

Doctoral School of Enterprise Theory and Practice

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**THE RUBIK'S CUBE OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
MENTORING PROCESS, AS THE CHARACTERISTICS AND
COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROCESS**

Theses of the PhD dissertation

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I. Introduction: reasons for choosing this topic, framing the research task

Competitiveness and its source is interpreted differently by authors and are linked to different production factors. Among the various approaches, we can differentiate between conventional factors of competitiveness (Porter 1996) and novel ones (e.g. Schultz 1983, Sveiby 1998, Németh 2011, Polyák 2011, Török 2012, Varga 2014). While *Porter* believed that the source of competitiveness was productivity, according to *Csath* and *Thurow* human capital, - talented, intelligent and skilled people – generate the biggest competitive advantage for enterprises and national economies (Varga 2014:13). Therefore, it is not surprising that novel approaches emphasize the significance of human resource.

The appearance of human resource as a new factor of competitiveness can be traced back to various reasons: first, the market has changed, the market relations have altered and protection around markets has ceased. Second, the behaviour of operators currently on the market has also changed. Simultaneously, ‘individuals and their knowledge have an increasing role in business life’ (Chikán 2006:318) as well. This is why human resource management has become the new field of management in the XX. century. Its focus is on how to make individuals, employees of a company, as successful as they can be in realizing corporate goals (Gergely 2012:13). Many authors (e.g. Mankiw et al 1992, Benhabib-Spiegel 1994, Hatch-Dyer 2004, Polyák 2011, Szabó 2011) see a possibility in the development of human resources and performance evaluation.

There are different opinions on how different organizations view development: some think that all human resource is valuable for them, even if not all of them become leaders. In spite of this, they admit that their development is critical to organizational change (Rooke-Torbert 2005). Others say that we ‘live in an age of changes, reacting to them is essential, and putting an emphasis on human resource and its development strengthens every company’s ability to react to changes’ (Gősi 2009:11-12). Based on this theory many companies develop so-called mutually acceptable relationships which include harmonising corporate and individual goals and the employee development plan necessary to achieve these goals (Sherman et al 2005:10).

At the same time, it is more and more widespread to initiate the concept of life-long learning named by *Kennedy* especially with entrepreneurs. *Gősi* (2009) also highlights this, adding that the task of life-long learning – the expansion, upgrading and maintenance of intellectual property - is compulsory for everyone. A tool for life-long learning may be the network of new alliances formed with colleagues that make leadership work personal and which ‘primarily requires teaching and development’ (Kunos 2011:53). ‘Educating the next generation personnel and developing human capital’ should be the main goal for all enterprises (Szabó 2012:33) because this is the only way to create or maintain competitiveness.

I.1. Narrowing down the topic

When narrowing down the topic the question arises: what educational and developmental activities could contribute to increasing corporate competitiveness and to effectively exploiting the potential of human resource as a new factor of competitiveness. According to *Savaneviciene* (2008) these developmental activities may appear both on an individual and a corporate level and may include methods that can be classified as graduate training, trainings and seminars, learning at the workplace, coaching and self-development. It is clear though that educational and development activities should be separated. I do not regard self-development as a separate methodological group when examining the topic of this dissertation, as all elements of this field can be categorized into the two groups applied in this dissertation. Furthermore, I consider training activities to be rather educational activities, which include graduate teaching and

advanced education. The so-called support activities such as consulting, coaching, training – including seminars – and mentorship are categorized in a separate group.

Many activities that help create and maintain competitiveness can be grouped into the so-called support jobs. These include performance-oriented training which mostly seeks outside solutions, and mediation or therapy that are mostly oriented towards inner solutions and the less extreme consulting, coaching and mentorship. This research examines a broadly interpreted service process, business development mentorship from two points of view – from the side of the service provider as a mentor and from the side of the recipient of the service, the mentee – in respect of the effectiveness of the process.

First, the question may arise: why this dissertation introduces mentorship and not another form of support activity. During my previous research and two theses work, I have conducted extensive research on coaching. It was concluded that from the different types of coaching in case of enterprises career or creative coaching and mostly business coaching and – in case of leaders – executive coaching can be considered as support activity. The price of these support activities ranges on a wide scale and a beginner entrepreneur might not be able to afford it. Moreover, the aim of participating in the development process is not about finding solution for a one-time problem but developing for the long term and acquiring knowledge. Therefore, I have excluded consultation from the possible options.

Furthermore, in my opinion, business development mentorship is a relatively unknown and unresearched topic in Hungary. Empirical research can hardly be found even in international practice. However, according to my experience, research and the people involved, development in this area would be necessary. Through the systematization of international literature as well as presentation of good and bad practices it is possible to get to know – and possibly introduce - an opportunity for development which may contribute to boosting domestic business life and increasing the success of self-employed entrepreneurs.

The role and importance of enterprises should be highlighted as well: according to the *European Committee's* annual report on European small and medium-sized businesses for 2016 (*Annual Report on European SMEs 2015/16*), SMEs are the core of economy, not only in Hungary but in the EU28 as well. In 2015, this sector provided two-third of the employment and three-fifth of the added value in the non-financial sector while most SMEs can be considered microbusinesses having less than 10 employees. According to SBA, domestic data are quite similar: in 2015 99.8% of all Hungarian enterprises belonged to the SME sector that provided 69.8% of the total employment and 57.8% of added value. The EU performs below average in six of the nine SBA¹ indices. These nine are the following: 1) entrepreneurial spirit, 2) second chance, 3) effective public administration, 4) subsidies and procurement, 5) contribution to financing sources, 6) unified market, 7) skills and innovation, 8) general environment, 9) internationalization incentives. Among the indices with the worst results – alongside environment and second chance – is skills and innovation potential.

The relevance of these results related to the topic of this dissertation is that it highlights those areas where there are deficiencies in SMEs and to which this dissertation aims to provide a solution. According to the SBA statement, the fundamental document of SME strategies between 2014 – 2020 marks three areas necessary for developing the SME sector. First an intervention is necessary to improve growth potential, to improve business environment and to provide easier access to external funds. Due to its holistic views business development mentorship activity may be suitable for increasing growth and innovation potential and developing the internal environment of a business, its employees and its leaders. In my opinion from this aspect, there are two arguments that supports the choice of topic for this dissertation: first, it is clear from the data and studies that the SME sector is lagging behind at an international

¹ SBA: Small Business Act was issued by the European Committee in 2008 and its aim is to utilize the innovation potential of SMEs.

level in areas where mentorship would be able to make a change. Second, since SMEs are significant in the national economy and the added value they provide is relatively high, positive changes in this sector could contribute to the development of the economy. Third, there is no unified view as to what can be regarded as business development mentorship process. Since the definition itself still raises questions, it is also unclear who are the participants of this process from either the side of service providers or the recipients, what attributes, qualities and attitudes they should possess and what are the criteria based on which the process itself can be directed. This might raise some quality assurance-related questions as well. A checklist covering the whole mentoring process or a model of the process that can be followed by the mentors would greatly contribute to the standardization of processes and to providing quality service.

The terms „leader” and „employee”, as well as the statements that support the need for their development has been mentioned several times in the above paragraphs. It is necessary to define the relation between these two categories. Hereinafter I consider entrepreneurs the combination of the two: people with their own ideas, working for their own goals instead of realizing someone else's dreams, having access to resources therefore acting as a leader of their own processes. However, at the same time they are parts and employees of the organization because they do business either single-handedly or working with colleagues, in compliance with the expectations of modern age, educating and developing themselves.

1.2. The aim of this research

Based on reviewing the literature of business development it could be concluded that the attention paid to mentorship activity directed at entrepreneurs has been quite limited until recent years. Certain authors confirm this statement as well (e. g. Clutterbuck 2004, Eshner-Murphy 2005, St-Jean 2009) stating that academic literature lacks the investigation of the qualities of mentors and mentees. The same could be applied to the mentoring process itself as well. The quality of literature on mentorship varies greatly and since it is in its initial, fact-finding phase, more research is considered necessary.

According to Clutterbuck (2005) – one of the most well known researchers of business development mentorship processes – there is a need for a generic business development mentorship list of standards which – with some degree of modifications – could be applied for all processes of this nature, thus providing support and a kind of framework for mentors and organizations coordinating business development mentorship activities. This research aims to find the factors – competences, qualities and attitudes – required from a mentor for a successful business development mentorship process.

Therefore, the main goal of my research is to identify the combination of factors that contribute to conducting a successful business development mentorship process. The aim of the thesis is to set up a model that can serve as a guidance throughout the business development mentorship process so that participants are able to get the best results out of it. I expect this research to paint a clearer picture of the factors that define the success of the mentorship process of the connection between these factors and of the context in which they can be interpreted. Another goal is to identify groups that are homogenous with respect to the important mentorship factors. This way I can define a system that best fits the needs of mentees. Therefore, the significance of this research is to correct the uncovered deficiencies and to start creating a normative regulatory system that may contribute to the support of the SME sector and strengthen the business development mentorship process.

Although there has been an attempt to compile such a list but there is no uniformly accepted framework yet and creating one would be beneficial for several reasons. First, since business development mentorship processes mostly target young people with less experience, mentors have a huge responsibility in shaping their future. In addition, creating the standards may raise questions of quality assurance. Last but not least, the rapid spread and growth of

business development mentorship activity requires and calls attention to the importance of regulation.

Table 1.-The goals of the thesis

Notation	Goal	Applied methodology
G₁	Systematization of domestic and international literature on business development mentorship.	secunder
G₂	Collect and systematize factors that can relate to the efficiency of the business development mentorship process	secunder and primer (qualitative)
G₃	To map the domestic expectations and important criteria regarding the business development mentorship process and to define the factors leading to dissatisfaction.	secunder and primer (qualitative and quantitative)
G₄	To create some kind of a model, or check-list which contributes to leading a successful and effective business development mentorship process.	primer (qualitative and quantitative)

Source: own editing.

II. The process and methodology of the research

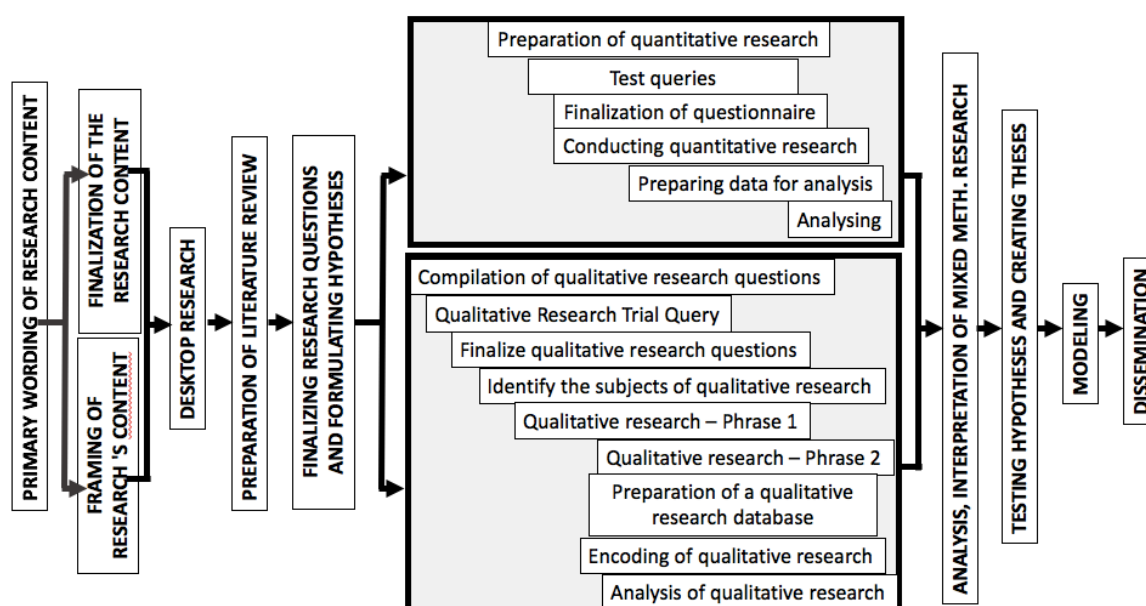
During the course of this research gradualness and change have constantly been present: while setting up the framework I have become familiar with a wide range of development opportunities and expanded my knowledge of team- and business coaching as well as the opportunities provided by interdisciplinarity and got to know mentorship both in a corporate and business-development context. The focus of my research has changed as I became familiar with the literature as well as the good and bad practices. Qualitative surveys based on in-depth interviews, quantitative surveys using questionnaires and the application of a mixed-methodology approach have gradually contributed to creating the model best describing the business development mentorship process. While writing my dissertation, I have applied both fundamental research methods, the primary and secondary research methods.

The research was of an inductive nature, during which ‘consequences can be drawn from our own empirical observations’ (Ghauri-Grønhaug 2011:17), meaning that ‘inductive research proceeds from the unique towards a generalization, from one series of observation towards finding a correlation which – to a certain extent – creates order among particular cases’ (Babbie 2001:39). The research has been built up according to this principle: after the observations, statements have been created which were followed by creating theories/models, comparing, and incorporating them into the already existing knowledge/literature and theories (*Figure 1.*)

While writing the dissertation, I mainly relied on the fact-finding nature of studies, as I aimed to map an area that, in theory but mostly in practice is not widely researched; therefore, it was necessary to learn about the process in detail. At the same time, I studied the individual factors and their impact on each other and on the model as well as the reason for the changes in their own values. These activities are all specific to the explanatory studies. My research was thirdly descriptive, aiming to describe a phenomenon – domestic business development mentorship process - by qualitative methods.

During the desk research (reviewing literature) as part of the secondary research, I have collected and categorized, then analysed the respective international and domestic publications. I have done search-word inquiries using the following keywords (both in English and in Hungarian): mentoring at SMEs, entrepreneurial mentoring, awareness of the mentoring process, characteristics of an entrepreneurial mentor, characteristics of an entrepreneurial mentee, successful entrepreneurial mentoring processes, psychology of supporting relationships, characteristics of the mentor relationship. I regarded as a source of data scientific statements, books and articles as well as case studies and descriptions and research reports on entrepreneur mentorship process.

Figure 1. – Structure of the research



Source: own editing.

A ‘paradigm shift in social research practice in the last decade, together with the changing qualitative and quantitative research preferences, a need for mixed methods research have emerged’ (Király et al 2014:95). The research of this dissertation can be regarded as a research based on mixed methods as well, as it includes qualitative and quantitative research methods. It is also sequential, though the various phases serve as preparations for further research. Therefore, it can be classified as a convergent parallel design based on the Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) dimensions, which is ‘the most widespread form of mixed methods’ (Király et al 2014:99). In this type of research, the interaction is independent and there is equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative survey. The mix of methods appears mostly during the interpretation of the results. (Creswell-Plano Clark 2011, Dén-Nagy et al 2014).

II.1. Sampling technique

Since there was no adequate information available about the population and there is no database containing the participants of entrepreneur mentorship processes, probability sampling could not be carried out so the snowball method was applied for the quantitative research. During the survey the subjects were addressed with the help of a database I created myself and from here I moved on to choosing my responders based on personal relations. As a result, the sample cannot be considered representative but since it was an exploratory survey, this technique is accepted in order to obtain an understanding of the topic. Despite the non-representative sample, the aim was to increase the cardinality in order to have a realistic sample size that ensures diversity among those interviewed and also allows for multivariant statistical analysis while not diluting the sample too much by including irrelevant respondents. During the qualitative research, a mixture of two non-probabilistic sample techniques was chosen: snowball and voluntary technique that includes those units into the sample that are considered comfortable, suitable and available.

II.2. Short introduction to quantitative survey and its process

Reviewing the relevant literature has shaped the list of factors that were deemed suitable for analysis. On this basis, a preliminary list of 21 elements was constructed on which a test survey was performed. During this process, the points in need of modification were identified and the final survey was completed: after naming the factors, a short explanatory description of a few

sentences was included to make sure that all respondents interpret the notions the same way. The number of factors was also reduced to 20.

Data collection was performed online using a standard questionnaire. Answering the questions took about 15-20 minutes. The core of the questionnaire was one open and 40 closed questions. The open question was regarding the mentees and their preparedness, attitude and competences. The final questionnaire contained 51 questions, including the ones related to personal, demographic and grouping data. The respondents had to answer 48 questions. Out of these, seven questions were related to demographic data and in three further cases three open questions were asked but response to these questions was optional. The closed questions were regarding the mentor and the process itself such that the respondents had to categorize 20 factors on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 in two dimensions. In the first dimension named 'importance' respondents had to assess their expectation towards each factor - 1 being „*not important at all*” and 5 being „*absolutely important*”. For the other factor, 'realization', respondents had to reflect on their last experience regarding their participation in a coaching process and determine to what extent was each factor realized - 1 being „*not realized at all*” and 5 being „*completely realized*”.

This concept was built based on the *Parasurman-Zeithaml-Berry* service quality model. In this model – ‘due to the characteristics of services – five so-called ‘gaps’ can be identified that lead to the service being unsuccessful’ (Heidrich 2006:96), thus influencing or being able to influence the success rate of the entrepreneur mentorship process. Since the service quality depends on a large number of factors, out of the 5 identifiable gaps the gap between defining the quality of the service and the fulfilment of the service could lead to the mentoring process being perceived as inefficient.

The data from this research was then analysed using the mathematical-statistical software, SPSS. Both single- and multivariate analyses were carried out and the scale used provided the opportunity to compare averages and variances and to study the relative frequency. Principal component analysis and factor analysis was carried out to decrease the number of variants as well as a cluster analysis to categorize consumer needs. In addition, the data was analysed using cross tabulation. During the analysis and evaluation error probability was set at $p=5\%$ within the significance examinations. The validity and reliability of the answers was ensured by the examination of Cronbach-alphas. During the multi-variate analysis variance analysis, chi-square test was carried out, the rank correlation coefficient was calculated and the final results on the expectations towards the process was determined using the K-MEAN non-hierarchical cluster analysis method based on which an attempt was made to create a segmentation of the target group (demand side).

II.2.1. Short introduction of the sample

During my survey's 75-day long availability 158 respondents filled out the survey, from which, after clearing the sample, 153 was included in the sample. Considering national and international literature, the currently available national entrepreneur mentorship programmes and the results of in depth interviews, when preparing the sample, the goal was to reach a 2:1 ratio of both mentors-mentees and men-women. Both the literature and the subjects of the in-depth interviews suggested that male dominance in mentorship was particularly strong and it is also significant among the mentees therefore it was expected to be reflected in the population of respondents. The age of the respondents was expected to follow a nearly standard deviation: representatives of the more experienced generation (mainly baby-boomers, younger members of the X and Y generations) appeared as mentors while members of the Y, Z and potentially α generations appeared as mentees in the sample. The composition of the sample is shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2. The composition of the sample of the survey

Sample composition			Role		Total
			mentor	mentee	
Sex	male	nr. of respondent	40	54	94
		gender distribution	42,6 %	57,4%	100,0%
		role distribution	67,8%	57,4%	61,4%
		distribution in whole sample	26,1%	35,3%	61,4%
	female	nr. of respondent	19	40	59
		gender distribution	32,2%	67,8%	100,0%
		role distribution	32,2%	42,6%	38,6%
		distribution in whole sample	12,4%	26,1%	38,6%
Total		nr. of respondent	59	94	153
		gender distribution	38,6%	61,4%	100,0%
		role distribution	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		distribution in whole sample	38,6%	61,4%	100,0%

Source: own editing.

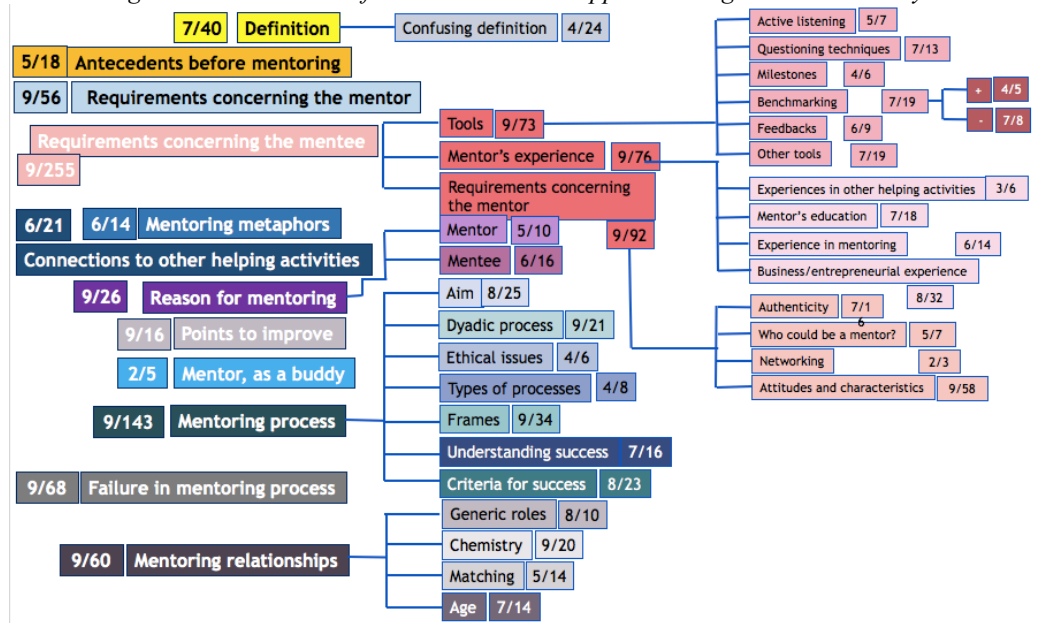
II.3. Short introduction to the qualitative research

The qualitative survey was carried out using semi-structured interviews. The goal was for the people interviewed to talk on their own as much as possible, thus giving them an opportunity to steer the conversation towards the aspects of the topic, which were important to them so that interviews could become emotional and exciting interviews. When preparing for the interviews, I planned for about 50-60-minute long conversations that would cover most aspects of the topic. After the first two interviews, two changes had to be made in the calculations: the period had to be extended and the questions were partly restructured in order to better cover the topic. Fill-in sentences were added to the questions as well as provocative, process-oriented questions. As a result, the interview was split into three final parts: introduction, open questions related to mentorship and statements that were further divided into six parts, and within that, 20 supportive/helping questions.

While selecting the sample the priority was that the potential data should be as informative as possible rather than compliant with the principles mathematical-statistical representativity. The primary criterion for being included in the sample was that the subject of the questionnaire should be part of an entrepreneur mentorship process. When preparing the sample Bokor and Radácsi's (2006) suggestion was taken into consideration, who suggested forming theories from the data used in qualitative research while being able to expand it beyond the sample. This is ensured by designing the research in a way so that each case is comparable basewith regards to similar data recorded in different ways. In addition, generalization is ensured not by the cardinality and randomness of the sample but by the stories formed in the readers (Bokor-Radácsi 2006 p246). As a result, 9 people were included in the sample: 3 women and 6 men; 4 mentors, 3 mentees and 2 people coordinating a mentorship process. 2/3 of them is actively taking part in entrepreneur mentorship processes at the moment. As to their age, the subjects follow a standard deviation.

Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and the transcript of the interviews was prepared with additions from previous notes on the topic by the author prior to the analysis of the data. To help understand the transcripts, meaning categorozation was performed which means the setting up and systematic coding of a category system (Kvale1996, Gelei 2002, Csillag 2014). Relying on the literature, previous experience and presumptions a high-level code structure was created which was later further divided into so-called sub-codes. During this process the NVivo 10.2.2. software was used for analysis. During the processing 12 codes were created which were divided into a total of 17 sub-codes. From these, in three cases there was a further multiple code division, and in one case even a further differentiation was necessary. Altogether, data analysis was performed using 45 codes (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2. Introduction of the code structure applied during the content analysis²



Source: own editing.

II.4. Short introduction to the quantitative survey and its process

Related to the goals described earlier the hypotheses examined during the research of this dissertation were formed. (Table 3)

The starting point of the dissertation is that a list exists that contributes to leading a successful and effective entrepreneur mentorship process or if not, then it can be established or there is a need for the establishment of such list. This checklist is suitable for defining the qualities, skills, competences, knowledge, experience and attitudes of the mentor that make him/her capable of leading an entrepreneur mentorship process. The list also provides a framework for his activity, supposing some sort of sequentality. The rationale of the list can be considered sound if its absence influences the success of the process (1), if processes with different goals, content and tools are operated under the same name (2) or if participants experience a feeling of absence during the processes or they are unsatisfied with the service they have been provided (3), or even as a result of the combination of the two factors mentioned above. In my opinion, entrepreneur mentorship process can become an accepted, acknowledged and prestigious activity and profession if it is defined as an activity with the same goal, with a framework and tools with the same cornerstones, producing results that can be measured. Individual sensation of absence does not justify the necessity of the list.

Assuming that the entrepreneur mentorship process is a complex system, in which both the demand and supply sides – the provider and recipient of the service – both have expectations for the service despite their different experiences and backgrounds, but working for the same goal, no significant difference can be observed between their expectations from the process. On this basis, according to the H₁ hypothesis, in a particular entrepreneur mentorship process, there is no significant difference between the expectations from mentees towards mentors and the mentors' own self-images, the factor combinations are the same. Therefore, the evaluation of the importance of certain factors shows nearly identical values, mean, variance and dissipation. To test the hypothesis, the results of the questionnaire, the t-test performed and the variance analysis can be used.

²The first numbers in brackets before/after the codes represent the number of the interview where that particular code has been mentioned and the second numbers represent the frequency of mentions of the code.

Regarding *Parasurman* and his colleague's work as a starting point, who state that 'service quality is the result of the comparison of the expected and the experienced performance which is a form of evaluation' (Papasarman et al 1988:15) it can be presumed that there is a difference between the expected and experienced service quality in the entrepreneur mentorship process as well. The aim of the H_2 hypothesis is to find out if there are significant differences between mentors and mentees in the factor combinations experienced during the process and the prior expectations they have had from a successful entrepreneur mentorship process. This hypothesis was divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

H_{2a} : There is a significant difference along the roles – mentor vs mentee – in the evaluation of the efficiency and success of the entrepreneur mentorship process.

H_{2b} : There is a significant difference within the roles between sexes in the evaluation of the efficiency and success of the entrepreneur mentorship process.

If the hypothesis is accepted and there will be an independent variant, along which there is a significant difference between the evaluation of the process quality, then this also means that the process, or at least a part of it needs to be improved. Therefore, this hypothesis can describe a picture of how participants evaluate the current national entrepreneur mentorship development processes.

Table 3. – The hypothesis system of the dissertation

Notation	Hypothesis	Applied methodology	Applied statistical analysis
H_1	In a given entrepreneur mentorship process, there is no significant difference between expectations set by mentees towards mentors and the self-image of mentors themselves, the combinations of factors are the same.	quantitative research	ANOVA, Spearman rank correlation index, arithmetic mean
H_2	There are significant differences both in case of mentors and mentees between the expectations set up towards a successful entrepreneur mentorship process and the factor combinations experienced during the actual process.	quantitative research	t-test; ANOVA; arithmetic mean
H_3	The industrial experience and the business knowledge complement each other in terms of the success and efficiency of entrepreneur mentors.	quantitative and qualitative research	arithmetic mean, modus, median, content analysis, factoranalysis
H_4	The entrepreneur mentorship process cannot function without a factor combination that contains the factors empathy, mutual trust, credibility, positive attitude and openness	quantitative and qualitative research	ANOVA, arithmetic mean, actoranalysis
H_5	In terms of the success of the process the 3 most important requirements towards the mentee are to be open, dedicated to what he/she does and to communicate effectively.	quantitative research	frequency indicator; content analysis
H_6	Mentees having taken/currently taking part in entrepreneur mentorship process can be categorized into well-differentiated groups based on the importance of requirements related to such processes. Based on the attributes of these groups a system of mentor characteristics and tools can be created that can be the most effective with that particular group and also a checklist that facilitates the success of the mentorship process.	quantitative research	cluster analysis

Source: Own editing.

Several authors share the view that in an entrepreneur mentorship process, age gap between the mentor and mentee is fundamental, so the mentor is usually a senior person and the mentee is relatively inexperienced (e.g. Levison 1978, Belcourt 2000, Rhodes 2002). Moreover, this age difference includes a difference in field experience and professional knowledge as well. Several authors emphasize the importance of professional knowledge (e.g. Fekete 2008, St-Jean-Audet 2009) while numerous others (e.g. Clutterbuck-Lane 2005, Wikholm 2005, Depali-Jain 2016)

and many participants of the national entrepreneur mentorship process mention not only professional and business knowledge as a key for success but experience as well. On this basis, H₃ hypothesis investigates whether experience in a certain field and business knowledge should appear as complementers of each other in the mentorship process and whether this factor combination is indeed the most important one.

Besides professional knowledge and field experience, the success factor mentioned the most often during the mentorship process is an atmosphere of trust and the intention to create it (e.g. Kram 1985, Kahn 1993, Ragins 1997, Clutterbuck-Lane 2005, Starchevich 2009, Jewel 2013, Dávid 2014). Creating such an atmosphere is of vital importance because in the complex relationship between mentor and mentee the relationship is built on a tight cooperation, sharing of information during the process, practices, tactics, human connection and mutual harmony – that goes beyond trust – that can only be realised if empathy, positive attitude and openness are present in the process, along with the credibility of the mentor. The H₄ hypothesis examines if the mentorship process can work without a factor combination built on empathy, mutual trust, credibility, positive attitude and openness.

Until this point, every hypothesis (H₁-H₄) focused on the provider of the service, the mentor, or on the process itself and the mentor's process-leading skills. However, the active role of the service recipient is vital for a successful process because it surely cannot be successful if the mentee does not have the right attitude. According to the literature, the list of characteristics, competences and attitudes required from a mentee contains several factors. The most commonly mentioned ones are openness, dedication and the ability to give and receive feedback. The H₅ hypothesis examines whether the participants of the national entrepreneur mentorship process actually consider these three factors to be the most important ones in the process.

By assuming in this dissertation that it is necessary and possible to set up a model that has a positive effect on the effectiveness and success of the entrepreneur mentorship process the model is also suitable for segmenting the target group of those participating in the process, dividing the target audience into homogenous parts. The H₆ hypothesis investigates whether it is possible to divide the people participating/having participated in a process based on the importance of expectations from the mentorship process and also whether it is possible to define a system of tools designed for the target groups with which the best possible result can be achieved.

III. New and novel results of the research

While writing the dissertation special attention was paid to summarizing the literature on the topic. In the theoretical overview I examined mentorship as a developmental activity in the system of other support activities; I have written about its different approaches (corporate and SME level); and about its types (internal and external mentorship); furthermore, I have defined the specifics of entrepreneur mentorship; the mentorship models connected to it, as well as the competences of mentors and mentees. Then I examined how embedded this topic is in international research.

III.1. The theoretical basis of the research

In our dynamically changing world where the dominance of SMEs is apparent and where human resource and its qualification can be named as the factor of competitive advantage, neither individual, nor corporate success can be obtained without the necessary flexible preparation or without having a proper level of dedication. The leaders of the future are open and interested. They do everything to expand their horizons in social and business areas as well. They are characterized as aspiring to continuously acquire new information, thus being able to adapt to the ever-changing conditions.

For all this, they need to have knowledge from various sources and from different fields (Iniguez, 2008). This knowledge can come from many places: organizations mainly support professional education and leadership programmes, though we often hear about competence-based approach as well but this has hardly been realized even though it would be desirable among enterprises. There are no better or worse methods, successful or less successful ones; the important thing is that in case of developmental activity we should use the one that is the most suitable in a particular situation and for a particular individual. In case of enterprises, this is especially true: there may be a need for very different type and depth of method depending on the personality and experience of the entrepreneur as well as on the profile and target group of the enterprise. There are several ways to develop a beginner SME or family enterprise of high growth potential. However, as we have seen it before, human resource and its role in organization is defined as the novel factor of an organization's competitiveness. Along this analogy, the enterprises examined should also put an emphasis on workforce or in many cases on the founder and owner. His education and development can be carried out in many ways: he can participate in a kind of traditional training that can be a school-like system, adult- or e-learning training, as well as participation in leadership- or group training, therapeutic process, counseling, mediation, coaching or mentorship.

The topic of leader development as an activity is often mentioned in connection with entrepreneur development (Bolden–Terry, 2000; Bolden, 2007; Leith, 2009; Stewart, 2009). Several sources highlight that entrepreneur development is nothing but leader development. Baumol (1968) in his early work made the following statement: in a growth-oriented world, we can try to learn how to stimulate the willingness of entrepreneurs but we have to look for solutions. After the millennium, it is still true that there is no unified standpoint on leader development. There are two parallel directions in this field: in case of certain organisations leader development is based on need, without planning, in an ad hoc manner; while in other cases it is characterized by complete personalization. For an optimal solution everyone should get what they need. For this, mentorship – as a tool of leader development and career management – is a suitable activity (McCauley–Van Velsor, 2004; Chuck–Yanbo 2014). Most developmental psychologists, however, agree that leaders are distinguished not so much by their leadership philosophy, personality or leadership style but rather by their inner „action logic” – the way they interpret their environment and react when their power and safety is in danger. Nevertheless, relatively few leaders try to understand their own action logic and even less has discovered the possibility to change it. Mentorship has a significance in this process (Rooke–Torbert 2005).

By coaching, mentoring processes, reporting, giving and receiving feedback, the use of knowledge necessary for leading an enterprise can be optimised (Gaál et al. 2012). Academic-level knowledge and the real world should be connected; i. e. pedagogical theories should be combined with business methods and models (Robinson–Haynes 1991). For this mentorship – like coaching, which is considered a related profession but is also quite different – is the first method, as the most effective entrepreneur mentorship support activity (Terjesen–Sullivan, 2011; Leferbre–Redien–Collot, 2013).

A further question yet to be answered is the reason for the (lack of) recognition and widespread application of mentorship as a developmental activity. One basic problem is that the notion itself is relatively unknown. Although in the literature few information is found about the role of mentorship, it can be stated that, in spite of this, many sources highlight the importance and usefulness of this activity (Lutz et al. 2015). Regarding its popularity, mentorship is growing rapidly as a personalized support activity available for young entrepreneurs (St-Jean–Audet–Courtet, 2009b). In the dissertation of Csapó (2009) about the characteristics and development opportunities of rapidly growing SMEs in Hungary, he made the statement that in western market economies but mostly in Anglo-Saxon countries, there are ‘counseling programmes in which founders or leaders of successful enterprises give advice to

enterprises recently founded or at the beginning of growth' (Csapó, 2009: 144.). The advantage of this, as referred to by Kállay and Imreh is that the leaders or owners of these successful enterprises have the necessary experience and they are aware of the macro-environment and the challenges awaiting a new SME (Kállay–Imreh, 2004), so they can effectively help and support new enterprises which are about to enter the market. They can give advice thus helping SMEs get over being relatively unknown. The mentor – if selected carefully – 'can provide the best assistance for a newly created enterprise' (Vecsenyi–Petheő, 2017:73).

III.1.1. Definition of the entrepreneur mentorship process

The entrepreneur mentorship process includes a supporting relationship between an experienced entrepreneur (mentor) and a beginner (young) entrepreneur (mentee), with the aim of helping the latter's personal development (St.Jean–Audet, 2009), as entrepreneurs, most of all, need mentors due to the complex and extensive nature of the tasks waiting for them (Krueger–Wilson, 1998). Entrepreneur mentorship activity confirms this statement, considering its basic goal to provide support and facilitate the sharing of information and ideas, thus promoting the survival and growth of young entrepreneurs in the corporate world (Kantor, 2001).

One key factor of the entrepreneur mentorship process is how the mentor can support the mentee in overcoming the hardships related to the complexity of entrepreneur existence and handling complex situations. Mentorship is, without a doubt, a proper form of supporting entrepreneurs that makes it possible for mentees to develop their own management skills and learn through actions, guided by a mentor with extensive business experience (St.Jean–Audet 2009). This mentorship process is necessary because of the feedbacks as well. However, the process has another approach, supporting not only the business side: in some situation, the mentee expects personal, emotional support and his own cognitive development from the process. In case of enterprises, due to the congestions – such as time, financial and energy input – in certain areas as well as the questions that arise and the complexity of the problems traditional training and counseling activity do not provide satisfactory solutions. In such cases, mentorship may provide solutions for the effectiveness of analysis and planning due to its knowledge-transfer and competence developing functions, as well as entrepreneurial and personal development of effectiveness. To make this method complete, developing the so-called soft-skills is vital. The development of entrepreneurial skills is connected to the development process of the entrepreneur's social language because this helps create personal theories, thinking and action (Rae, 2000). As a result, the more experience and knowledge available for the mentees, the more flexible they will be towards new challenges. According to another approach, entrepreneur mentorship is a complementary developmental activity connected to the primary learning process surrounding the individual and providing the opportunity of greater flexibility by complementing traditional strategies (Gay–Stephensson 1998).

In my dissertation entrepreneur mentorship process is defined as the first step in creating a mental model. This model makes it possible for the mentee (young entrepreneur) to do business activity based on his own idea and to cope with challenges he meets along the way in the most effective way. On this basis, mentorship is the starting of an interaction between a less experienced and an experienced participant, the beginning of thinking together with the aim of developing the mentee's entrepreneurial competences. On the other hand, the mentorship process is a series of activities with certain pre-defined frames that provides all the necessary support and feedback to the mentee in a safe environment. Its aim is to get the mentee from point A to point B – from the starting point to the predetermined state by guiding him along the way. However, I assume that 'not every mentorship process is able to ensure the same learning outcomes, benefits and profits' (Zsigmond 2017:590). The influencing factors are yet to be investigated. As St. Jean and Audet have stated certain factors – like the roles of the mentor,

the frequency and length of mentorship meeting as well as the psychological characteristics of participants – definitely influence learning but further, deeper investigation is needed in this topic (St.Jean–Audet 2009).

III.1.2. The mentorship process, its participants and the expectations towards a mentor

Any mentorship process is characterized by dyadicity (Kram, 1985; Waters et al., 2002; Alfred–Garvey, 2010; Myers, 2016). Since this dyadicity consists of the connections and interactions of people, its perception is in many cases subjective. In spite of this, there are some features, attitudes and competences both the mentor and the mentee should possess. While considering as a starting point that mentoring is a two-person activity in which the mentor, as provider of a professional service, and the mentee as its recipient are present and by definition the mentor has experience and is in possession of the management and facilitating skills which are important for the process, primarily the link to the mentor process is investigated.

In order to examine the system of expectations and requirements towards a mentor it is necessary to clarify who can be considered a mentor from an entrepreneur development point of view. In this dissertation entrepreneur development mentor is defined as an experienced helper who is open, willing and able to share his knowledge and is an expert in business life. A mentor contributes to reaching the goals of a less experienced entrepreneur (who either is at the beginning of entrepreneurial existence, is stuck or is facing a growth dilemma) through knowledge transfer and support, while expanding the professional knowledge and improving the personal skills of the mentee.

Considering that the task of a mentor is quite complex, the compiling a list of competences and attributes required for this activity is far-reaching and difficult. It is further complicated by the fact that the process management does not happen not in a laboratory but rather in a rapidly changing environment, so the situation and the context changes from meeting to meeting and from entrepreneur to entrepreneur. Therefore, it is not enough to choose the activity most suitable for the needs of the mentee but it is also necessary to align it to the requirements of a certain context (Clutterbuck–Lane 2005). This alignment does not primarily and exclusively mean the input factors (the background and experience of a mentor) but rather the way the mentor acts in a particular situation and the problem solving patterns he chooses (St.Jean–Audet 2009/b).

While processing the relevant literature, several requirements towards the mentor related to successful process management were identified. These were categorised into 5 groups for the sake of transparency. These are the followings: mentor attitude (1), factors regarding theoretical knowledge (2), attributes (3), skill and competences (4), other essential factors for management (5). Several factors – competences, attitudes and attributes – were categorised in these groups that are described in *Annex 1*.

The literature agrees that when judging the effectiveness of the mentorship process, the characteristics of mentors should be taken into consideration (Mullen, 1994). However, there is no agreement on what exactly these characteristics mean. When examining the requirements from a mentor it can be stated that certain theories highlight factors of key importance (see *Annex 1*) while other authors describe the requirements as a complex model, along a scheme. Since the aim of this dissertation was to create a model specific to Hungary that helps successful mentorship, the described and categorized factors were analysed in the mixed methodology study.

III.3. Examination of the hypotheses and the theses of the research

The hypotheses were examined based on certain research questions and the empirical studies related to these, then I attempted to draw up theses.

III.3.1. Hypothesis testing

Based on the premises the expectation was that there would not be any factors that is judged significantly differently by mentors and mentees (H_1). It was further assumed that the requirements towards the process are of higher value, therefore of greater importance than those describing the real experiences: i. e. an opportunity for development can be found where the expectations of the demand and supply sides differ from each other and there is also a difference in the expected and the experienced quality of service as well. The importance of development in these cases is shown by the extent of the difference (H_2). As for the ranking of the factors my preconception was that the survey will show quite identical results in case of mentors, mentees and cumulated importance so there will not be any factors that one group considers important while the other thinks it is negligible (H_3 , H_4).

Assuming that the entrepreneur mentorship process is a complex system, in which both the demand and supply sides – the provider and recipient of the service – both have expectations for the service despite their different experiences and backgrounds, but working for the same goal, no significant difference can be observed between their expectations from the process. In this sense according to the H_1 hypothesis, the judgment of the importance of different factors shows nearly identical values, mean value, variance and dissipation. The results of the questionnaire survey –since importance and realization are independent avariants due to the specificity of the database – and the pairwise t-test and variance analysis performed on the data are suitable for testing the hypothesis.

By analysing the responses of mentors it can be stated that in five cases there is a significant ($p < 0.05$) positive relation between the importance and the realization value of a certain factor: active listening, credibility, openness, giving feedback and the ability of managing change. Considering the reverse sign, it is necessary to intervene in the process and to develop it in case of these factors. With respect to the mentees and to the whole sample, a significant relation can be observed in a larger number of cases – 14 coinciding factors, all of them with a positive sign. This means that numerous factors are below the expectations and show significant differences between the average values of importance and realization. Considering the results of the ANOVA analysis it can be stated that in case of mentors three factors (empathy: $p = 0.007$; economic knowledge: $p = 0.033$; and openness: $p = 0.012$) show significant difference between the expected and the realized values. In case of mentees, 9 such differences can be observed (benchmarking: $p = 0.032$; ability to create a trusting atmosphere: $p = 0.00$; empathy: $p = 0.012$; holistic view: $p = 0.00$; integrity: $p = 0.003$; outward communication: $p = 0.019$; openness: $p = 0.014$; poaitive attitude: $p = 0.009$; giving feedback: $p = 0.034$). In addition, while the linear correlation coefficient measures how accurate the regression line calculated for two numerical series is, rank correlation investigates whether they change together, assuming that there are no outlier values in the series. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was determined to measure how strong the rank correlation relation is.

Formula for calculating the *Spearman* rank correlation coefficient:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum_{i=0}^n d_i^2}{n^3 - n},$$

where d is the difference between the rank values the x , y variables. The value of the rank correlation coefficient in case of importance is 0.8330; in case of realization is 0.765. The value of the rank correlation coefficient is between -1 and 1 where the sign indicates the direction of the link and the difference to 1 indicates the strength of the relation. In this case, this means that the rank of mentors and mentees is closer to each other from the viewpoint of importance than in the case of accuracy; therefore, the expectations are more closely linked than the experiences.

Considering the pairwise t-test, ANOVA analysis and the value of the rank correlation coefficient, the **H_1 hypothesis has been rejected**, since both the supply and demand sides agree

that there are different factors where significant differences can be observed between the expectation and the experience.

The entrepreneur mentorship process is interpreted as a professional service. Like other services, I assumed that the service quality model created by Parasurman–Zeithaml–Berry could be interpreted to the activity of entrepreneur mentorship as well. Therefore we can identify 5 „gaps” responsible for the unsuccessful process (Heidrich 2006), i. e. they influence the success rate of the entrepreneur mentorship process. As the service quality depends on many factors – as we could see, numerous factors could have been identified in case of entrepreneur mentorship process as well – the difference between the definition of the service quality and its realization was considered as a starting point when trying to identify the factors of an ineffective mentorship process. This statement was formed as the H2 hypothesis, which states *„there are significant differences both in case of mentors and mentees between the expectations set up towards a successful entrepreneur mentorship process and the factor combinations experienced during the actual process.”*

To investigate the hypothesis further it was divided into further subhypotheses. First I examined if there was a difference between the perception of the roles, i. e. mentors and mentees: *„H2a: There is a significant difference along the roles – mentor vs mentee – in the evaluation of the efficiency and success of the entrepreneur mentorship process.”* The results of the t-tests showed that out of the 20 factors investigated there are significant differences in the importance and realization values in case of 14 factors. The same differences can be observed among the roles as well. Therefore, I accept the H₂ hypothesis.

Next, it was examined whether there were significant differences among the sexes. According to the H2b hypothesis, *„there is a significant difference within the roles between sexes in the evaluation of the efficiency and success of the entrepreneur mentorship process.”* The differences were examined using the ANOVA analysis. From the point of importance there are significant differences among mentors between sexes in case of two factors – empathy ($p=0.035$) and hard frames ($p=0.33$), while among mentees we could not find such differences. From the point of realization, significant differences can be observed in case of the following factors: among mentors active listening ($p=0.049$), among mentees holistic view ($p=0.048$). On this basis the H_{2b} hypothesis is accepted as well as out of the 20 factors examined there were some that have shown significant differences between sexes and/or roles on the basis of importance or realization.

Since the t-tests and the ANOVA analysis highlighted that there is an independent variant along which significant difference can be observed in connection with the importance of expectation from the process and its perception. Furthermore, both H_{2a} and H_{2b} subhypotheses were accepted, therefore the H₂ hypothesis itself can be accepted as well. This emphasizes the need for development in – at least a part of – the entrepreneur mentorship process.

According to the service approach, both a demand and a supply side can be observed in case of entrepreneur mentorship process as well. It is presumed that both sides of the service process enter the process with the same expectations, since they have the same goal – to facilitate the learning process connected to starting/operating/developing enterprises and to take part in it – according to which the H₁ hypothesis was formed. *„In a given entrepreneur mentorship process, there is no significant difference between expectations set by mentees towards mentors and the self-image of mentors themselves, the combinations of factors are the same.”*

To compare the opinions of two independent groups, with the help of ANOVA analysis it is shown that there is a significant ($p<0.05$) link in the importance of factors in three cases: empathy ($p=0.07$), economic knowledge ($p=0.033$) and openness ($p=0.012$). Although according to the ANOVA analysis significant difference can be observed between the mentors’ and mentees’ answers in the above 3 competences, based on the absolute values, the most

significant difference, however, can be observed in other factors. At the first place is sympathy (0.409, this means a nearly 20% difference), followed by economic knowledge (-0.285) and the holistic view (0.258). The reason for the differences can be traced back to the difference in average values of the factors. The Sperman rank correlation coefficient (0.765) confirms that while the rank of mentors and mentees from the point of importance is closer to each other than from the point of realization and the expectations are quite the same but they do not coincide because the value of the index fails to meet the desired $\rho=1$ value which is needed to accept the hypothesis. In light of the results above the **H₁ hypothesis is rejected**.

Several factors of the entrepreneur mentorship process were examined. The H₃ hypothesis focuses on professional experience and business knowledge, while the H₄ hypothesis focuses on the factor combinations needed for the creation of a trusting atmosphere.

Even while studying the relevant literature some questions have been raised as to how experience gained in the same field, professional knowledge, general and business knowledge can influence the entrepreneur mentorship process. There is a general agreement that some kind of competence is needed from the mentor (Ebrahimi 2013). The meaning of competence, though, is interpreted differently by the literature. Although there are extreme standpoints, – same industry experience (Deakins 1997), attraction of contrary industries (Bisk 2002) – the intermediate standpoint is the most common, complemented by theoretical, business knowledge (e.g. Sorcinelli-Yun 2007). While examining the H₃ hypothesis, the focus was on general economic knowledge, i. e. theoretical and business knowledge and connections acquired in a certain industry.

Considering the importance rank of the factors, economic knowledge received a value of 4.21, while industry experience 3.71. These values mean that they are at the 14th and 20th places in the rank. In case of mentors the two values (3.949 and 3.61; ranked 17th and 20th places) are a bit closer to each other but in case of mentees economic knowledge is ranked 10th place with a value of 4.23 while industry experience was considered less relevant with a value of 3.76. Although according to the opinions of mentors and mentees there are certain differences between the importance values and their rank in case of industry experience (3.61 és 3.76; ranked 20th and 20th) and theoretical or acquired business knowledge (3.95 and 4.23; ranked 17th and 10th), during the factor analysis carried out using the Varimax method on the whole sample (Figure 3), the responses to both factors moved together, albeit in different directions. As a result, they can be grouped into one factor; therefore the **H₃ hypothesis can be accepted**.

Figure 3 – Rotated factor weight matrix based on the complete sample

Name of the Factor	Faktor száma	Rotated Component Matrixa	Component					
			1	2	3	4	5	6
MENTOR'S CREDIBILITY	Faktor 1	international communication	0,746					
		credibility	0,697					
		hard frames	0,593					
		integrity	0,463					
COMMUNICATIONAL COMPETENCIES TOWARDS THE MENTEE	Faktor 2	reflection		0,705				
		active listening		0,705				
		external communication		0,644				
RAPORT BUILDING	Faktor 3	creating trust			0,699			
		holistic aspect			0,698			
		sympathy			0,636			
COMPETENCY OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT	Faktor 4	positive attitude				0,699		
		managing changes				0,616		
		openness				0,557		
HARD SKILLS	Faktor 5	business knowledge					0,787	
		industrial experience					0,668	
HOLISTIC APPROACH	Faktor 6	goal-oriented						0,713
		project-oriented						0,592
		process-oriented						0,58

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Rotation converged in 7 iterations.
N=153

Source: own editing.

The qualitative research has called the attention to the same results: none of the people interviewed considered it important to split the two factors. The differences have shown – possibly due to the age of respondents – that younger respondents prefer – although not exclusively – industry knowledge, while more experienced respondents regard the two as equals but their personal development highlights the necessity of their theoretical knowledge as well. Relying on the correlation discovered during the quantitative research and that this correlation was not rejected by the qualitative interviews, the **H₃ hypothesis can be accepted**.

According to the assumption – with regard to the close cooperation between mentor and mentee and the intimate information, practices and tactics shared between them – the success of the complex connection system of mentors and mentees is characterized by human connection beyond a trusting relationship from the viewpoint of the realization of mutual goals set prior to the process. The H₄ hypothesis was formed on this basis.

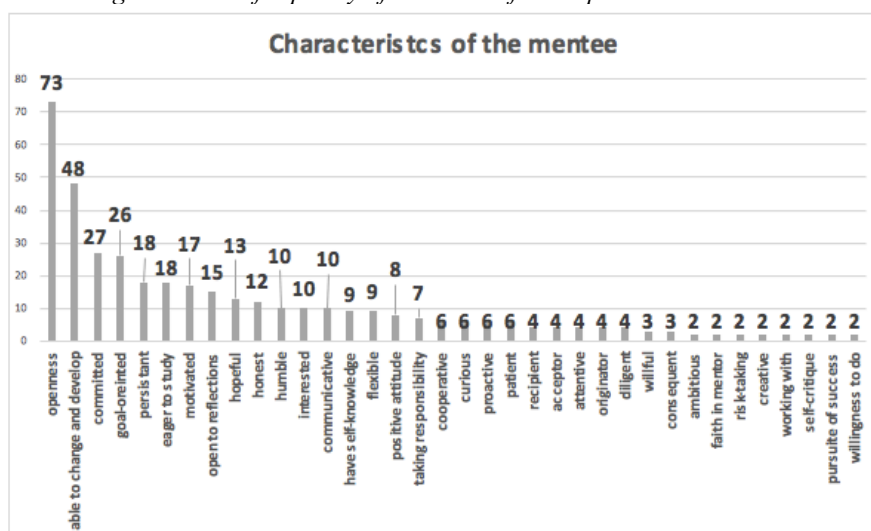
When considering the factors of a successful process respondents ranked sympathy 17th (3.93), empathy 11th (4.19), trusting atmosphere 5th (4.46), credibility second (4.63), positive attitude 3rd (4.58) and openness 1st (4.73) place. Based on the results of the ANOVA analysis, significant differences can be observed between the responses of mentors and mentees in case of empathy and openness concerning their importance in the success of the process. The difference between absolute values of the factors can be observed in case of sympathy (0.409), economic knowledge (-0.285) and holistic view (0.258). Considering the average values and their ranks, personal sympathy and empathy were ranked behind other factors necessary for creating rapport between participants of the process. According to the factor weight matrix rotated with the Varimax method and created based on the response of mentees, empathy is not among the factors of successful entrepreneur mentorship activities. It was grouped into a factor together with credibility, inner communication and hard frames, while credibility and sympathy form a factor pair together, openness and a positive attitude completed with the ability to manage changes also contribute to the success of the process. In case of factor analysis based on the complete sample, it cannot be stated that sympathy, empathy, mutual trust, openness and positive attitude are in the same factor category. Empathy cannot be categorized into a factor according to this analysis. The ability to create a rapport appears but it is complemented with the ability to have a holistic viewpoint, while the factors shaping the credibility of the mentor (internal communication, credibility, hard frames and integrity) can be categorized into an individual factor. Positive attitude and openness are the elements of another factor combination. Since empathy has not been the element of any factors during the factor analysis and the factors necessary for the creation of a rapport could not have been categorized into one or two factors, the **H₄ hypothesis was partly accepted**.

Due to the dyadic nature of the mentorship process (*Dickinson et al 2009, Alfred-Garvey 2010, Water et al 2012, Myers 2016*) not only the expectations from the mentor should be examined but also the requirements towards a mentee. According to the literature, the three most common characteristics of a mentee are openness, dedication, and effective and reflective communication (*Fulmer 2000, Maxwell 2005, St-Jean-Audet 2009, Dávid 2014*). The H₅ hypothesis investigates the legitimacy of these requirements, namely it assumes that *'in terms of the success of the process the 3 most important requirements towards the mentee are to be open, dedicated to what he/she does and to communicate effectively'*.

In the questionnaire, after rating the factors of the process on a scale, open questions were used to inquire mentors and mentees about the three most important characteristics that a mentee should possess in order for the process to be successful. In the questionnaire there were 142 out of 153 respondents giving 447 evaluable responses, naming 81 different features and attitudes. During the evaluation of the importance of factors, a simple frequency calculation was carried out (Figure 4) for which the expectations with the same meaning were merged. On this basis, the most frequently mentioned factor was openness (73) which was mentioned by

more than half of the respondents. It is followed by the incentive to change (48), dedication (27) and goal oriented attitude (26). The communication competence in the hypothesis is ranked at the 11th place with 10 mentions. So it has become clear that the factors and feature highlighted by literature do not coincide with the ones emphasized by the models, therefore the **H₅ hypothesis is rejected**.

Figure 4 – The frequency of mentions of the expectations towards a mentee



Source: own editing, n=153.

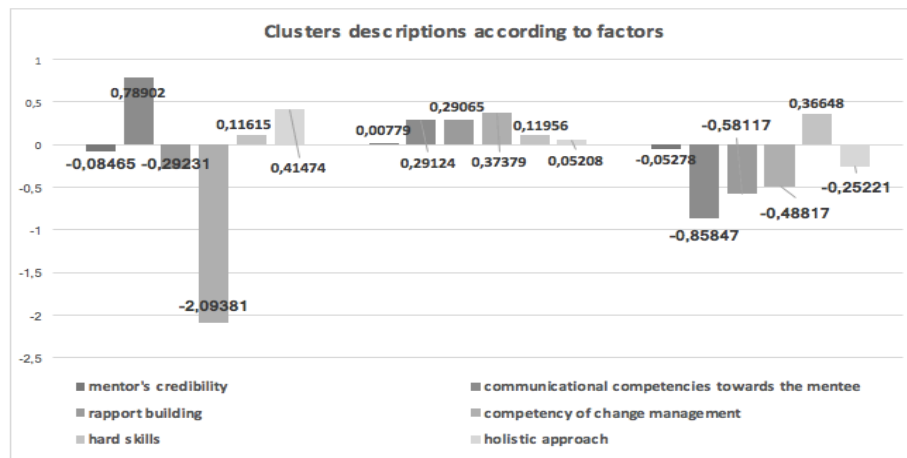
The aim of my research was to set up a model that identifies the factor combinations that contribute to leading a successful and effective entrepreneur mentorship process. According to the approaches in the relevant literature, successful mentorship process can be interpreted differently (eg. Boyd 1999, Dymock 1999, St-Jean–Audet 2009) depending on the target group, the problem, how and when do participants enter the entrepreneur developmental process. H₆ hypothesis was based on these differences.

The expectations connected to segmentation and segments were taken into consideration, namely whether it is worth segmenting if the expectations and the needs within a segment are characteristically different from the demand characteristics in other segments (1), the prerequisite of which is to have identifiable segmentation criteria, based on which the supposed demand can be divided into parts (2), and if there is an opportunity to satisfy the revealed needs (3), and if there are no quick changes in the demand characteristics (4), and if the costs of segmentation do not exceed excess result produced by them (5) (Veres–Szilágyi 2007). Since factor analysis created a basis for the identification of the segmentation criteria – it could be assumed that there is a mentor-pool that is able to adapt, and that the formation of segments does not mean an excess cost and furthermore there is an opportunity of longitudinal studies investigating the characteristics of the demand side and homogenous segments can be identified as well – a cluster analysis was carried out.

Several attempts were made using cluster analysis with the help of K-midpoint method in order to identify segments with homogenous expectations and needs. The analysis performed for 3, 4, 5 and 6 possible clusters has shown that a segment of proper cardinality (that does not exclusively contain individual responses), where there is a significant difference between the responses of the individuals making up the clusters, can be observed when dividing the respondents into three homogenous groups. These clusters are different from each other along the factors of the factor analysis created earlier, the representatives of the clusters prefer different factors (values of importance) when it comes to the expectations towards the

mentorship process (Figure 5), therefore the **H₆ hypothesis is accepted** since it is possible to satisfy the needs along the different preferences on the demand side of the process.

Figure 5 – The characteristics of clusters along factors



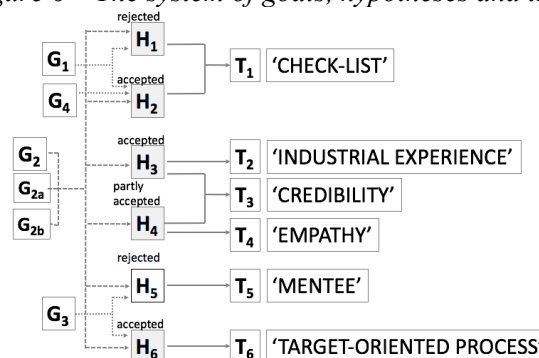
Source: own editing, n=90.

III.3.2. Describing the theses of the study

After testing the hypothesis, I attempted to form theses. As an overview of the study, the system of goals, hypotheses and theses can be seen on Figure 6.

The result of the research has proven that, first, there are differences between the expectations of mentors towards themselves and the expectations of mentees towards mentors and the process (1), second, differences can be observed both in ranking and in evaluation of several factors and between the factors experienced (and realized) and expected from the entrepreneur mentorship process (2). This calls attention to three points: there are no guidelines regarding the work of mentors and the expectations set towards them (1), therefore the experienced quality of the service often fails to meet the expectations, so there is a narrow gap, a field in need of development (2) that raises questions of quality insurance from the viewpoint of the effectiveness and success of the process (3).

Figure 6 – The system of goals, hypotheses and theses



Source: own editing.

In order to standardize the entrepreneurial mentorship process to a certain extent, and for it to be facilitated by mentors with the right qualification a check-list should be created which contributes to leading an effective and successful entrepreneur mentorship process. With the help of the participants of the research, the people who have taken part in entrepreneur mentorship processes in Hungary and their experience and the factor analysis a model set up combining six factors which helps reach the goal – an effective and successful mentorship process.

The factors of the model can be divided into further competences and skills. The factor 'ability to understand the mentee' includes the ability of the mentor to listen to the mentee, give feedback to what he has heard while using effective questioning techniques, methods and tools during the process. The process leading criteria cover the process of contracting and the rules related to it, such as defining the time and resource limits as well as the nature of communication between each other and the application of appropriate benchmarking practice. The process cannot work without creating a trusting atmosphere based on mutual sympathy and trust, which can be regarded as the factor of the ability to create trust. The positive attitude of the mentor, interest and openness is also required so that change can be facilitated by the mentor. This should be complemented with general business and economic knowledge. In addition – as it is shown later on – it is also beneficial, but not required, to have relevant experience in the industry, which can be called hard knowledge. However, the mentor needs to oversee the process as a whole, therefore a holistic view is required from them, complete with a goal- and process oriented approach.

Thesis 1 – 'Check-list'

Leading a successful and effective entrepreneur mentorship activity can be facilitated with the consideration of a six factor model, the elements of which are the ability to understand the mentee (1), the ability to create the process-leading criteria (2), the competence to create trust (3), the ability to support change (4), hard knowledge (5) and holistic view (6).

The literature names differences between the mentor and mentee in age (eg. Levison 1978, Belcourt 2000, Rhodes 2002) and experience (eg. Fekete 2008, St-Jean-Audet 2009). However, there is no agreement regarding the nature of experience and whether industrial and business knowledge should appear as complements of each other in the mentorship process or whether there is a difference in their importance.

The respondents have clearly highlighted that industrial experience is the least relevant among the examined factors while general economic and business knowledge have a higher priority and there are differences between the average importance values of the factors as well as their places in the ranking, during the factor analysis the responses to the two factors have moved together, they belonged to the same factor. *Thesis 2* has been formed on this basis.

Thesis 2 – 'Industrial experience'

Economic and business knowledge is more relevant than industrial knowledge of the mentee with regards to the effective leading of entrepreneurial mentorship processes. Mentorship experience in a certain industry is not an essential requirement from the mentor with regards to success, however, its existence can contribute to the success of the process. Mentees prefer general achievements over time spent/experience gained in a certain industry.

The thesis highlights that the mentor needs to be open-minded and experienced, namely he needs to have some kind of significant – personal and professional – achievement in the field of business, another industry, geography, sport or art.

However, a basic requirement towards the mentor and the process is to create a rapport, a trusting atmosphere between the participants. For this, credibility from the side of the mentor is necessary. One component of this is the achievements mentioned in *Thesis 2*. The second is to have a positive attitude and openness toward the process, in which there is mutual sympathy between the participants. All this is necessary as during the mentorship process the mentor and mentee share such intimate information with each other that in order to process them, human

contact, trust and harmony are vital. Several factors contribute to the creation of a trusting environment. These factors contribute to the successful entrepreneur mentorship process not by themselves and not in a group either, but complemented by other requirements, as it is stated in *Thesis 3*.

Thesis 3. – 'Forming a rapport'

The success of the complex relations between mentor and mentee depends on several factors that cannot be grouped into one factor, however, in order to have a successful process, these factors should be present combined with other factors as basic requirements during the mentorship process. These factors are openness, a positive attitude, credibility, a trusting atmosphere and sympathy.

According to the respondents, the factors that are most able to influence the process positively are openness (the most important requirement), credibility (2) and positive attitude (3). From the three highest rated factors, two – openness and positive attitude combined with change management – make up a factor combination (The factor of the ability to facilitate change), while credibility, together with the factors of internal communication regarding the process and the framework makes up the factor of process-leading criteria. The other two factors mentioned, the ability to create a trusting atmosphere and matching (mutual personal sympathy) grouped into a factor contribute to the success of the process.

By examining the responses and based on the results of the factor analysis performed both on the complete sample and on the demand side the factor of empathy was excluded from the model. However, empathy is mentioned in several models by literature (eg. Clutterbuck 2005, Smith 2005, Connor 2007, Starchevich 2009, Roll 2015, Palmer 2016) and in other related research (eg. St-Jean–Audet 2009). Empathy, as a factor, considering its value of absolute importance shows significant differences. While mentors consider this factor relatively important (with an average value of 4.41 and the 8th place in the ranking), mentees rated it as being less important (4.03 average value and 15th place). This difference is also backed by the results of the ANOVA analysis. At the same time, according to factor analysis, empathy can be classified among the factors which do not act like other factors but cannot be considered an individual factor either, since it does not have the right influence or communality value to be an individual factor. Therefore, I concluded that – *Thesis 4*. - empathy is not of primary importance for the entrepreneur mentorship process.

Thesis 4. – 'Empathy'

To ensure understanding, human connection and harmony is required during the entrepreneur mentorship process. Empathy, however, is not a fundamental contributing factor to successful and effective leadership as maintaining objectivity is of higher priority.

Thesis 4. emphasizes that empathy as a factor cannot be completely excluded or neglected. However, it cannot be included in the requirements that contribute the most to leading a successful and effective process either. The reason for this is that even though empathy is necessary for understanding but objectivity is prioritized over it as objectivity makes it possible to see the picture as a whole and to think systematically. This way, too much involvement of the mentor can be avoided as well, since this would distort the judgment of the situation and would lead to lower effectiveness. In this case, professional relationship could be replaced with an amicable one since excessive empathy could make the mentor subjective and biased.

Due to the dyadic nature of the process, requirements can be set not only towards the mentor and the process but towards the mentee as well. These are summarized in *Thesis 5*.

Thesis 5. – 'Mentee'

Due to the dyadic nature of the process requirements can be set not only towards the mentor and the process but towards the mentee as well. According to these requirements, mentees should be open, eager to change and improve, devoted and goal oriented.

The respondents have mentioned 81 different requirements a mentee should meet in 447 cases. Out of these, the most often mentioned requirement was openness – twice as often as the eagerness to improve (at the second place), followed by devotion and goal-oriented approach. Other requirements from mentees are perseverance, a desire to learn, motivation, the ability to receive critical feedback, hopefulness, honesty, humility, curiosity and communication. It is interesting that the last factor – according to the literature – is among the top three qualities. The lesson of *Thesis 5.* is that the mentee side of the process is just as important as the mentor and several factors can contribute to the success of the process or the lack of certain competences might hinder it. Further research is needed in this field.

Considering that, from a quality insurance point of view, the standardization of processes would lead to the most desired results, the process still needs to remain demand-specific namely that it needs to meet the expectations of the mentee (1) and it should fit their situation as well (2). To carry out this standardization in a formalized manner sparing resources, a cluster analysis was performed. During the analysis groups of homogenous features and expectations were identified. It is possible to create a different process for these groups that is still directed towards the same result.

Thesis 6. – 'Target group-specific process'

According to the current perception of the entrepreneur mentorship process by the mentee the demand side can be divided into three homogenous groups which are significantly different from each other in their expectations. These segments can be described with the words 'Lead!', 'Encourage!' and 'Teach!'.

The representatives of the three clusters expect different contribution from the mentor and prioritize different factors in connection with the process. Those who belong to the first cluster can be regarded as pathfinders. For them, passing on authentic benchmarks based on experience is the most important, so they enter the process with a goal, but most of all they participate in it as students. The members of the second segment judge every factor of the model in almost the same way, for them, guidance is the most important. They have goals and questions, and during the process, there is a two-way flow of information. Giving and processing feedback also have important roles in the mentor-mentee interaction. Mentees of the third segment mainly enter the process without questions or ideas, so for them the most inspiring is, besides support, teaching and passing on theoretical knowledge and sharing experience. From an entrepreneur developmental aspect, the second cluster is the most desirable based on its characteristics. It is also the cluster with the most members, therefore a standardized process needs to be adjusted to the expectations of the representatives of this segment.

IV. Possibilities of utilizing the results of the research, future research plans

In connection with the research new and novel statements beyond the theses and further areas of research can be defined.

The research itself fills a gap, since such a study focusing on the characteristics of Hungarian entrepreneur mentorship processes as well as on the expectations from the mentor and the process has not been published so far. The research approach and the methodological processing are novel too, since the selected method, mixed research, includes the characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative research using in-depth interviews and the quantitative research using questionnaires, together with the mixed methodological approach have gradually contributed to the creation of the model best describing the entrepreneur mentorship process. The research approaches the examined problem from two aspects, which is also novel: it takes into consideration the characteristics and expectations of both the demand side (mentee) and the supply side (mentor). It also considers their experience, incorporating it into the model.

From a content aspect, the system of criteria for leading a successful mentorship process is a novelty and it can be considered as an individual model. This checklist can be the starting point of a framework that in the future may contribute to the formation of a mentor training, aptitude or mentor selection process and this research can serve as a guideline for that.

Considering the processed literature, the results of the qualitative and quantitative research several suggestions can be raised. First (1) it is important to spread the awareness of the topic, to define mentorship as a process and emphasize its positive effects and profits. This, however, can only happen if the entrepreneur mentorship processes adhere to certain quality insurance principles namely if there is a training and accreditation system, which serves as a basis for mentors and as a benchmark for mentees. Therefore, I suggest (2) setting up an organization which could tend to the training of mentors and provide a framework for a follow-up system. I would further suggest (3) introducing supervision for the mentors involved in the mentorship process and (4) introducing international benchmarks in order to create a geographically centralized developmental activity. Moreover, supporting knowledge sharing (5) in this field would also be necessary – creating forums, organize conferences where good and bad practices and research results could be presented. I hope that the six factor model introduced in the dissertation can contribute to the realization of all this, considering that it is based on the opinions and expectations of the mentors and mentees who have participated in Hungarian entrepreneur mentorship processes. This model can serve as a guideline or checklist for the people working in the field of entrepreneur development.

The systematic classification and categorization of entrepreneur mentorship activities – such as idea-, process-, professional and international mentorship – and the identification of related characteristics can also be defined as a direction for future research. Expanding the system of factors can also be linked to this area of research, as well as the widening the elements – such as empathy – of the current factor system.

I think the examination of the link between the success of the process and the gender distribution is also a desirable research area. I have also identified the expectations towards mentees that are necessary for the success of the process. An overview of these expectations can also be the basis of future research. The research can be extended to unsuccessful processes too, even if its main question has a negative message. The identification of pitfalls would surely contribute to improving the accuracy of the factors promising success and effectiveness.

V. Related publications of the candidate

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Annex

Annex 1. – Requirements towards the mentor

Factor		Author
Attitude	Trust and faith	Starchevich 2009
	Single-minded	Clutterbuck 2005
	Open	Clutterbuck 2005, Starchevich 2009, Nagypál 2010, Menges 2015
	Positive attitude	Clutterbuck 2005, Starchevich 2009, Bencsik 2012, Memon 2013
Theoretical knowledge	Knowledge in the same industry	Bisk 2002, Deakins 1997
	General business knowledge	Wilson 1999, Clutterbuck 2005, Szádvári 2011, Menges 2015, Heathfield 2016
	Knowledge in economics	Bencsik 2012, Filius 2012
	Knowledge of other developmental activities	Kram 1985, Clutterbuck 2005, Smith 2005, Szádvári 2011
	Organizational knowledge	Smith 2005, Szádvári 2011, Heathfield 2016
Characteristics	Commitment	Clutterbuck 2005, Szádvári 2011, Smith 2013, Roll 2015, Heathfield 2016
	Empathy	Clutterbuck 2005, Smith 2005, Conor 2007, Starchevich 2009, Roll 2015, Palmer 2016
	Extraversion	Menges 2015
	Humor	Clutterbuck 2005
	Consistency	Bencsik 2012
	Selfless	Clutterbuck 2005, Starchevich 2009
	Honest	Conor 2007, Starchevich 2009, Bencsik 2012, Rácz 2014
Skills and competencies	Emotional intelligence	Berman-West 2008, Heathfield 2016
	Process- and project-orientation	Kathermdahl 2011, Filius 2012
	Integrity capability	Heathfield 2016
	Ability to create frames	Clutterbuck 2005
	Communicational capabilities, including the ability to deliver feedback and active listening	Clutterbuck 2005, Smith 2005, Jones-Spooner 2006, Conor 2007, DeLong 2008, Starchevich 2009, Nagypál 2010, Zsigmond 2011, Bencsik 2012, Dávid 2014, Rácz 2014, Roll 2015
	Self-knowledge, self-criticism and self-development	Gibbs 2000, Clutterbuck 2005, Smith-Jenetsch 2008, Szádvári 2011, Rácz 2014
	System thinking	Clutterbuck 2005, Starchevich 2009, Rácz 2014
	Ability to transfer knowledge and willingness	Roche 1979, Kiss 2003, Zsigmond 2012,
	Patience	Starchevich 2009
Other	Credibility	Holliszter-Sutter 2001, Kunos 2011, Nagypál 2016, Palmer 2016
	Access to the network	Clutterbuck 2005, Bencsik 2012, Rácz 2014, Heathfield 2016
	Role model	Clutterbuck 2005, Noor 2010, Kerry-Mayers 2013, Dávid 2014, Mitchell 2015

Own editing.

Annex 2. – Results of the t-test according to importance and reality

Name of the attribute	FULL EXAMPLE								MENTOR								MENTEE							
	importance	realization	average	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		importance	realization	average	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		importance	realization	average	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
active listening	4,346	4,203	0,144	1,06	1,678	152	0,095		4,458	4,186	0,271	0,906	2,298	58	0,025	*	4,277	4,213	0,064	1,144	0,541	93	0,59	
internal communication	4,176	3,954	0,222	1,053	2,611	152	0,01	*	4,136	4,068	0,068	0,848	0,614	58	0,542		4,202	3,883	0,319	1,157	2,675	93	0,009	**
benchmarking	4,059	3,771	0,288	1,139	3,122	152	0,002	**	4,017	3,966	0,051	1,041	0,375	58	0,709		4,085	3,649	0,436	1,178	3,589	93	0,001	**
raport building	4,464	4,216	0,248	1,102	2,788	152	0,006	**	4,576	4,576	0	0,67	0	58	1		4,394	3,989	0,404	1,281	3,059	93	0,003	**
goal-oriented	4,163	3,961	0,203	0,969	2,586	152	0,011	*	4,288	4,119	0,169	0,791	1,646	58	0,105		4,085	3,862	0,223	1,069	2,026	93	0,046	*
empathy	4,19	4,19	0	1,032	0	152	1		4,441	4,407	0,034	0,694	0,375	58	0,709		4,032	4,053	-0,021	1,2	-0,172	93	0,864	
process-oriented	4,026	3,797	0,229	1,097	2,579	152	0,011	*	4,068	3,932	0,136	0,84	1,24	58	0,22		4	3,713	0,287	1,232	2,26	93	0,026	*
economical knowledge	4,124	4,098	0,026	1,026	0,315	152	0,753		3,949	4,119	-0,169	1,02	-1,277	58	0,207		4,234	4,085	0,149	1,016	1,422	93	0,158	
hard frames	3,837	3,771	0,065	1,168	0,692	152	0,49		3,814	3,763	0,051	0,729	0,536	58	0,594		3,851	3,777	0,074	1,378	0,524	93	0,601	
credibility	4,634	4,157	0,477	0,904	6,53	152	0	***	4,729	4,288	0,441	0,676	5,004	58	0	***	4,574	4,074	0,5	1,024	4,734	93	0	***
holistic approach	4,333	4,163	0,17	0,909	2,313	152	0,022	*	4,492	4,475	0,017	0,707	0,184	58	0,855		4,234	3,968	0,266	1,007	2,56	93	0,012	*
integrity	4,503	4,196	0,307	0,982	3,87	152	0	***	4,559	4,458	0,102	0,824	0,948	58	0,347		4,468	4,032	0,436	1,053	4,016	93	0	***
industrial knowledge	3,706	3,412	0,294	1,251	2,909	152	0,004	**	3,61	3,373	0,237	1,208	1,508	58	0,137		3,766	3,436	0,33	1,282	2,495	93	0,014	*
external communication	4,464	4,098	0,366	1,037	4,365	152	0	***	4,39	4,305	0,085	0,836	0,778	58	0,44		4,511	3,968	0,543	1,114	4,724	93	0	***
openness	4,725	4,386	0,34	0,852	4,934	152	0	***	4,847	4,576	0,271	0,611	3,409	58	0,001	**	4,649	4,266	0,383	0,974	3,813	93	0	***
positive attitude	4,575	4,412	0,163	0,892	2,266	152	0,025	*	4,695	4,61	0,085	0,702	0,927	58	0,358		4,5	4,287	0,213	0,993	2,077	93	0,041	*
project-oriented	3,902	3,987	-0,085	1,088	-0,966	152	0,336		3,814	3,966	-0,153	0,925	-1,267	58	0,21		3,957	4	-0,043	1,182	-0,349	93	0,728	
sympathy	3,935	4	-0,065	1,179	-0,686	152	0,494		4,085	4,153	-0,068	0,926	-0,562	58	0,576		3,84	3,904	-0,064	1,318	-0,469	93	0,64	
reflectional skilss	4,379	3,987	0,392	1,008	4,812	152	0	***	4,407	4,186	0,22	0,721	2,348	58	0,022	*	4,362	3,862	0,5	1,143	4,241	93	0	***
change management	4,242	3,817	0,425	1,244	4,223	152	0	***	4,305	3,864	0,441	1,038	3,26	58	0,002	**	4,202	3,787	0,415	1,363	2,951	93	0,004	**

