Greece; these are Institutes of Lifelong Education in Universities, Other Institutes of Lifelong Education, Second Chance Secondary Schools. The precondition for the inclusion of a subject in the sample was to have at least a basic knowledge on effective mentoring (i.e. has attended courses on mentoring). Other criteria are: a) to be typically able to practice adult education, b) to have a representativeness as it refers to the discipline

(profession), the experience in adult education, age, and gender, c) to have at least 5 years experience in education, d) to be over the age of 28, and e) to work in different varied areas.

The sample was selected by purposive sampling and by snowballing, so that the criterion of representativeness is kept. In qualitative research the sample's size is chosen by the researcher so as to ensure data saturation, a situation that does not necessarily mean a big sample (Krippendorf, 2004); the aim is also to interpret a phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). So, the researcher should focus on choosing the useful for the research individuals (Fusch and Ness, 2015).

#### *4.5. Data Collection*

The major goal of the researchers was to investigate what mentors consider as an effectiveness of all stages of mentoring. Deep interviews would allow to understand the views of the mentors and compare the aims, the practice, and their visions. The interview texts were transcribed accompanied with notes on how the participants responded and the interruptions during the interviews. Then, content analysis was then utilized towards the findings of specific words, themes, or concepts, which would contribute to meanings and connections related to the goal and the supplementary research questions of the study. Content analysis would not be intrusive and should be based on the systematic study of the texts, through which titles and codes were given to the data aiming to highlighting passages with interest and meaning.

During the application of content analysis, it must be clear which data is analyzed and how it is clarified, and which population are collected from and the relevant framework (Krippendorf, 2004). Content analysis, though it has limitations during application, it provides the opportunity to quantify findings to make the analysis clearer (i.e. the frequencies of appearance of certain categories, etc). In the present analysis typical quantification was not used, as it was more interested in the purpose and implications of using the data which contributes to the strong parallels between qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.

### **5. Research Process**

The research process followed was a proper one for this type of study, that is: a) an invitation was sent through e-mail to candidates, in which they have to express their interest to participate in the study, b) a telephone communication with the candidates that covered the aforementioned criteria and gave a positive response for their participation, c) the place and the way that the interview would take place was arranged.

Two pilot interviews were carried out for validity reason. The interviews took place face to face at a specific place where there recording was possible. One interview was made through phone; during this interview notes were taken and every possible effort was made record it with detail. The interviews were carried out from January 2022 until March 2022.

After the stage of transcribing the interviews in written text, a first reading of the collected material with the aim to obtain a general view of what is being said, what they do, and what do the participants mean; also, an effort is made to seek for themes and connections-patterns that are of interest to the research. In this way, coding emerged that gave to every text unit the coding that expressed that most interesting to the study meaning. In the case that certain text units could be interpreted different and connected to different parameters of the model, they were given different code names. All the codes were grouped to repeated relevant ideas.

Based on the meaning and the content of the data, the thematic units that could be formatted from the combination of ideas and the way codes were repeated, was searched for. These units were holistic descriptions and interpretations of the content of the text passages. Then, it was necessary to reexamine the themes based on the criterion of meaning connection among them with a conceptual demarcation and clear separation of the topics necessary for the research. The themes were grouped in more general categories, themes and ideas/concepts, in an effort to construct tree-type diagrams, based on the research model and the relevant research questions.

The last stage concerned the processing of the topics in an understandable and interesting way, with parallel references to the reliability and validity of their content, as well as the research axons. The final goal of the content analysis was to connect the thematic units to the bibliography of the field, so that a deeper and approach to the goal of the research would be realized in a valid and reliable way.

### *5.1. Validity and Reliability of the Research*

The utility and reliability of a research are considered necessary for it to be useful and usable. These two concepts were the basic guides of the present research, which, as a qualitative one with the potential bias that may characterize it, it should: a) meet the criterion of validity, i.e. have a research tool (interview) that investigates and "evaluates" what it intends to study, and b) meet the criterion of reliability, i.e. its results to be repeated in every case of new research under the same conditions (Krippendorf, 2004).

In the implementation of this research, there was a constant effort so that we (the researchers) were not influenced by any of our prior knowledge and expectations, which could, intentionally or not, have an impact on the conduct of the interview. Our aim was to explore the views of the Participants in Adult Education (PAE) in real conditions and for this we prepared and posed the questions in an appropriate way. It is emphasized that our existing knowledge and experiences contributed to a deeper understanding of the texts that emerged from the interviews. The issue of better understanding of the questions by the participants was addressed by conducting pilot interviews at the beginning of the research, which were duly exploited. An effort was made to make the questions clear, simple, and immediately understandable, to respond to the information collected (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2008). During the interviews, and when this was deemed necessary, we used clarifying questions.

We recognized that reliability in qualitative research (Krippendorf, 2004) is initially examined through the careful and stable attitude and behavior of the researcher in relation to the design and interpretation of the data, so that they are fully understandable and confirmable. An important contributing factor to the reliability of this research was our deep and continuous study of the topic of mentoring at a theoretical and empirical level.

We were also concerned, on a permanent basis, with the generalizability of the research results, a situation that led us to the clearer and more interesting and understandable presentation of the results. Of course, this does not mean that the results would be fully generalizable, and we always had in mind how important the role of the researcher was to enhance the validity and reliability and the usefulness of the research.

### *5.2. Restrictions of the research*

The experience of conducting the present research highlighted any limitations that any future similar research should consider to optimize its implementation. The purposive snowball sampling method we employed worked with difficulty. That is, finding people to participate-representatively in the survey from three cities (Athens, Larissa, Patras) could not be carried out, so that the final number of participants is 18, as we originally planned. Therefore, we ended up collecting data by interviewing 15 people.

Some of the participants appeared hesitant, at least, initially, rather "afraid" of not being exposed to the people who suggested them, and for this we asked facilitating questions (Krippendorf, 2004), which were most often effective in creating a climate of trust. It is reported that there were times when, while we planned the interviews to last around 30 minutes, they ended up lasting around 20 minutes. Of course, when the few were coherent and targeted, there was no problem. In a few cases the interviewee talked more, getting off topic (at some points), which we dealt with accordingly both during the interview (we politely reminded the topic) and during the analysis. The number of interviews does not allow the generalization of the findings across the country, thus creating the need to expand any future research to include adult educators from other regions.

## **6. Analysis and findings**

### *6.1. Sample demographics*

The sample consists of ten women and five men. Nine of them are in the age group of 40-50 years old and six in the age group of 51-65. Nine of them are Patra's residents (South Greece), three are Larissa's (North Greece) and three are Athens' (capital in the Middle of Greece). Twelve of them hold a PhD, two a MA and one a university degree. Also, six of them have 5-10 years of experience in adult education and nine of them 11-20. This general information on the participants is included In Table 5.1.1., in which the identification abbreviation is also contained (Participant Adult Educator- PAE).

Table 5.1.1.: Identification and demographics of the sample

ID reference	Gender	Age	Town	Level of study	Years of experience	Institutions of work
PAE1	F	48	Patras	PhD (University Teacher)	12	Centers of Training (CoT) - Institutes of Lifelong Learning in Universities (IoULL)
PAE2	M	58	Patras	PhD	20	CoT IoULL
PAE3	F	60	Larissa	PhD (University Teacher)	15	CoT IoULL
PAE4	F	65	Athens	PhD (University Teacher)	20	CoT IoULL
PAE5	F	45	Patras	PhD	16	CoT
PAE6	M	42	Larissa	Bachelor of Arts	4	IoULL
PAE7	F	40	Patras	PhD	7	CoT IoULL
PAE8	F	49	Patras	Master of Arts	6	CoT
PAE9	F	65	Larissa	PhD	20	CoT IoULL
PAE10	F	45	Patras	PhD	9	CoT and Technology
PAE11	M	52	Athens	PhD	12	Second Chance Schools
PAE12	M	49	Patras	PhD	6	Universities
PAE13	F	48	Patras	PhD	5	Private Institutions CoT
PAE14	M	55	Athens	PhD	13	CoT, Universities
PAE15	F	47	Patras	Master of Arts	12	CoT IoULL

## 7. The Interviews' Text Content Analysis

During interviews researchers took notes of any intense reactions of the participants' style or speech for a fuller understanding and deepening of what they "wanted to say"; more specifically, the notes were about any negative expressions, some hesitation or certainty, and apparent agreement with what was said. The above was useful to generate the ideas and words and note the frequency of the word use, as well as the possible differentiation in the meaning when in different framework of use. We first organized the results based on the axes and questions, and then grouped the ideas and themes formed based on our model of effectiveness: Inputs-Process-Outputs and the relationships between them.

In the preliminary questions we sought how they had learned about mentoring, with most stating that they had not received formal training; they had studied on their own and were constantly learning through their experience. We also obtained information on their time of experience and the respective adult education structures they had worked in to check for any differences.

The findings of the content analysis were grouped into categories in relation to the purpose of the research and examples were selected per category based on their degree of representativeness in terms of the theme/meaning expressed. Commonalities were identified, as well as any differences, to gain a deeper understanding of the views expressed.

### 7.1. Axon 1- Views on Mentoring and the Roles in it

Their views on mentoring are presented according to their frequency of occurrence. References are identified in relation to the profession, personality, and education of the trainees (a fact that also shows the importance of these fields) and ideas, which are analyzed in detail in the individual relevant axes.

#### 7.1.1. Mentoring as an Advisory Guidance

The majority of the PAE (Participating Adult Educators) consider it as advisory guidance, in whatever area the trainees seemed to need it; they are of the opinion that it is "...especially important and necessary..." (PAE4), "...in all types and structures of education..." (PAE12). The content is "...on matters of a personal, professional and, above all, educational nature..." (PAE11), "...an element of professional socialization..." (PAE8), and the mentor/trainer "...should satisfy the needs and expectations of the mentee/trainee, and create a dynamic and friendly relationship at a discrete level..." (PAE15), "must be aware that mentoring can motivate...to motivate..." (PAE9).

#### 7.1.2. Mentoring as Advisory Support.

There are several explicit and implicit references to mentoring as a form of advisory support, so that it meets the needs of the trainees, going beyond guidance: "...the role of the mentor/trainer should be more consultative; listen to the conditions, the needs of the mentees/trainees and help them to discover the solution as a consultant and be supportive..." (PAE1). There are some who refer largely to people-centered support of learners and "interpersonal communication..." (PAE2), that "...mentoring is the building of the human mentoring relationship between two parties..." (PAE9).

Doctorates working in universities and/or in teacher trainings, consider that "our role is to empower the person, to encourage them...to see something in the light of the tunnel without the cognitive and other barriers..." (PAE5). A participant who taught in a second chance elementary school comments that support should have limits and more specifically: "Of course we avoid being completely supportive because that way also builds a relationship of dependence"(PAE11).

All participants considered mentoring as a key to professional support and development, which is more developed in the respective Axons. It is noted that the focus of the reports of interviewees is: "...consultative guidance and support on how they will develop..." (PAE11), "...(mentoring) can influence further professional choices..." (PAE8). For VET students, mentoring workers report "It could affect them until they get into the profession...positively..." (PAE11). The reference to the importance of mentoring in today's labor market is important: "...in the field of entrepreneurship...they advise start-ups, this I consider mentoring, and they advise them in their first steps" (PAE7).

#### 7.1.3. Mentoring as a Form of Self-development.

Almost all participants refer to mentoring as a way of self-awareness and self-development that helps to realize the relevant individual goals in terms of their skills and personality traits. For example: "...they will discover some

abilities they didn't know they had..." (PAE11), "I see learning as a transformation of personality, perceptions, meanings, so in this sense a transformation of the person's personality occurs through mentoring, therefore it develops as a whole" (PAE1). Also: "Mentoring should be able to excite..." (SS9), "be focused on the learner's abilities and skills and his wants and deepest desires...(and) self-actualization..." (SS5), so that: "The transfer of knowledge and culture...to proceed efficiently and effectively..." (PAE14). Summarizing the above, it is emphasized that mentoring "should have certain quality indicators..." (PAE2).

## 7.2. Axon I- Views on the Role of the Mentor in the Mentoring Relation and Process

### 7.2.1. Mentor as a Supporter and an Animator

The idea and willingness to help and inspire the mentees/trainees, marks the main characteristic of the role of the mentor, which also requires similar skills. "(His role is) guiding, supporting and encouraging..." (PAE14), "An effective mentor must have social skills...that have to do with people...his role is encouraging..." (PAE3), "The mentor must...encourage the other to take initiatives...be a good listener...(with) empathy..." (PAE8) and "listen to the needs of the mentors/trainees..." (PAE1), "...be an inspiration...as a role model...a guide..." (PAE5). It is emphasized by one that "(mentoring) is not that widespread maybe because of its complex nature...(PAE15).

### 7.2.2. Views on the Role of the Mentor's Training and Experience.

The training and experience of the mentors is important for most of them, also linked to the structure in which the adult education takes place. "(Mentoring) although it is useful ... we give it little importance ... it would improve things and the culture of educational institutions/structures" (PAE8). It is recognized by most that they have not received formal training in mentoring "(to) combine a personal development goal, either with studies or with experience..." (PAE5). Most of them stress that "(they should) have the maturity to understand and adapt their teaching" (PAE10). Representative is also the next except "Many times (mentees/students) have their insecurities because the years of their formal education have passed. They want a boost in their self-confidence...uh...you're like a guide...like they're the orchestra and you're the conductor..." (PAE6).

### 7.2.3. Views on the Knowledge of Mentoring by the Trainers

When and if it is used, mentoring is informal and experiential. "Not theoretically, they know it practically..." (PAE2), "I don't think adult educators/trainers know the mentoring process... just basic elements of communication with the adults... not everyone applies it, either because there is no time or because they don't really care to support someone...uh, not everyone understands the process..." (PAE3). As it is admitted: "The method of application ... depends on the mood of the mentor..." (PAE5). It is also commented that "when educators are civil servants...most do not enter such a consultation process" (PAE11).

## 7.3. Views on the Role of the Mentee in Mentoring

### 7.3.3. Characteristics of Mentees/Trainees/students.

They consider that the mentee/trainee should accept the role of "mentor as his trainer..." (PAE4). They seem to be aware of the problems that exist in adult education courses, as the mentors/trainees "...have crystallized their personality, their experience, their thinking and their perspective...a mentor (must) be open and listen to the situation of the other... » (PAE7).

The learner's role is summarized by them as "...honest, communicative and participatory..." (PAE4), "...to be receptive and committed...throughout the relationship. To be open...in a two-way process..." (PAE3). "In any case the learner should express what he feels is needed" (PAE8). "...both (must) participate equally...it is a participatory process..." (PAE15).

#### 7.3.4. Knowledge of Mentoring by Mentees/trainees/students.

An ignorance of the mentees/trainees about the mentoring process was also mentioned by all the participants, which they believed reinforces the difficulty of benefiting from mentoring "*...there should be a willingness to cooperate well ...to create a relationship of trust...*" (PAE1). Of course, there was the specificity of age "*The good thing about adults is that because they decide for themselves - they may even not participate...but this has to do with the adult mentee/instructor....*" (PAE6). The participants say that mentees sense the mentoring process but it is clear that "*they haven't learned much, and (most times) they had not engaged in it*" (PAE15).

#### 7.4. Opinions on How to Implement Mentoring- Organization- Structures- Remuneration

##### 7.4.3. Space and way of implementation- increased pay

According to many participants, an important element towards the effective implementation of mentoring is the way it is implemented in the classroom, during lesson; in this case the methodology adopted is of major importance, as it has to support the mentoring relationship (e.g. as a group- experiential, or as a role play). The excerpts below are representative of the participants' views: "*The trainer/educator must be aware of the basic teaching/learning techniques, such as experiential and synergic learning...*" (PAE4). Training the mentors is on mentoring considered important "*...Beyond intuition...(the mentor) has to know all contemporary teaching tools of teaching and how he/she can implement them effectively*" (PAE1). "*The individual mentor's personality is special importance especially in making the lesson more pleasant and interactive...*" (PAE6).

Out of the classroom, e.g. during breaks, meeting and getting to know one another can be promoted; this is "*...The first issue is to allow people communicate...*" (PAE4). "*In practice they learn the mentoring process through meetings, communicating, and cooperation's...*" (PAE16). Special attention is given to the fact that there must be formally given time for the mentoring relationship to be build, and therefore "*...Time and extra effort must be devoted...*" (PAE5). "*Special meetings and discussions must be organized at the administrative level...*" (PAE11).

##### 7.4.4. Views on the Increase in Pay

This question was set autonomously, as it has been commented upon in bibliography and it is often mentioned as a factor towards effectiveness. Almost all participants disagree to the need of more pay, either directly saying "No", or indirectly. However, some consider that more pay might be a motive to a number of mentors. Representative text excerpts are: "*No, I don't believe that mentoring should have a higher pay...like in other types of education, extra money will not make it more effective...*" (PAE1). "*In education generally, there is a need for more reward...I think that this might become a motive, but not a necessity to working in mentoring.*" (PAE8).

## 8. Axon 2: Professional Development and Mentoring

### 8.1. Utilization of Mentoring by the Mentees in their Working Place

The first question in this Axon referred to how the mentees think that they develop professionally through mentoring. The answers referred to this topic in a holistic way, such as "*...we start from the interests of the learners. The...knowledge and experience will help...must be essential...supportive...*" (PAE10). "*They are supported in their professional everyday life; their insecurity is reduced... they make use of their qualifications...*" (PAE8). "*...it helps them to get self-awareness...thinking about their gaps...and a complete picture of them as a subject of the profession...*" (PAE2), "*...to become informed about things in their profession they don't know*" (PAE13).

The mentees/trainees may apply mentoring techniques in their professional field: "*They can also support people next to them...social skills in all professions are needed...uh...and especially in professions that have to do with people, other citizens...*" (PAE3). "*They develop proper professional relationships...*" (PAE4). Also, the mentor:



"...can convince them...to change their professional decisions, to a certain extent, when this is needed..." (PAE15). Especially for the students in the second chance schools "The mentees would be assisted to find out how they could make use of the qualifications they will acquire..." (PAE11).

## 8.2. Changes in the Professional Behavior

Changes are expected due, mainly, to the application of "new knowledge, methods and practices..." (PAE1) more effectively, a situation that "...helps in relations with colleagues..." (PAE4), especially "the acquisition of new communication skills, support or improvement of human values...they are very basic..." (PAE3), "they deal with the other professionally with greater maturity..." (PAE5). At the same time, "Their personal image of what exactly their work is or their relationship with colleagues will have improved...and their skills have increased..." (PAE8), "To be rational...to discover possibilities that they didn't know that they had them..." (PAE11), "They get knowledge...skills...they develop behaviors..." (PAE10), "To improve the quality of the services provided on the job..." (PAE6) and "To greatly increase the self-confidence of the trainees...and they have personal satisfaction" (PAE5).

## 8.3. Development of Professional Skills and Competences

### 8.3.1. Future Professional Skills

Regarding the specialized professional skills for the trainees, communication is considered first by the participants, followed by cooperation, and the combination of the two improves their professional targeting, empathy and efficiency: (Skills) "...of communication, of setting goals, of efficiency them and of the management of their emotions" (PAE8), "...adopts principles of dialogue, communication, consistency and responsibility..." (PAE15). The mentor will help the mentee/trainee "to have a more complete picture of his profession, to be inspired...to adopt...appropriate practical professional skills..."(PAE6). They acquire (the student mentees/trainees) "some skills they didn't have...for an effective interview...to enter the professional arena...and/or the family business..." (PAE5), "...become more receptive to diversity...more mature people...." (PAE9).

### 8.3.2. Future Professional Choices

All participants consider that mentoring will influence their future professional choices, which are often related to personal and educational ones. The unemployed will be helped to "reach the profession, to do something more (in studies) ..." (PAE11). Also, "(...mentoring) opens perspectives and removes fear." "It affects further professional prospects, (clarifying) the professions' landscape..." (PAE8). At the same time, "...it makes them think about profession in a new way...which, of course, it can be influenced by the social environment...it can to see something on the internet..." (PAE6), "(they learn) various techniques of educational, personal and professional development..." (PAE5).

### 8.3.3. Other Professional Benefits of Mentoring

In the interviews other more specific benefits were mentioned, which may be the ones due to the "transformation of the personality..." (PAE1), as "...the benefits in relation to communication and in relation to the person are holistically important..." (PAE3) and "... (there is) consolidation of a culture of interaction..." (PAE8). In the end: "through guidance (becomes able) to educate himself throughout his life" (PAE4).

In an explicit or implicit way, references are made to the holistic approach of mentoring: "increasing self-confidence, curiosity to wonder if I can do something else..." (PAE2), "...the trainee is motivated by a desire to do more things, to look for them...and to win professionally..." (PAE). In the interviews other more specific benefits were mentioned which may be due to the "transformation of the personality..." (SS1), as "...the benefits in relation

to communication and in relation to the person are holistically important..." (SS3) and "... (there is) consolidation of a culture of interaction..." (SS8). In the end: "through guidance to educate himself throughout his life" (SS4). In an explicit or implicit way, references are made to the holistic approach of mentoring: "increasing self-confidence, curiosity to wonder if I can do something else..." (SS2), "...the trainee is motivated by a desire to do more things, to look for them...and to win professionally..." (SS9). In the interviews other more specific benefits were mentioned which may be due to the "transformation of the personality..." (SS1), as "...the benefits in relation to communication and in relation to the person are holistically important..." (SS3) and "... (there is) consolidation of a culture of interaction..." (SS8). In the end: "through guidance to educate himself throughout his life" (SS4). In an explicit or implicit way, references are made to the holistic approach of mentoring: "increasing self-confidence, curiosity to wonder if I can do something else..." (SS2), "...the trainee is motivated by a desire to do more things, to look for them...and to win professionally..." (SS9).9).

## 9. Axon 3- Personal Development

The answers to the questions belonging to the 3rd axon section were often also related to the participants' general views on mentoring (Axon 1). Below, some points are presented to offer a holistic idea on the issues mentioned by the responders.

### 9.1. Personal Development of Trainees and Mentoring.

Mentoring "is considered the basis of personal development..." (PAE15), the mentees learn to "...cooperate (and) work in a team..." (PAE), "...they are given the opportunity to work on themselves, their opinions and their attitudes ..." (PAE8), "They understand the subtlety of emotions...they acquire empathy..." (PAE3). In particular, the students in the second chance schools point out that mentoring "Strengthens their self-confidence a lot to continue the educational process, because there is a high school leakage at this level..." (PAE11), and, in general, the students "...acquire a better balance within themselves, to be able to recognize their real skills... to enter new paths..." (PAE1).

### 9.2. Changes in their Personal Development

Changes in personal skills, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors are reported to make them "... more receptive... to change..." (PAE4). More specifically, "...techniques and skills...can be used in interpersonal relationships..." (PAE1), "They learn to have patience and... persistence comes..." (PAE11), "Their personal image will have improved...their effectiveness ...emotionally and at a personal level of skills..." (PAE8).

There is often the idea that all the elements of mentoring "work psychotherapeutically...uh...everything...collaboration...gets into a group...feels accepted, something builds...forms...cultivates..." (PAE6) and "...his behavior and his setting in general, in society they also have a social impact..." (PAE2), "self-awareness has as an indirect consequence the change of behavior both towards their relatives and towards society...they develop themselves...and they can (become) mentors themselves..." (PAE9).

Central points of the reports (which have a direct interface with the previous sub-sections), concern the skills related to "communication", "collaboration", "goal setting", "management of emotions": "Their communication skill increases, they have communication benefits. Their teamwork is greatly strengthened...they learn to cooperate..." (PAE11), "(gain) self-awareness, develop themselves...receptive to diversity..." (PAE9), "(learn) to function effectively within a group...to understand the roles...respect the other..." (PAE1), "learn to express their feelings, manage conflicts...be more flexible (and have) ...soft skills..." (PAE15).

### 9.2.1. Further Options on Personal Development

The general view is that mentees/trainees, after mentoring, can make "...better choices..." (PAE11) or "*correct choices, ...and become more receptive and cooperative...*" (PAE4). Usually, "*...in these schools are people who didn't have opportunities, financially very difficult, homes without support...*" (PAE6). The choices will lead them to improve themselves, to become "better", through the increase of "the circle of contacts..." (SS4), due to "*...functioning (the learner) effectively in the context of a group...the role also improves of...*" (PAE1) and "*can have personal, emotional and behavioral as well as human benefits...*" (PAE3). "*Generally, on a personal level they get ideas...see...with the eyes of another...more open...*" (SS8), "*(for) conflict resolution...*" (PAE11). Overall: "*...they will make better family choices...they will improve, as well as in their workplace and social environment...*" (PAE9) and "*(they will escape) ...from some stereotypes and some older ideas...*" (PAE15).

## 10. Axon 4- Views on Mentees' Educational Development and Mentoring

Almost all participants mention that they understand that "*...learning is a continuous process...they apply lifelong learning tactics...*" (PAE4). More specifically, "*they update knowledge and skills, communicative and personal... they learn, they are informed about new methods (and practices) ...*" (PAE1) and "*...they learn to solve some issues...to be interested, to take on challenges...*" (PAE11). It all boils down to: "*There will be a change in their learning behavior...*" (PAE8), they will "*...be confident...*" (SS3), "*...(they will) progress academically...*" (SS6), "*They enter new paths...(for) scientific association, to go to a conference...*" (PAE5)

### 10.1. Development of Educational-learning Skills

As already commented in the introductory section (Axon 1), the mentees learn the skills of cooperation and those of deep learning: "*...seeking learning, mutual support for learning, skills of group cooperative learning, discovery...creativity, critical thinking...*" (PAE4). "*... (those that are teachers learn) to impart not only knowledge, but also skills and cross-curricular skills...to promote, that is, holistically their students...*" (PAE1), "*...(acquire skills) to take initiatives...*" (PAE11). Also, they get familiar to "*...goal setting, planning and implementation...*" (SS8) "*...for noble competition, trust...ethics...empathy...productivity...*" (PAE12), "*If (mentoring) has been done correctly, then...the mentee/trainee has acquired thinking skills...to improve, to respond more to new needs...*" (PAE6) and, "*Metacognitively...to learn how to learn...*" (PAE5), "*Their worldview about learning changes...*" (PAE15).

### 10.2. Influence on Further Educational Choices

Basic is the view that through continuous and group learning, the improvement of individuals is enhanced: "*they acquire skills, work on their attitudes...*" (PAE8). The educators of special education "*...(get) help for what they will do next...*" (PAE11) and, in general? "*New paths open up, to do something else, to acquire a specialization (do a master's degree) ...as ...their personality is transformed...their worldview changes...or they change their work to their studies...*" (PAE1), since "*they are transformed... they convey human values...*" (PAE12).

In addition, it is important that the mentor improves because now (there are) "*criteria and indicators...the educators can judge and compare to produce new knowledge...become an instructor themselves for those around him by his example...*" (PAE2). Especially for special education "*the teacher will introduce new methods in his teaching, will be informed (about) cooperative teaching...to become better in educational matters... (to be motivated) to do a master's degree, a doctorate...*" (9). Of course, it is emphasized: "*A good mentor always updates his own learning process...*" (PAE12).

## 11. Axon 5- Effectiveness of Mentoring Implementation and Legitimation

The answers in this section are related to and supplement the findings of the rest sections; They are more specific and give the interviewees one more opportunity to express more details on the effectiveness of mentoring issues. Most participants stress that mentoring is not “*established, institutionalized/legitimized.*” (PAE3); it is “*not formally implemented and at an experiential level*” (PAE11), a situation that makes it “*inefficient*” (PAE11). Also “*Effectiveness and the way it is implemented are up the individual concerned, that is the mentor himself*” (PAE1). There is a view that “*... mentoring is a complementary process ... based on the mentor’s freedom...*” (PAE2), and also that “*there must be a precondition for the acquisition of advisory guidance for e.g. special university teachers*” (PAE5); in this way “*a moral satisfaction is realized, which can not have any reward.*” (PAE 15).

### 11.1. Problems and Mentoring Implementation Difficulties

The non-institutionalization of mentoring is the most important difficulty, which is encountered many times both in the text of the interview itself, and in a large number of them: “*it should be done according to specifications... to be composed... to define material, to be institutionalized/established some body, which will put the fixed...guide axons...*” (PAE6), “*...as a scientific addition, I believe it would become more qualitative...*” (PAE5). At the same time, the importance of the mentor's self-education is also noted “*...instructors are also trainees...to refer to literature, to materials that will help them...to transform...*” (PAE2), “*...(important is) experience and experiential ( of mentoring) as well as having an evaluation*” (PAE13).

Regarding the mentor himself, other difficulties are mentioned, such as “*insufficient experience, knowledge, his personality is not suitable...for trusting relationships...*” (PAE1). More specifically, “*education interest is missing...from the State...*” (AE9), “*there is no scientific training (of mentors).* In terms of trainees' difficulties, it is mentioned that they are not “*receptive, think they know everything or don't want to change their value system...they don't improve themselves...*” (PAE4).

Difficult are often considered the “*general conditions for the application of mentoring...whether the organization/structure knows about it and has the intention to implement it, to provide all the facilities*” (PAE2) “*...I don't think we have given much importance to mentoring in Greece , so that it is included in the plans of the state...probably it has been sidelined or rather they have neglected it, considering it not so important*” (PAE9).

Also, difficulties are reported regarding time duration of mentoring: “*Also, time is often non-enough...*” (PAE3), “*There is usually limited time...*” (PAE4). It is emphasized by many that “*the biggest obstacles are related in individuals’ time. Neither the mentor/trainer, nor the mentee/trainee... have time to develop this relationship..*” (PAE). It is noted that there is always an important element (which requires time), that is “*...the necessity to evaluate and improve the mentoring process both from the state and from the structure/organization, so that it becomes a 'scientific' process...*” (PAE5).

### 11.2. Proposal for the improvement of mentoring effectiveness

Several elements that are part of this theme are diffused throughout the interview in an explicit or implicit way. At this point, the researchers sought to elicit more specialized information that distilled the participants’ approach to mentoring relationship and its effectiveness. Emphasized e.g. is the view against the “*establishing and institutionalizing the school/education of the market*”, stating: “*Adult education structures should become more human-centered... (the trainer must) ...see the learner on a human-centered level...there should be empathy...*” (PAE11). Due to the particular (practical) requirements of mentoring, one PAE emphasized that “*A mentor should train some stable groups of trainees so that he/she would be able monitor their progress...*” (PAE15).

Also, the importance of targeting training and evaluation in the field of adult education is highlighted: “*...targeting, continuous training and evaluation. In other words, this needs to be a continuous process...as formative...*” (PAE1), “*...specialized training is needed for mentoring...for every mentor, newcomer to work. This is how time and experience are gained towards efficiency...and... there should be specific training programs for mentors...*”

(PAE3). "*People who can be mentors for others should be selected...*" (PAE9). The mentor must "*...be completely open in philosophy, in mentality, be eclectic....*" (PAE12).

Regarding the issues of space and time, which are often highlighted as "problems" for the proper implementation of mentoring, it is stated that if this is institutionalized "*these can be regulated, as it means I already control, measure, evaluate and am evaluated*" (PAE1). It is believed that remote mentoring, as it was implemented during the pandemic period, contributed to overcoming most difficulties. One PAE emphasized that "*Distance mentoring is more intense, trainees are more outgoing...*" (PAE5).

## 12. Discussion of the Results

In this part of the paper, the results of the research are related to the theoretical part and the review of the literature, so that the results might be drawn and written down; also, proposals for the future will be made. This synthesis of the results is organized according to the research question (or axon) they are related to.

The opinions expressed at the beginning of the interviews about what they consider mentoring to be and what qualities they attribute to the mentoring relationship, are central to the entire topic of the paper; basically, everything starts from and is connected to the very concept of mentoring. Most of the PAE consider mentoring as "counseling guidance", with the rest, tending to characterize it as "consulting support". The basis of both references is that mentors help and guide mentees through their own knowledge and experiences Valassi (2015) also agrees with this point of view, as well as Kamarudin et al (2021) and Klinge (2015) who have a similar view.

The PAE present their relationship with the trainees as one of trust and friendship, in which communication is constantly developed, and appropriate behaviors emerge that, initially, contribute, as tools, to their professional development. As early as the 1980s, Bova & Philips (1984) report that trainees/mentees learn from their mentors to survive, take risks, set high goals and communicate in any professional context, even in matters concerning the formation of salary as well as the pace and manner of professional success (Allen et al., 2006; Balikci et al., 2017). The PAE comment in a special way on the mentoring of teachers in relation to their professional development, considering that through a revised and effective framework (with modern methodologies) they are prepared to become mentor-educators in their workplace, something that is also emphasized by researchers (Krishnamurthy, 2019; Lofthouse, 2019; Lofthouse et al, 2020).

Most participants comment that mentoring is also a form of self-awareness and self-development that contributes, as a healthy mentoring relationship, to the realization of individual goals at all levels. Mentors should, they argue, excite and, in a quality supportive way, contribute to the cultivation of the trainees' skills and the realization of their deepest desires - their self-actualization. Mentoring is considered, as in the relevant literature, an important tool of guidance, (Giannakopoulou, 2008; Moisdou, 2018), support and encouragement (Nauridis, 2005), but also mediation/facilitation towards the achievement of the learning and development goals of the mentees/trainees (Achistein & Athnases, 2006; Kokkos, 2005; 2012; Karalis & Papageorgiou, 2012; Bagakis & Tsigou, 2017).

The above characterizes, according to the PAE, the complex role that the mentor is called upon to adopt, in order to adapt to the needs and special of the mentees/trainees (Giannakopoulou, 2008; Jarvis, 2006). At the same time, the necessity of the existence of appropriate social skills by the mentor is emphasized, in order to contribute to the autonomy of the groups with which he works (Kapsalis & Papastamatis; 2002). This needs to be done regardless of the learner's socio-cultural level; the friendly mentoring relationship allows the mentor to take on the role of a 'critical friend', which Allen (2007) empirically demonstrated in the case of a school principal mentoring program, which he related to the effectiveness of the administration; similar are the findings of Anastasiou et al (2015), but also Simkins et al., (2006) for Great Britain. Complementary are the research findings that recognize the effectiveness of scaffolding as well as trust in cultural interpersonal communication in the mentoring relationship (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Hobson and Sharp, 2005; Kamarudin et al., 2020; Mercer & Fisher, 1993; Robins, 2006 Van de Pol & Elbers, 2013).

When PAE had more years of experience and had also worked with teachers, they tended to emphasize the effectiveness of building an appropriate learning culture in the mentoring relationship. Something similar is supported by Nearing et al. (2020), who highlighted the production of benefits for both science and society (Pfund et al., 2013).

It was also commented on that having a human-centered approach on the part of the mentors/trainers (Robins, 1999; Rogers, 1999) is important, given the aim of feedback, encouragement, and inspiration of the mentees/trainees. In this context, the mentor must be like a role model, with flexibility, knowledge, and experience to give feedback, advise and help the trainee at all levels effectively, after having studied and "listened" to their needs. A particular role is played by the mentor's complete knowledge of the mentoring content, the subject, and the mentoring process. These are particularly emphasized by researchers as well (Giannakopoulou, 2008; Valassi, 2015; Vlachou and Manesi, 2019), who also describe the need to realize the goals set in a two-way way, so that the mentors/trainers also learn from the process, to improve their skills, to acquire new experiences and new knowledge and methodologies (Kamarudin et al., 2020).

PAE consider that, in addition to a positive attitude, openness, empathy and communication, appropriate knowledge on a theoretical, but also on a practical level - methodology (teamwork, experiential, problem solving)- is required. Researchers have studied effective behaviors in the implementation of mentoring programs, even in mentors (Brace et al, 2018; Garvey & Westlander, 2012), especially, in the context of differentiated teaching and understanding the role of interculturality towards an effective mentoring (House et al, 2018).

In a more specific tone, the PAE, state that they study about mentoring, and, also, learn through their experience; this happens, especially, when they apply creative and experiential learning, as these, are similarly emphasized by scholars (Allan, 2007; Bozionelos, 2004; Chappell, 2007; Koutsoukos et al., 2021; Robins, 2006). Descriptions of PAE focus on the effectiveness of team-collaborative methodologies, which is also recognized by Renshaw (2008) and Simkins et al (2006); also, the acquisition of new experiences and skills, which Phillips and Fragoulis (2010) specialized as those of problem solving, communication, collaboration, and reflection in the mentoring relationship as well as in the optimization of their knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Special mention on the effectiveness of problem-solving method appears in the works of Hobson and Sharp (2005), Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2007) and Robins (2006); in their works they address the positive contribution to addressing the goals, hopes and fears of the mentees/trainees.

Also, the need to apply a diverse type of mentoring (mosaic), which is adapted to the needs of the trainees and facilitates specialized professional learning, is often mentioned, as by Calligan, 2018. The participants believe that mentoring for teachers and school principals will make them more effective, since, as Pryce and Kelly (2018) emphasize, this is the way that educational practice is transformed and, through dynamic interpersonal dialogue, the well-being of the participants is promoted (Allen & Eby, 2003; Dawson, 2014; Mears, 2019).

In general, the interviewees highlighted the need for the development of an appropriate and research-informed preparation and training method for mentors; as this is pointed out by the research (Aspfors and Fransson, 2015; Vergidis, 2006; Kontakos & Govaris, 2006), mainly, this concerns the culture of the organization and the complex role of education today, in the era of the 4<sup>th</sup> (cultural) revolution (Lampropoulos et al., 2021; Papageorgiou, 2008); particular importance is given to the contemporary qualitative educational change and innovation (Vozaitis & Yfanti, 2008; Hargreaves, 1994; Hendricks et al., 2010; Karatzia-Stavlioti and Lambropoulos, 2006). In addition to being informed by research findings, the creation of a sustainable structure of scientific and educational content for mentors is also proposed (traditional and digital/electronic) (Chival et al., 2010; Pfund et al. al., 2015; Spencer et al., 2018). It is emphasized that the final success of the mentoring relationship depends on external factors as well (e.g. other environmental inputs); such could be the characteristics of all those involved as well at the implementation, and evaluation framework (Valassi, 2015).

The initial views of the PAE regarding the role and the willingness of the mentees/trainees for their interaction, honesty, participation, and commitment in the mentoring process (Kapur, 2015; Robinson, 2001; Rogers, 1999; Simkins et al, 2006; Vandeburg & Stephens, 2010; Xanthopoulos, 2019). In addition, participants believe that

mentors must be interested in and willing to evaluate and be evaluated and even accept mentees'/trainees' fruitful criticism (Heinz, 20003; Lee, 2003).

As it concerns time and place of mentoring implementation, in the first general part of the interviews, elements directly related to the mentoring relationship and the roles of those involved were mentioned. There are frequent descriptions that the mentee/trainee should be engaged in the process, making the first contact, keeping in constant contact through phone calls, e-mails and in person. Follow his/her own performance and acquiring new skills (Furlong & Mayard, 1995; Kamarudin et al, 2020).

Since mentoring is based on teamwork and collaboration, participants highlight the importance of the effectiveness of the role and the organizational context of the professional organization that provides it, as it is shown by McVann et al., (2010). The PAEs consider important that the mentor uses modern teaching tools, which make the course interactive and enjoyable not only in the classroom, but also outside it (for contact with real situations); not only in person, but also online; with the use of various teaching tools there must be enough time at to organize the mentoring process. Almost all PAEs report that the time is not enough, as the hours outside the classroom contain other obligations of the instructor. Related research shows that mentoring gives a positively influential role to organizational results (Fogarty et al., 2017; Powel, 2012).

The need for additional remuneration (salary) for the implementation of mentoring is viewed negatively by all PAEs; they only think positively on it for the cases where this would expect additional employment. They justify their opinion as regards to the effectiveness of mentoring in adult education programs, noting that "some relationships are not rewarded with money" (Fogarty et al, 2017; Valassi, 2015).

The relationship of mentoring with professional development has already been pointed out at the beginning of the interviews. In this section, more specialized information is sought about the professional benefits of the mentoring relationship for all those involved in it, regarding the process and the outputs. PAE's report focus on the professional and not only development of both mentees/trainees and mentors (Kamarudin et al., 2020; Zachary, 2006). Some have expressed the view that even in times of crisis, such as the Covid Pandemic, mentoring can help professionally, even if offered online (Powel, 2012). It is noted in the review of research by Kupersmidt et al., (2017) on several mentoring programs that there is a greater proficiency and readiness in the case of online programs.

The participants express opinions in favor of the effectiveness of applying mentoring for different professional groups, agreeing, in general terms, with the relevant research findings; for example, for psychologists and teachers (mainly of Science), where the research showed the necessity of exploiting emotional intelligence and of knowledge about effective teaching methodologies (Melton et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2019; Whiteside and Lies, 2004; Whiteside, 2019). Especially for young academics it was found out that opportunities, extra time, and appropriate space should be provided (Kayombo, 2020). In the case of medical academics, a long-term effectiveness framework of training and mentoring programs was created (Sheri et al, 2019). This is also mentioned as an effective solution by the PAEs, which can also be applied to other adult groups (Athanasidou et al., 2015; Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2005).

It is considered by the participants that it is useful to provide mentoring in the professional field of the trainees, to develop correct professional relationships and attitudes as well as to organize their professional development; situations that are also recognized in the relevant literature, often associated with positive effects on a personal level as well (Dowly, 2019; Oberholzer, 2019; Sofos, 2015). Based on the above, mentoring is expected to lead to the acquisition of new professional skills (new ways of communication, cooperation, targeting, empathy, and emotion management), but also to the promotion of human values, the improvement of their personal image and the development of a network of partnerships (networking). Some opinions comment on the interconnection of mentoring with the increase of entrepreneurship and the creation of new start-up businesses (Lambropoulos, et al., 2022).

The interviewees consider that mentoring influences the future professional choices of the trainees, which are related to both personal and educational ones. Especially for teachers in school units, the optimization of the mentoring relationship and its benefits emerge through the creation of mentors in schools and the promotion of collaboration and reflective practice (Cambell & Haines, 2018; Mynott, 2018) all this, without the mentors' constant criticism of trainees' teaching ability, as documented by Ingleby (2014).

The opinions of the participants on the contribution of mentoring on the personal level of the trainees, were usually connected with the professional and the educational ones. In this section, participants mainly refer to the positive impact of mentoring on their personal development, through the opportunity to work on themselves, their attitudes, and behaviors. The application of mentoring should lead to the redefinition and specialization of the general rules of the organization/institution, the improvement of interpersonal relationships, self-awareness and the upgrading of social status; Pollack (2012) also agrees to the above, regardless of the type of approaches (eg developmental, learning, social), as well as Domonguez and Hager, (2013). The need to develop special personal skills is also mentioned, linked to aspects of communication, cooperation, goal setting and management of emotions as well as the formation of the respective roles. The SS focus on the issue of self-awareness as a basis for the development of the self and the acceptance and understanding of diversity (Alahiotis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2021).

The participants consider that mentoring contributes to the expansion of further personal choices for the trainees, in terms of increasing their circle of contacts, especially for economically vulnerable groups such as the students in special education. They also promote the improvement of their personal role, through the acquisition of human benefits and the resolution of problems and conflicts - at a social, professional, and family level (Brace et al., 2018; Bova & Phillips, 1984).

The views of the interviewees on the educational benefits of the mentees are also linked to both the process and the outputs. The inclusion of appropriate effective activities in all learning groups and particularly teacher-led situations is considered essential by all participants, which has been researched for seasonal employees, managers, gifted people and executives/leaders (Heinz, 2003; Walker, 2011); special references exist for the preparation of first-time teachers through the reframing of the school process (Beutel et al., 2017; Willis et al., 2019). Research has also extended to mentors in educational organizations to highlight relational interactions towards an effective framework (Andrea, 2010; Bush, 2007; Chao et al., 1992; Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Mathews, 2015 · McInerney & Green-Thompson, 2017; Waterman & He, 2011).

The most positive effect on educational development is related to the understanding and adoption of the concept of lifelong and continuing education through which, they change and update their knowledge and skills on new topics, and new professional methods (Allan, 2007; Simkins et al, 2006). The PAEs consider that the new educational paths also lead to scientific specialization in higher structures than the one they had attended. This treatment of lifelong learning is becoming more and more demanding in the digital society we live in and is constantly highlighted in studies of the modern market (Karatzia-Stavlioti & Lambropoulos, 2006; Lambropoulos et al., 2021). As the PAEs emphasize that through such a framework of continuous, lifelong learning, they are expected to develop metacognitive skills in conjunction with communication for teamwork and "soft" /interdisciplinary skills. These contribute to the transformation of the trainee's personality and worldview, so that he can improve and respond effectively to the new needs that emerge (Alahiotis & Karatzia-Stavlioti, 2021).

In all the interviews there are references to the expected educational changes and to the mentors as individuals who should study and improve, producing new knowledge and promoting new experiential and collaborative methodologies. Also, they may seek greater effectiveness in mentoring through reflection and openness, mainly through continuing their studies and advancing their careers (Dowley, 2019; Mynott, 2018; Oberholtzer, 2019).

In the section on research question 5 the PAEs often repeat elements that they had already touched on in their previous answers but try to position themselves in terms of how to deal with difficulties. An important problem pointed out by most was that when mentoring is implemented, it is done informally, optional, and not mandatory; also, it is done empirically, with its effectiveness depending on the mentor him/herself, since it is not a very formal



and organized process (Manolopoulou (2011). This situation can inhibit the relationship of those involved, but also their overall development (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010). The above is exacerbated by the general lack of time required to meet everyone's expectations and cope with excessive workload (DeCesare et al., 2016).

The important issue of the adequate training to mentoring instructors is highlighted, so that they acquire a deep understanding of the principles of adult education and of the informal cultural dimensions of the organization involved (Aspfors and Fransson, 2015; Vergidis, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009; Theodorou & Petridou, 2014; Kontakos & Govaris, 2006). Some participants saw the potential lack of trust and/or reluctance on the part of the mentees/trainees, as a problem, which is reinforced when they perceive their mentor/instructor as a supervisor, critic and/or evaluator. In any case, the development of a mutual mentoring relationship of interaction, trust and support is constantly suggested by the literature (Theodorou & Petridou, 2014); it is complemented by the general acceptance of the use of formative assessment for mentoring improvement, something suggested by the research on the design of effective mentoring programs (Valassi, 2015; Chival et al., 2010; Pfund et al., 2015; Spencer et al., 2018).

The proposals of the participants on the above problems are mainly focused on the establishment/institutionalization of mentoring, considering that in this way its application will be improved; more specifically, the general effectiveness of mentoring is expected to improve: 1) if its use is mandatory in the structures adult education, 2) if adult education training programs are drawn up in issues of mentoring planning and implementation, 3) if suitable educational material is created and if mentees/trainees are guided in the use of a variety of sources, traditional and digital, 4) if the mentors follow self-improvement methods, 5) if the self-improvement methods are shown and cultivated for the mentees/trainees as well; in this way an interactive relationship can be created to solve any kind of problems (professional, personal and educational). Related research supports the above (Valassi, 2015; Barrera et al., 2010; Gandhi & Johnson, 2016; Karalis & Papageorgiou, 2012).

### **13. Conclusions**

#### *13.1. General Conclusions of the Study*

The question of the application of mentoring in the field of education, and in adult education, is of increasing concern to both the scientific community and the people who practice educational policy. Many researchers have carried out a variety of both theoretical and empirical studies on mentoring; these point out its importance in education and its positive effects on both mentees/trainees and mentors/trainers. The institution of mentoring is relatively recent for the Greek Education, which justifies the relatively limited relevant Greek literature; additionally, the general issues of educational effectiveness have not been researched enough in Greece. The investigation of the effectiveness of mentoring is given great interest lately, and a small contribution towards this direction is sought by the present work, through the study of the views of adult educators.

Regarding the participants' view of the definition of mentoring, a variety of demarcations appear, as this is also shown in the review of the relevant literature. In almost all the interviews, it was mentioned that in mentoring there is a person with experience in a field, who aims to guide the inexperienced, towards the enrichment of their theoretical and empirical knowledge and the development and cultivation of the skills required for their professional, personal, and educational development. It is considered that the mentor/trainer has the important role of providing experiential based learning to the mentee/trainee based on his needs.

The mentoring relationship, to be effective, should contribute to the holistic development of all involved. The openness to discussion, the feedback exchange of positions and information, the experiential and group approach to knowledge and skills, but also the positive emotional involvement of everyone are essential characteristics of an effective mentoring, both based on the literature and according to the views of the interviewees. In the interviews, the particularities of the characteristics of both the trainees and the instructors were often mentioned, a situation that highlighted, on the one hand, the changing reactions of the trainees and, on the other hand, the different perceptions of the instructors regarding their mentoring role.

The views of the PAE's on the mentoring role differ depending on the educational context, the concepts such as guide, supporter, advisor, animator, and the role model dominated. It is worth mentioning that the PAE's, as mentors, adjust their views on their role according to the needs of their mentees/trainees, such as e.g. those who work in Second Chance (Secondary) Schools differ in their views on the support their mentees/trainees (who consider that they wish to earn a Secondary School diploma) in relation to the mentors/members of the universities (who consider that they prepare their mentees firstly for their scientific/theoretical knowledge education and secondly for their effective introduction to the labor market). The educational programs, teaching methodologies and learning approaches applied by mentors are the basis for the formation of a demanding and multifactorial role. Mentors/trainers have special knowledge, skills, and experiences, in order to understand deeply and effectively the principles of adult education, especially in today's complex era of digital information and rapid scientific development.

The effective implementation of the mentoring process can bring about a variety of results and benefits on a professional, personal, and educational level. The dominant problem, however, in its effective implementation is that of its non-institutionalization and organization as an establishment. Everyone's suggestion is to make mentoring an official and mandatory process through its institutionalization, but also through the constant institutional support of mentors at a theoretical and practical level.

### *13.2. Proposals for the future*

Regarding the participants' view on the definition of mentoring, a variety of demarcations appear, as this is also the fact in the review of the relevant literature. In almost all the interviews, it was mentioned that in mentoring there is a person with experience in a field, who aims to guide the inexperienced, towards the enrichment of their theoretical and empirical knowledge and the development and cultivation of the skills required for their professional development, the personal development and educational development. It is considered that the trainer/mentor has the important role of providing experiential and group-based training and assistance to the mentee/trainee based on his/her needs.

When mentoring relationship becomes effective, it should contribute to the holistic development of all involved. The openness to discussion, the feedback exchange of positions and information, the experiential and group approach to knowledge and skills, but also the positive emotional involvement of everyone are essential characteristics of an effective mentoring, both based on the literature and according to the PAE's. In the interviews, the particularities of the characteristics of both the mentees/trainees and the mentors/instructors as well as their importance, were often mentioned, a situation that highlighted, on the one hand, the changing reactions of the mentees/trainees and, on the other hand, the different perceptions of the mentors/instructors regarding their mentoring role.

The effective implementation of the mentoring process can bring about a variety of results and benefits on a professional, personal, and educational level. The dominant problem, however, in its effective implementation is that of its non-institutionalization and formal organization. Everyone's suggestion in this study is to make mentoring an official and mandatory process through its institutionalization, but also to create a system of constant support of mentors at a theoretical and practical level. Similar research of both qualitative and quantitative kind should be of special usefulness in the field of mentoring effectiveness in adult education; it would be expected to contribute to the advancement of adult education locally and in other countries.

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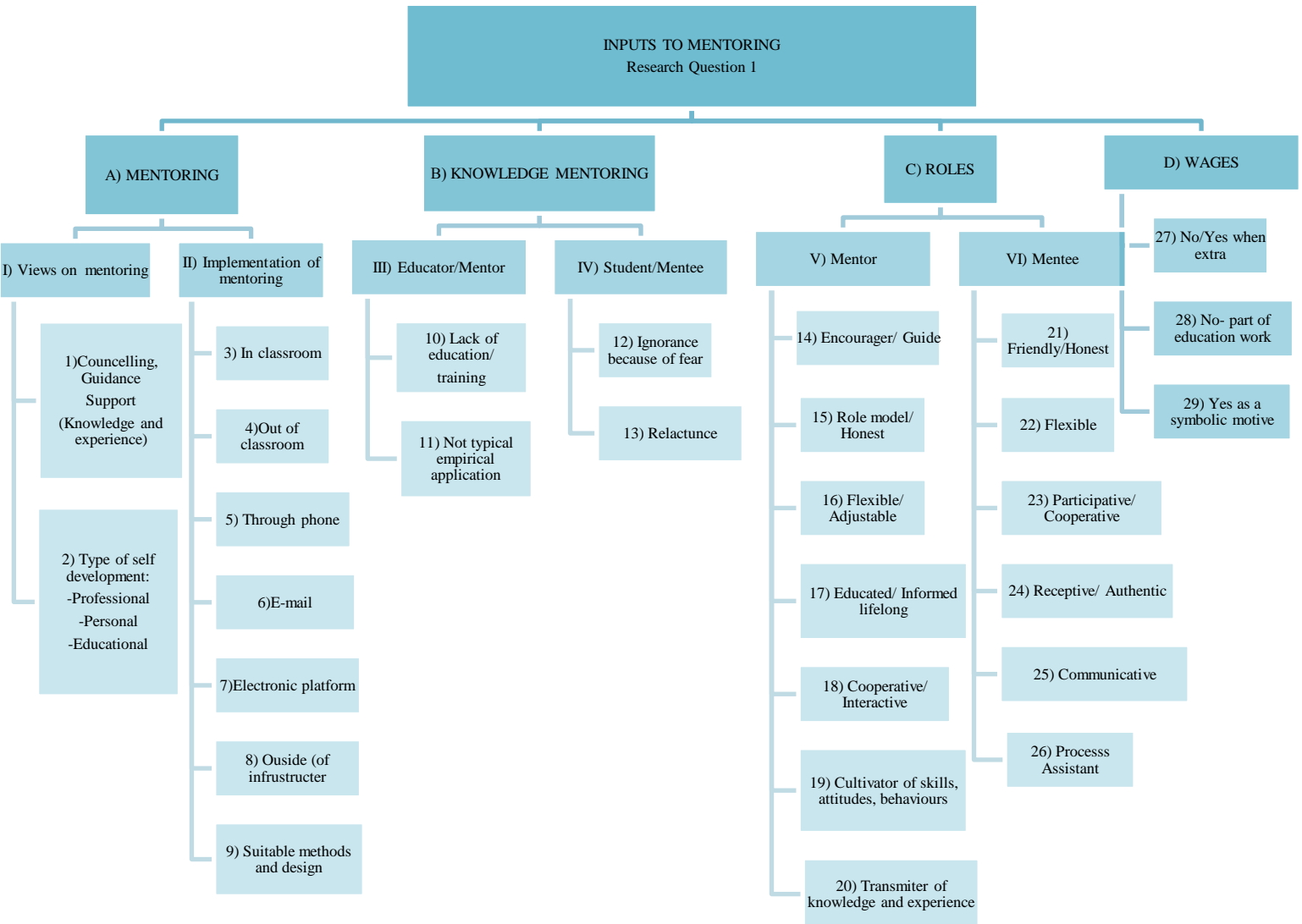
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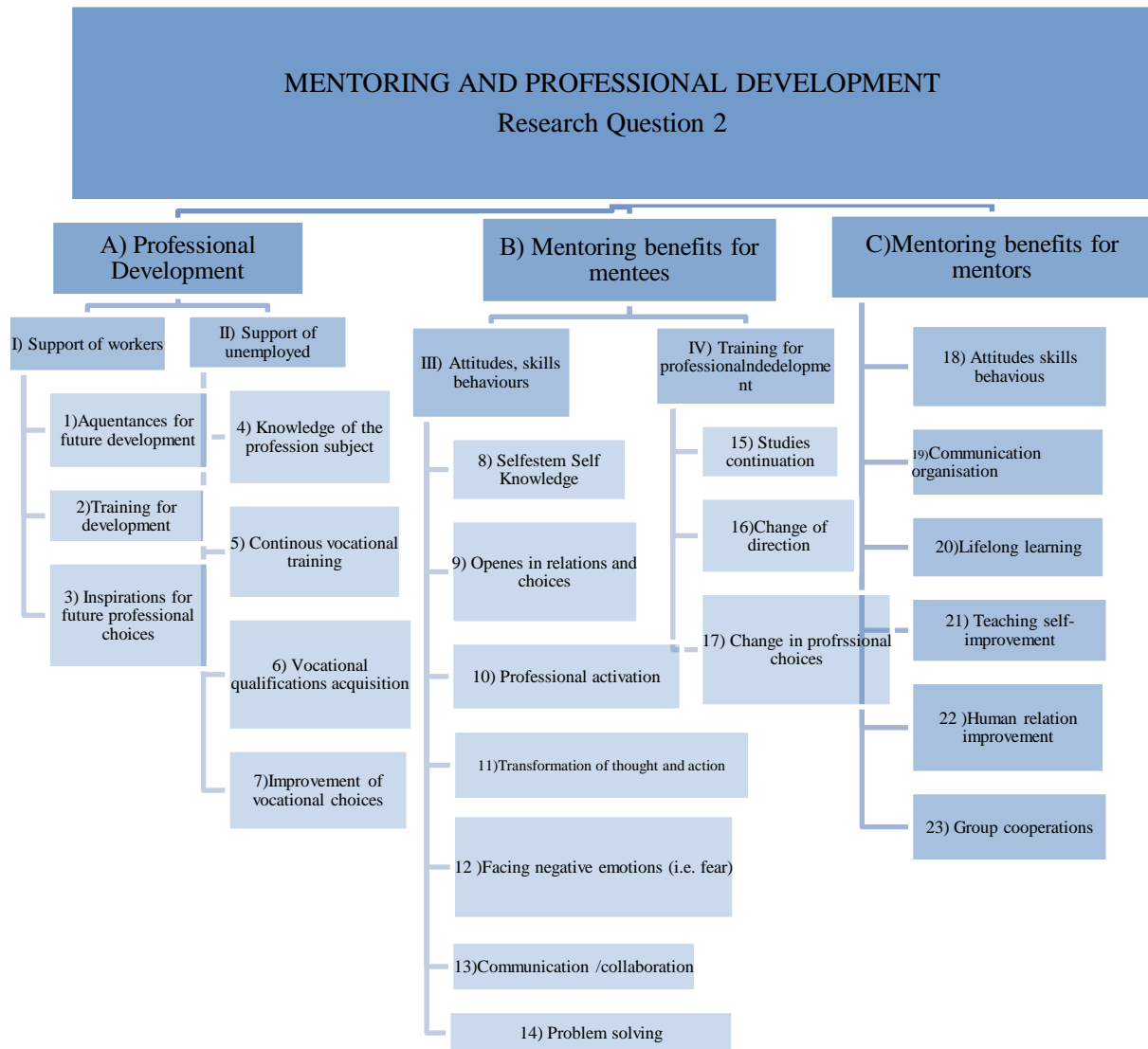
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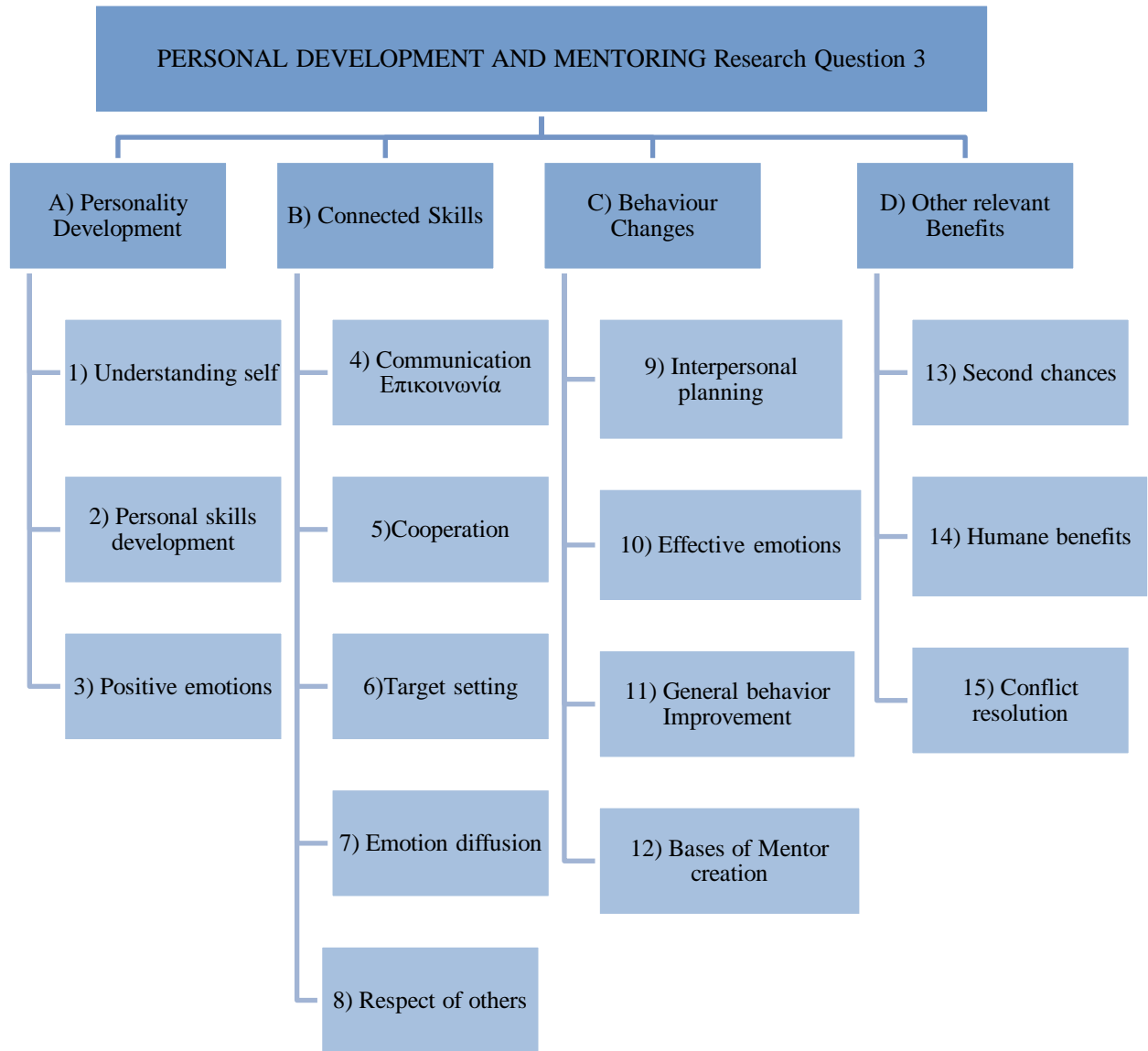
APPENDIX A

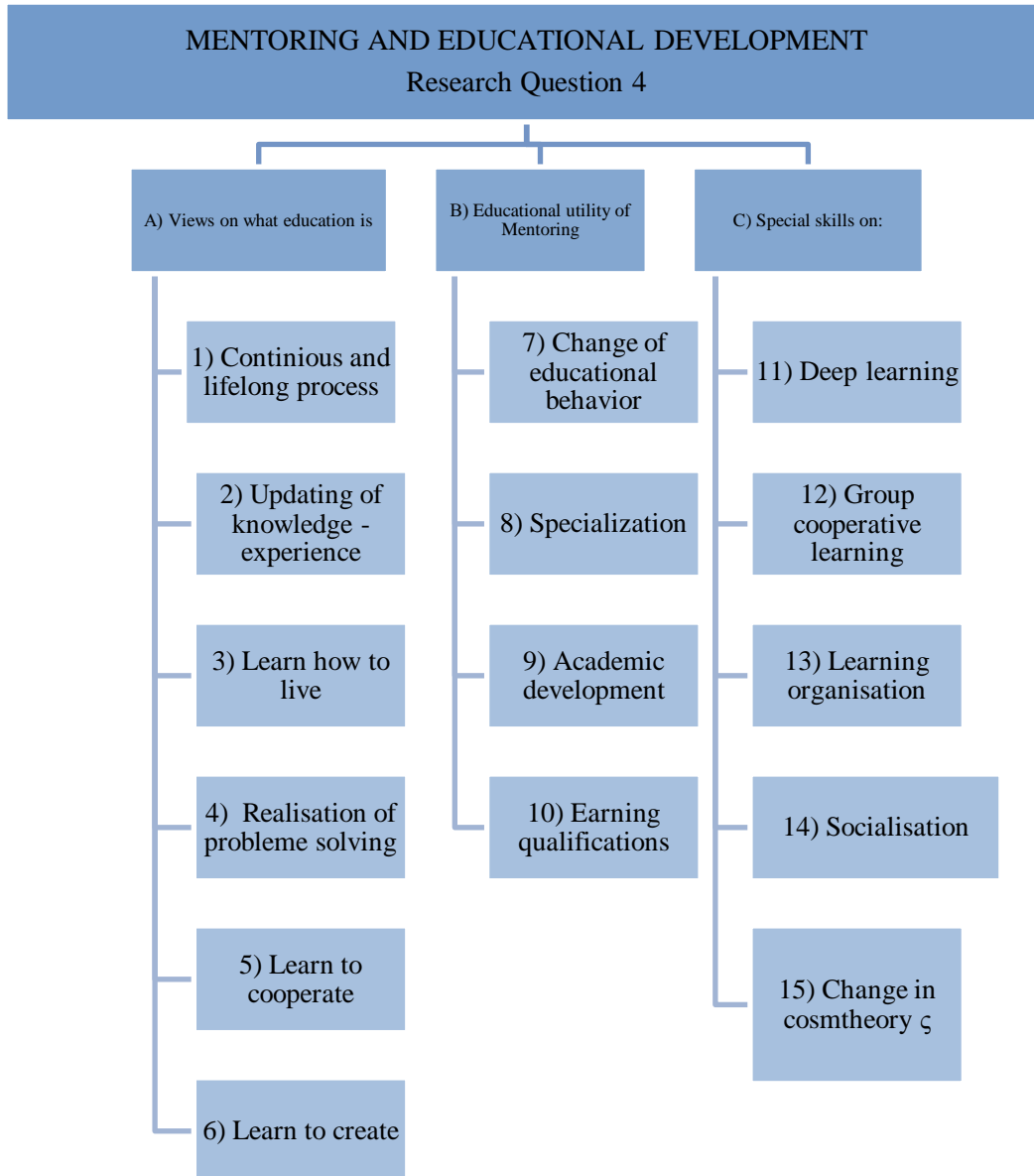
Representation of the main concepts found in the interviews, which refer to the supplementary questions set











## EFFECTIVENESS AND DIFICULTIES OF MENTORING IMPLEMENTATION

### Research Question 5

