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**Characteristics, quality features and dynamics in formal youth mentoring relationships: The Rhodes model revisited**

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## **Abstract**

Youth mentoring interventions are based on one-to-one long-term mentoring relationships formed between a volunteer and socially disadvantaged children and young people and operate also in the Czech Republic. The paper presents a literature review that revisits the Rhodes Theoretical Model on mentoring processes (2002, 2005). In particular, the presented literature review operates the characteristics and dynamics of mentoring relational features that do or do not mediate mentoring benefits in formal youth mentoring relationships. It contributes to the current theory, research and evidence-based practice in the field of youth mentoring, social psychology and theories on development in social context with 1) Synthesizing the features of formal youth mentoring relationships associated with the quality of mentoring bonds; 2) Reviewing the research studies on relational dynamics and quality. Thus, it reviews the beneficial as well as risk relational and individual features in formal youth mentoring bonds, and 3) Reviewing features of Beneficial and Risky formal youth mentoring bonds. As a result, it revisits the model of pathways of benefits in formal youth mentoring relationships (Rhodes, 2002, 2005) according to the literature results published in the field to date. Subsequently, it informs academics, professionals and volunteers who interact with children and young people in the role of mentors, significant adults and role models; and thus contribute to evidence-based practice in these professions and services with research evidence on mentoring principles.

**Keywords:** youth mentoring relationships, youth mentoring interventions, quality of formal mentoring, development in social context.

## INTRODUCTION

Natural mentoring relationships create an essence of developmental relationships that exist in social networks over generations throughout history (Freedman, 1992). The mentoring relationship is a unique, one-to-one, caring and supportive connection between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger mentee (Eby et al., 2007, p. 10). In general, mentors provide consistent support, companionship, guidance, encouragement, advocacy and care to a younger, less-experienced protégé to facilitate their cognitive, personal and social growth and positive development. Mentoring relationships thus aim to develop new knowledge, autonomy and competence in the child or adolescent (Ryan, 1991, 1993; DuBois and Neville, 1997; Bennets, 2003; Rhodes, 2005). In particular, the mentor provides models of behaviour, values or attitudes, and practical examples of problem-solving skills that facilitate opportunities for the mentees' learning, experiences of autonomy and empowerment, and development of skills and talents (Brady et al., 2017; Brumovská, 2017). The mentoring relationship is dynamic: it develops and changes over time. It is an asymmetrical yet reciprocal connection (Rhodes, 2002, p. 25).

The characteristics, quality and benefits of naturally occurring mentoring relationships between adults and children or youths have been systematically studied over the last 30 years (Werner and Smith, 1982; Freedman, 1992; Zimmerman et al., 2002; Spencer and Rhodes, 2014). Gradually, so-called "formal youth mentoring relationships" (FYMRs) were deliberately transformed into the praxis of social and psychological services in various countries (Philip and Hendry, 2000; Rhodes, 2002). Formal youth mentoring interventions (FYMIs) were established since the 1990s, also in the social services in the Czech Republic, to support socially disadvantaged children and young people (Brumovská and Seidlová Málková, 2010).

The theory on principles of youth mentoring relationships is now being conceptualised for different purposes and in different social-sciences traditions. Here we adhere to the "relational perspective" (as named by Keller, 2007) in FYMRs research, which applies social-psychological perspectives on

principles, characteristics, quality, dynamics and benefits of mentoring relationships. It considers, for instance, mentors' style of interaction and its impact on the characteristics, quality, dynamics and benefits of the experience for mentees (Morrow and Styles, 1992, 1995; Philip, 1997; Colley, 2003; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2006, 2007; Keller, 2007). The relational perspective also explores antecedents of relational risk features in formal mentoring for mentees (Morrow and Styles, 1992, 1995; Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Spencer et al, 2006; Spencer, 2007b; Liang et al., 2007; Rhodes et al., 2009). Following this relational perspective, Jean Rhodes (2002, 2005) proposed the first theoretical model of relational mediators of helping processes in mentoring relationships. This model, called Pathways of Benefits in FYMRs, identifies key features of mentoring that create conditions that are beneficial for children and youths. It addressed the benefits in FYMRs, arguing with the results of studies on youth mentoring at the time. Because research on mentoring processes was emerging in 2005, to support her model she used the general theoretical underpinnings of processes in helping and developmental relationships. She proposed that her model be further investigated, tested in research and refined (Rhodes, 2005, p. 38).

Rhodes's original model has been widely accepted by researchers, theorists and professionals in the field, and cited by academics in various studies throughout the past years. But because the studies up to 2005 were limited in scope, the model could not explain various possible developmental pathways of mentoring relational features and their impact on the dynamics and quality of FYMRs. Since the model was published widely (Rhodes 2002, 2005; Rhodes and DuBois, 2008) research on youth mentoring processes has multiplied; and the results, especially in qualitative studies, have slowly accumulated, pointing to possible ways of adjusting the Rhodes model. In this article, therefore, we systematically review the relational features from the research on youth mentoring that address the gaps in Rhodes's theoretical model. We specifically aim to clarify the details in *relational elements* in the pathways of youth mentoring relationships from their beginning that affect *the quality of FYMRs*. We understand these relational elements as a key aspect missing from the Rhodes model. We include details on the mentoring relational features, and

features in mentors' approach style to children. We then show that these features moderate the development of beneficial and risk types of FYMRs.

A literature review in this paper (covering studies conducted between 1992 and 2017) concentrates on both the quality and risk features facilitating FYMRs' development and the development of qualitatively different FYMR types. Results of the reviewed studies serve to identify details of relational mentoring processes and their features illustrated in Rhodes's model. We use these results to fill in the theoretical gaps in Rhodes's model (2005) and to propose an elaboration of it. Rhodes's model is thus a theoretical framework leading the selection of articles for the literature review. At the end of this paper we propose an elaborated, updated version of the model on Pathways of Benefits and Risks in FYMRs.

#### **JEAN RHODES: PATHWAYS OF BENEFITS IN FORMAL YOUTH MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**

Rhodes (2005) proposed a theoretical model to describe the features of beneficial FYMRs. She included relevant actors and their influence on the benefits of FYMRs in mentees' development. Her model distinguishes *casual*, *moderating* and *mediating* aspects and actors. Rhodes argues that mentoring has a positive impact on a mentee's socio-emotional, cognitive and identity development. Supported by the mediating actions of parents'/peers' relationships, it fosters conditions to reduce risk behaviour in mentees, and leads to a generally higher level of well-being for the children and young people (Rhodes, 2005). As general moderating factors influencing the quality of FYMRs and their benefits, Rhodes (2005) identifies features of interpersonal history, social competencies, relationship duration, developmental stage, and family and community context of the mentor and mentee. What is of great importance in Rhodes's model is the identification of predictive quality of mentor-mentee relational characteristics. These identified features – the experiences of closeness, trust and empathy – truly mediate the benefits (positive results) of mentoring relationships

**(Figure 1 – Rhodes’ Process model on mentoring benefits, 2005)**

As mentioned, Rhodes (2002, 2005) did not specify the mentoring processes within which these important mediating qualities of FYMRs could or could not be developed throughout the mentoring relationships. Thus, the relational dynamics and quality features that produce positive experiences of closeness, trust and empathy in FYMRs remained unidentified in Rhodes’s theoretical model.

The following parts of our paper will provide an overview of current knowledge on both the quality and risk features in FYMRs and their impact on the outcomes of the mentoring. With reference to the current literature, we show that mentoring relational features moderate the development of beneficial as well as risk types of FYMRs, often omitted in current mentoring discussion. We review the objective and subjective relational features, the individual features of mentoring experience from participants’ perspective, and the dynamics that the relational features create in the mentoring relationships. Finally, we summarise the beneficial and risk types of FYMRs according to the current literature and as an outcome of our review. These review perspectives lead us to the proposition of an elaborated Rhodes model.

**THE QUALITY AND RISK FEATURES IN FORMAL YOUTH MENTORING  
RELATIONSHIPS**

Kalbfleisch (2002) remarked that mentoring relationships have the character of friendship, in which “humans have fun, fight, laugh, and cry [...] they become jealous, compete, cooperate, learn, become bored, have conflict and forgive” (p. 67). She argued that mentoring relationships are often treated as static entities, and that this overlooks the dynamics that occur in them due to their characteristics and qualities that change and develop over time. Also, the conflict that can be experienced significantly changes the dynamics and quality of the mentoring relationship and can impose risks of FYMRs on the mentees (ibid.).

The beneficial and risky relational features identified in research to date will be reviewed in the following sections. We understand these characteristics as moderators of mentoring dynamics that potentially elaborate, refine and

complete the Rhodes theoretical model. For the purposes of this paper, we will summarise and discuss the mentoring features in the beneficial and risky types of FYMRs.

#### *OBJECTIVE RELATIONAL MODERATORS OF QUALITY IN FYMRs*

In addition to the Rhodes theoretical model, studies on youth mentoring relationships identified several *objective measurable relational characteristics* moderating the quality of mentoring relationships. Firstly, the *frequency of contact* of the match predicted positive ratings of perceived closeness in relationships (DuBois and Neville, 1997). The rate of mentors' contact with mentoring staff also predicted the number of relational obstacles in the match, such as low perceived closeness in the mentoring bonds as well as negative ratings of perceived benefits of mentoring for young people (ibid.).

In addition, a strong positive association was found to exist between the *length of the relationship* and the frequency of contacts of the match and perceived benefits (DuBois and Neville, 1997; Grossman and Rhodes, 2002). Young people whose match terminated within the three months suffered significant declines in self-worth and perceived competence. By contrast, youths who were matched with mentors for more than 12 months reported significant increases in their self-esteem, self-perceived social acceptance, perceived academic competence, quality of parental relationships, and positive school attitudes, and a decrease in the risk of substance abuse and truancy. No significant benefits for youths were found in matches that lasted less than six months; nevertheless, adolescents reported an increase in alcohol use. Children matched in mentoring relationships for 6–12 months indicated a decrease in school truancy and in the number of times they hit someone, and an increase in perceived scholastic competence (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002, pp. 208–209). The *environmental risk factors* (known background circumstances of the match) that moderated the durability of FYMRs include: the mentor or mentee moving out of the place of residence; graduation from school; illness; parental re-marriage; age of youth; competing adolescent peer relationships; previous experience of abuse in young people; adolescent's time-consuming hobbies;

age and marital status of a mentor and the gender of matches; family interference; and inadequate support from the mentoring programme (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Philip, 2006; Spencer, 2007a; Spencer et al., 2014). For instance, youths aged 13–16 years were more likely to break up a match in each period of the relationship than children aged 10–12 years (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002). Unmarried volunteers aged 26–30 years were 65% less likely to terminate the relationship each month than married volunteers in the same age group. A higher income rate of mentors predicted longer-lasting relationships. Same-sex female matches were, in general, more likely to terminate the relationship than male matches (ibid.). Finally, adolescents who had been abused were more likely to break up (Rhodes, 2002).

#### *SUBJECTIVE RELATIONAL FEATURES IN MENTORING DYNAMICS*

The *subjective relational features* experienced by mentors and mentees over the span of the mentoring bond predict the quality and benefits or risks of the developed relationship. For instance, the perceived positive characteristics of FYMRs influenced mentors' intention to remain in relationships, and consequent positive outcomes of the mentoring experience (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998). Subjective relational features include *perceived relational satisfaction*, *perceived closeness*, *perceived trust*, *perceived interpersonal attraction*, *perceived challenge of the issue of confidentiality*, and *perceived frequency of conflict*. Experience of these features in the mentoring bond impacted on the resulting benefits or risks in the mentoring relationships for mentees. For instance, Grossman and Rhodes (2002) argued that the impact of objective moderators of relationships' durability decreased with *perceived satisfaction in mentoring relationships*. The more satisfaction that young people experienced in the mentoring bond, the lower the impact of other identified relational risk factors on the length of relationships and outcomes of mentoring for youth (ibid.). Similarly, Karcher et al. (2005) argued that both the perceived relational quality (measured with the perceived relational trust and closeness) and the frequency of conflict in the relationships, as recognised by mentees, correlated with mentoring outcomes on the scales of mentees' subjective well-being.



*Confidentiality* moderated the quality of mentoring experiences. In particular, the fact that sensitive, confidential matters shared in mentoring relationships were further discussed among the staff of mentoring schemes was a source of challenge and conflict in some matches. However, when confidentiality was a subject of negotiation and young people were part of the decision-making, confidential issues were shared smoothly, without conflict or undermining of trust (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998).

Positive relationship characteristics of interpersonal attraction, perceived closeness, and rate of conflicts were also found to be a mediator of positive and negative mood and relationship depth. In particular, the *perceived interpersonal similarity in extraversion* was found to be a predictor of the durability of formal mentoring relationships (Madia and Lutz, 2004). By contrast, a *perceived mismatch between a mentor and a mentee* was found to be a risk factor in FYMRs. As the FYMRs are matched by a third party – the mentoring programme – the most prominent risk factor is a lack of basic personal chemistry perceived from the beginning of the mentoring. Sources of mismatch were also recognised in differences of background, age, interests or personality (Spencer, 2007b). Perceived closeness was found to be positively associated with perceived benefits of FYMRs for young people, as reported by mentors (DuBois and Neville, 1997). On that note, Philip (2006) and Spencer et al. (2014) argued that the challenge of *negotiation on secure relational boundaries* and *poorly managed endings* moderated the benefits and dynamics of FYMRs. Lastly, perceived *mentees' support-seeking behaviour* was found to be a predictor of perceived relationship satisfaction as reported by mentors (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998).

#### *INDIVIDUAL FEATURES OF MENTORS' APPROACH*

*Individual features* concern the *features in mentors' approach to children and to the mentoring role* in general that moderated the quality of FYMRs. For instance, Karcher et al. (2010) measured the impact of *mentors' attitudes* towards young people on mentees' benefits from FYMRs. The results showed that mentors' positive attitudes towards youths were associated with more

emotional engagement of mentees towards their mentors. Academically disconnected mentees with positive mentors were more emotionally engaged in relationships, and subsequently reported significantly better relationships with teachers. Conversely, academically connected mentees with negative mentors made more negative contributions in the classroom and had lower peer acceptance than related controls, according to teachers' reports.

*Unrealistic expectations* of mentors concerning the time, nature of the relationship, and the mentoring role in general revealed discrepancies in the reality of the mentoring role and correlated with the risk of early termination of the mentoring bond. In particular, perceived insufficient motivation and feedback from mentees reported by mentors, and a perceived lack of effort or appreciation on the mentee's side, were often mentioned by mentors as a source of dissatisfaction in the mentoring role and the reason for early termination and thus a source of risk of FYMRs for the mentee (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2007b). Furthermore, the perceived discrepancy between the expected and the experienced role of the mentor was found to be a predictor of their intention to remain in the relationship (Madia and Lutz, 2004). The higher a mentor's negative discrepancy between ideal and actual role, the lower the intention mentors showed to engage in mentoring relationships (ibid.).

*Mentors' perceived self-efficacy* correlated with the perceived mentee characteristics and risk status, and the subsequent perceived quality of the mentoring relationship. For instance, mentors' initial high perceived self-efficacy was positively related to mentees' experience of empathy, praise and attention (EPA scale) and mentees' perceived importance for the mentor at the end of the school year. By contrast, mentors who felt incompetent in communication and relational skills with (vulnerable) mentees consequently created tension and conflict in the mentoring bond (Spencer et al., 2014). Karcher et al. (2005) explored the impact of mentors' perceived self-efficacy and a priori motivation to have a positive experience on the quality of mentoring relationships. The results showed that mentees' perceived characteristics and quality of the mentoring relationship were fully mediated by mentors' perceived self-efficacy and expectation of gaining good

experience in a mentoring role. *Mentors' a priori positive motivation* was associated with a high level of perceived self-efficacy after 4–6 weeks of the mentoring experience.

#### *CHARACTERISTICS OF A BENEFICIAL APPROACH OF MENTORS FROM MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE*

Beneficial approach of mentors and the relational features of the relationships they developed were analysed previously in a relational perspective and described by researchers as “satisfied relationships” (Morrow and Styles, 1992), “developmental relationships” (Morrow and Styles, 1995) and “equal-friendly relationships” (Brumovská and Seidlová Málková, 2010). For instance, in “satisfying relationships”, the mentors allowed the youth-driven character of content and timing. They were patient with youths’ defences, let them determine when and how trust would be established, and let them signal whether, when, and how personal problems and challenges would be divulged. The determination of roles in the relationship varied in duration from weeks to months. The mentors defined the youths’ needs by identifying their interests. They built trust by taking those interests seriously and focusing on areas where the child was most receptive to help (Morrow and Styles, 1992, p. 14).

The approach of mentors in “developmental relationships” was similarly characterised by a youth-oriented approach, focusing on the child’s wishes and needs. Volunteers had a sensitive, empathetic approach to children. They showed their respect to the mentees and developed equal cooperation with them by involving them in decision-making. As a result, they developed a secure, trusting and close relationship with a high level of perceived relational satisfaction and long-term mentoring involvement (Morrow and Styles, 1995). Research studies have also focused on the beneficial features in mentors’ approach that were identified and reported by mentees. In general, mentees identified the role of mentors in supportive mentoring relationships as a *quasi-parental role* in which mentors functioned and were perceived as *role models* for their protégés (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005). For some youths, the experience of a “good” mentoring relationship was similar to the parent–child

bond, and thus a mentor had the function of a quasi-parent for them. Others described the importance of difference in experiences with mentors in comparison to mentees' parents (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005).

Mentors in beneficial relationships overcame mentees' negative expectations quickly and were described by mentees as *surprisingly interesting and kind* from their first impressions.

An *empathetic, youth-centred approach* was identified and described by mentees as *understanding the mentees* and their personality, character, interests, and needs sensibly. Young people emphasised the importance of mentors accepting them on their terms and valuing and empowering their capabilities and positive abilities (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2006).

In terms of relational dynamics, mentors' beneficial approach correlated with the experience of positive mentoring relational features. Young people specifically valued experiences of trust, control, reciprocity, fun and sharing (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998; Liang et al., 2002; Philip et al., 2004; Philip, 2006; Spencer and Liang, 2009). In particular, mentors' empathising with mentees' experience of diversity was associated with mentees' initial trust and thus their sharing of other personal issues with mentors. This was emphasised as one of the main beneficial experiences of mentoring for youths (Philip et al., 2004).

The forms of social support were a dominant theme of mentoring benefits that developed in relationships with mentors' positive approach. At the beginning of mentoring relationships, mentors expressed their intentions to support mentees by listening and creating trust so the protégé could turn to them at any time (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998, Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005; Spencer and Liang, 2009). They particularly supported young people through conversation occurring in the context of shared fun activities. Thus, they were able to contextualise the issues and difficulties and they expressed awareness of the challenges that the mentees were facing (Spencer and Liang, 2009).

Young people specifically mentioned that mentors helped them by *listening to their matters*, supported them with emotional problems, and *offered validation, feedback, suggestion, and acceptance* (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005; Spencer and Liang, 2009). Mentors' ability to listen and respond with honesty

and genuine feedback and opinion, without passing judgements on the mentees for their decisions, made the provided emotional support powerful. Mentees also emphasised that mentors were honest with them in their advice, shared their opinions, and were reliable, available, respectful and engaged in the relationship. As a result, mentees experienced trust and mutual openness in the relationship and believed that mentors cared for them, understood them and knew who they were (Blinn-Pike et al., 1998; Spencer and Liang, 2009).

Young people also described *mentors giving them a sense of being a useful and valuable person*. Mentees not only referred to relationships with mentors as existing at a given time and place but also had a sense of the connection when the mentor was not present. They considered what the mentor would have suggested in certain situations, even when the mentor was not physically present, and they refrained from behaviour which the mentor would not respect, such as “breaking the rules” (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005).

In summary, the mentees emphasised that the beneficial experience of a relationship was with someone who listened to them, knew and liked them, believed in them, was available to help them, and enjoyed spending time with them. This was crucial for the enhancement of their well-being.

#### *CHARACTERISTICS AND DYNAMICS OF BENEFICIAL MENTORING BOND*

The interrelatedness of emotional connection shared, enjoyment of mentoring activities, collaboration and companionship were identified as supportive relational processes in the mentoring bond developed by positive mentors’ approach to the mentee.

*Companionship* was described as a feeling of being like a family and not being able to imagine life without this relationship (Spencer, 2006).

*Collaboration* was referred to as the experience of working together to develop new skills or capacities of the mentees (Spencer, 2006) while mentors offered encouragement and practical, instrumental support. Thus, mentors helped the mentees to develop a range of new skills or empowered their natural talents and abilities (Spencer, 2006; Brady et al., 2017).

*Negotiation over shared activities* and experience of the “fun factor” shared with mentors was associated with positive benefits of mentoring for mentees. The “fun factor” particularly mediated the perceived escape from daily stresses (Spencer and Liang, 2009). The experience of enjoyment and fun allowed young people to go beyond casual behaviour and allowed for spontaneity, such as sharing jokes and recognising the same sense of humour and capacity to laugh at their shared actions. The match thus offered opportunities to connect in new ways through the experience of fun and relaxation (ibid.).

The “fun factor” of regular activities with the mentor also created opportunities for the mentor to provide support to the mentee in learning new skills as needed and enabled by the mentee. As a result, the “fun factor” facilitated mutual satisfaction and empowerment of mentees and predicted a high level of relational trust in the mentoring bond (Spencer and Liang, 2009).

*Reciprocity* was experienced as simple forms of exchange that fostered mentees’ self-respect and had an impact on positive mentoring experiences. Thus, reciprocity was identified and valued by mentees as an essential feature of equality in the mentoring bond (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005).

The experience of *authenticity* in FYMRs was found in the beneficial relationships as *feelings of connectedness* and being able to *express and share opinions genuinely* (Spencer, 2006).

Finally, building *trust* was a fundamental relational process that was associated with mentoring benefits. *Trust* was built through mentees’ experiences of (1) availability of support of a mentor, (2) perceived reliability of a mentor, and (3) seeing the mentor as potential support in cases of need (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005). Mentees tested mentors’ reactions to their challenging behaviour before they began to trust them, become closer, and share personal issues. As a result, mentors were perceived as available support at times of stress (ibid.). The beneficial formal mentoring bond was described by mentoring participants as a sense of emotional connection that provided a secure base for mentees (Dallos and Comley-Ross, 2005). The stable core of the relationship was perceived as occurring when the mentor was available for mentees at times of adversity when they felt fearful, anxious, stressed or threatened (ibid.). Other qualitative studies described features of companionship and “a break from the

world” (Spencer, 2006; Spencer and Liang, 2009; Brady et al., 2017), experienced as mutual enjoyment of time spent together and finding satisfaction in each other’s company in the mentoring match (Morrow and Styles, 1992, 1995; Spencer, 2006).

#### *THE RISKY TYPE OF MENTORING BOND*

To date, the debate and literature on the risks of FYMRs are still scarce. Broader and deeper discussion on the possible side-effects of formal youth mentoring is needed for the effective beneficial practice of mentoring interventions. For the scope of this paper, we now summarise the debate on the risks in FYMRs under the heading “Risky type of mentoring relationship”. Thus, we complete Rhodes’s model with the debate on the risk features in FYMRs. As such, we hope to contribute to the critical discussion on the impact of mentoring risks on mentees, that is, on socially disadvantaged vulnerable children and youths who receive the mentoring effects.

“Dissatisfied relationships” (Morrow and Styles, 1992, p. 14) were described in their dynamics, developed with mentors’ risky approach, where youths did not have a voice in determining the types of mentoring activities. The mentors were prescriptive in identifying the areas where they would help the child. These relationships had risk dynamics: the children tended to withdraw from the mentoring bond and terminate their involvement prematurely.

*Prescriptive relationships* (Morrow and Styles, 1995) were characterised by mentors who primarily intended to fulfil the goals they set in mentoring relationships on their own. They pushed children to achieve the pre-established aims, did not pay attention to the children’s needs, and were not alert to their personalities and wishes. As a result, they facilitated an experience of low relational satisfaction. Closeness and trust in the bond were absent or rare, and the relationships terminated prematurely or immediately after completion of the formal assignment time.

Similarly, Colley (2003) discussed the risks of power imbalances in FYMRs. In particular, she showed how mentors in the British empowering mentoring programme were judgemental and prescriptive to young people rather than

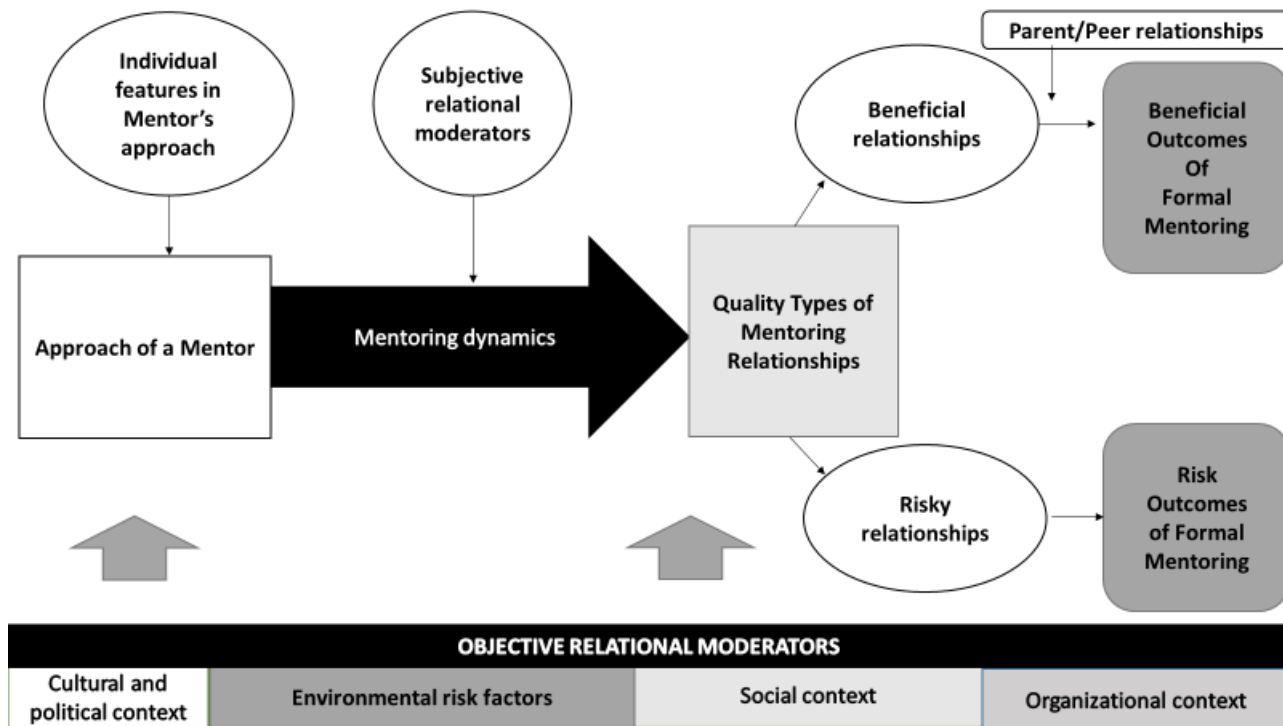
empowering. She also identified and discussed the organisational and socio-political context that negatively impacted on the practices of mentors in their mentoring role (ibid.). Philip (1997) paid attention to the risks of FYMRs that should be considered in the practice of formal youth mentoring interventions. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) identified the negative impact of prematurely terminated mentoring bonds on children's well-being. Spencer (2007b) identified the risk factors that moderated the quality of mentoring bonds. Rhodes et al. (2009) discussed the ethical issues of formal mentoring and its risks in rather general terms to ignite the discussion on mentoring ethics. Brumovská and Seidlová Málková (2010) distinguished the risky mentoring approach developed over one year of the mentoring involvement, called Relationships with Authoritative–Intentional Approach of Mentors, that was potentially harmful for mentees. Finally, Brumovská (2017) identified and analysed the “controlling mentoring bond” developed with the controlling mentors’ approach to children, as opposed to an empowering, autonomy-supportive approach (Ryan and Deci, 1985, 2000). In summary, the research that would explore in-depth and subsequently theoretically discuss the risk features of FYMRs, especially in terms of power in the mentoring bond, is needed in the future studies led in the field of formal youth mentoring.

#### *PROPOSITION OF AN ELABORATED RHODES MODEL*

Our intention in this paper is to elaborate on the Rhodes model of relational processes in FYMRs, and to update it with the pathways in dynamics of quality and risk features developed in the FYMRs that have been identified in the mentoring research literature to date. The following elaborated model on mentoring processes synthesises the above literature review as it summarises and illustrates the mentoring features that impact on the quality of FYMRs.

#### **FIGURE 2: THE REVISITED RHODES MODEL ON PROCESSES IN FYMRS**





The elaborated model on mentoring process explains that the benefits of FYMRs are moderated by objective background elements found in the organisational background, cultural and political context, social context and other environmental factors that surround the mentoring match. Moreover, mentors' characteristics and approach to the relationship with a mentee also have a key impact on the developed dynamics and quality of FYMRs. Individual aspects in mentors that mediate the benefits or risks in FYMRs are: mentor's perceived self-efficacy, level of mentors' a-priori positive motivation to have a satisfying mentoring experience with the child, mentors' attitudes to mentees, mentors' perception of mentee's characteristics and risk status, and mentor's expectations.

Our revised mentoring process model illustrates that not only the benefits but also Risky relationships are created in the dynamics of FYMRs. Thus, our model includes the 'subjective relational moderators' that impact on relational dynamics and are associated with the level of benefits and risks in developed FYMRs: perceived relational satisfaction, perceived closeness in the relationship, perceived trust, perceived experience of conflict in the relationship, perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction, perceived

challenge of the confidentiality issue, perceived feedback from the mentee, and relationship's ending style. As a result, the Beneficial and Risky types of mentoring bond are developed as described in the literature. The Beneficial FYMRs are characterised by mentees with: sense of genuine emotional connection, perceived companionship, mutual experience of fun and enjoyment, perceived high satisfaction in the match, perceived reciprocity, collaboration, authenticity and perceived freedom to express feelings and opinions. The beneficial mentoring bond finally mediates the perceived benefits of the FYMRs and thus the efficacy of mentoring interventions.

Risky FYMRs are described less often in the mentoring literature. Nevertheless, the major features of the Risky relationships are: mentor's controlling - prescriptive approach to mentees, dissatisfaction of mentees in the relationship and mentee's 'voting with feet', prematurely terminated mentoring bonds, objective risk features of mentors and mentees. As a result, Risky mentoring relationships can decrease mentee's self-worth and competence and increase the use of alcohol as reported by previous research.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this paper we revised the Rhodes theoretical model using the results from current literature in the field of youth mentoring. The revised model illustrates the dynamics from the beginning of FYMRs to their outcomes, and includes the moderators of mentoring benefits. We refined the model by including individual characteristics in mentors' approach that are key mediators of dynamics in FYMRs. Our model also includes the risky type of mentoring as one of the outcomes of FYMRs. Thus, we have composed a model that shows the results of mentoring interventions in terms of both beneficial and risky FYMRs.

We argue that sound awareness of the quality and risk features, types of relational dynamics in FYMRs, and moderators of these – as shown in the revised Rhodes model of FYMRs – is crucial in facilitating quality child- and youth-centred formal mentoring relationships and for positive outcomes from formal mentoring interventions. We hope that the model illustrates the

mentoring processes with the features of quality and of risks as evident in the current mentoring literature.

We argue, however, that more detailed in-depth research studies on the characteristics and dynamics of Risky FYMRs, and subsequent theoretical debate on the mentoring risks that would address the ‘dark sides of formal youth mentoring relationships and interventions’ is needed in the field. In particular, the issues of power in the mentoring relationships that are supposed to be empowering for mentees needs to be addressed and discussed in the academic discussion and among mentoring practitioners to avoid mentoring risks and achieve its benefits for socially-disadvantaged children and young people. Thus, our revised model on mentoring processes includes not only the quality relational features developed in FYMRs throughout its course, as Rhodes illustrated, but also the risky type of formal youth mentoring bond. In so doing we hope to contribute to the theoretical discussion on the processes of both benefits and risks in formal mentoring relationships.

Our revised model is by no means final and can be refined by colleagues in the field in future studies. We hope it will inform future mentoring research, theory and evidence-based practice, and ultimately the well-being and positive development of mentored children and young people.

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