

e-Mentoring Supporting Female University Managers' Leadership Development

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How to support female university managers in leadership development

- Mentoring is one solution to supporting women managers' skill/career and leadership development (Ragins 2002; cf. Giscombe 2007).
- The significance of women support networks is vital in supporting female university managers' career development and encouragement in a rapidly changing international operational environment (cf. Giscombe 2007).
- These networks will increasingly be virtual. Female managers can be pioneers by adopting work practices utilising modern technology in mentoring.
- How can HE female presidents' reciprocal sharing and development of skills be increased and deepened through e-mentoring in a changing operational environment?
- How can electronic communication and virtual peer networks be utilised in mentoring?
- How and what kinds of virtual mentoring models can advance female managers' career and leadership development and deepen reciprocal global sharing of expertise and development?

E-mentoring supporting female leadership

- E-mentoring refers to cooperation between two or more individuals or within a community, in which all parties desire to share expertise and develop in an area of mutual interest employing electronic communication tools in interaction (see Leppisaari et al. 2006).
- E-mentoring offers the opportunity to set up dynamic two-way and multidimensional learning networks. Experiences and tacit knowledge can be gathered and disseminated through virtual mentoring spaces.
- E-mentoring models: one-to-one mentoring, peer e-mentoring, group e-mentoring, and virtual mentoring communities.
- E-mentoring communication modes: synchronous, employing speech (e.g. computer conferences, virtual meetings, Internet calls, social media tools), asynchronous through written communication (e.g. learning platforms, blogs, email, social media tools) or combination of the two.
- Social media / virtual peer networks continuously afford new kinds of opportunities for using increasingly diverse communication modes and combinations in mentoring.

Higher education leadership and surveying mentoring needs

- Effective mentoring is based on identified mentoring needs and skill deficiencies (Rickard 2008).
- Profitability and influence, strategies to meet these, and new leadership are required of universities (cf. Bologna process). Mentoring needs of female university managers should be analysed from university business areas and support services perspectives as these create the leadership operational environment.
- The analogy between HE leadership and the corporate world is justified (cf. Clark 1998; Kaplan & Norton 2001).
- Strategic business areas of HE:
 - education,
 - research and development,
 - innovation work, including HE regional development work.
- Support services of higher education:
financial administration, implementation of the learning process, student counselling and included processes, R&D and implementation of related practices (e.g. ventures), network collaboration (business and labour market, other HE institutions), human resources, marketing, communication and publicity, international activities, library and information procurement, IT (including infrastructure) and quality assurance (cf. Kaplan & Norton 2001; 2006; Clark 1998).

Study – developing the eMWL model

- Objective: to develop the e-Mentoring promoting Women Leadership (eMWL) model.
- Research question: How can development of international e-mentoring based on a survey of leadership profiles support career development of female university managers?
- Examination focus: perspectives of the International World Female University Presidents' Forum participants (2009) on e-mentoring as a support for female managers. An electronic Webropol survey was sent to 33 Forum participants from 25 different countries in September 2009.
- The survey's multiple choice and open-ended questions ascertained e.g. respondents' leadership profiles and perceived leadership development needs, perspectives on e-mentoring models applicable to leadership development, and the significance of internationality in developing management competence through mentoring.
- 10 responses from 9 countries were received; the response rate was 33%.
- Research methods: Qualitative and quantitative content analysis
- The results of this study cannot be generalised; rather they create a basis for wider follow-up and comparative studies.

Background details and leadership profiles

- 90% of respondents hold a scientific post-graduate degree; doctorate.
- All respondents had continued research work after scientific post-graduate studies. Almost half had over 100 post-doctoral publications.
- Six respondents had 30 or more years university work experience.
- Only one respondent (10%) had over 20 yrs experience as a university manager and four (40%) had 10-20 yrs. Half the respondents had less than 10 yrs experience.
- 60% of respondents had no work experience in business. One manager had 15 yrs and 3 managers 1-6 yrs of corporate work experience.
- Limited leadership and work experience in business indicates many current presidents originally embarked on academic careers. Often one "drifts" into, as opposed to applies for, management positions.
- Limited leadership experience combined with lack of mentoring can be identified as one barrier to career development (cf. Giscombe 2007).

Experience and mentoring needs in HE strategic business area leadership

| HE strategic business area | never | for a short period of time | for a reasonable period of time | for an extensive period of time |
|---|-------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Education | 30% | 30% | 10% | 30% |
| Research and development | 20% | 50% | 10% | 20% |
| Innovation work, including HE regional development work | 20% | 40% | 30% | 10% |

- The greatest (80%) mentoring support was needed in *Innovation work*.
- 30% required support in *Education*; only 1 respondent needed mentoring in *R&D*.
- When the results are compared with work experience, no correlation between mentoring needs and lack of work experience is evident. Although 70% lacked reasonable experience in *R&D*, nobody expressed a need for mentoring in this area.
- Correspondingly 40% had reasonable experience in *Innovation work*. However, 80% felt they required mentoring in this business area. Is this result explained by the rapid changes in this business area and a new emphasis on entrepreneurial operations in the HE framework (cf. Crow 2008; Clark 1998)?

Work experience and mentoring needs in HE support services

| Support service | never | short time | reasonable time | extensive time |
|--|-------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Financial administration | 60% | 30% | - | 10% |
| Implementation of the learning process | 30% | 30% | 10% | 30% |
| R&D | 40% | 30% | 20% | 10% |
| Network collaboration | 10% | 30% | 20% | 40% |
| Human resources | 40% | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| Marketing, communication and publicity | 40% | 20% | 30% | 10% |
| International activities | 10% | 30% | 20% | 40% |
| Library and information procurement | 70% | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| IT (including infrastructure) | 60% | 30% | 10% | - |
| Quality assurance | 30% | 30% | 10% | 30% |

-The greatest need (50%) for mentoring in support services was in *Marketing, communication and publicity*. This is partly explained by profitability pressures and the need to maintain positive relations with society.

- In second place (40%) was *Human resources* and *International activities*. Work experience does not appear to affect mentoring needs.

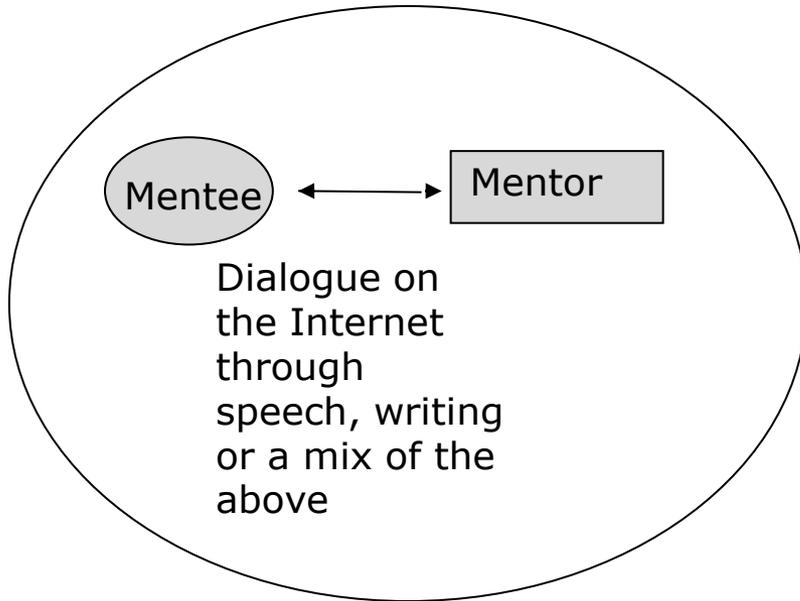
- Least support was wanted in *Financial administration* and *Library and information procurement*. Limited work experience in these support services. Not identified as key areas from a management ability perspective? Healthy finances are, however, a requisite for sustained development.

Attitude to mentoring and discourse themes

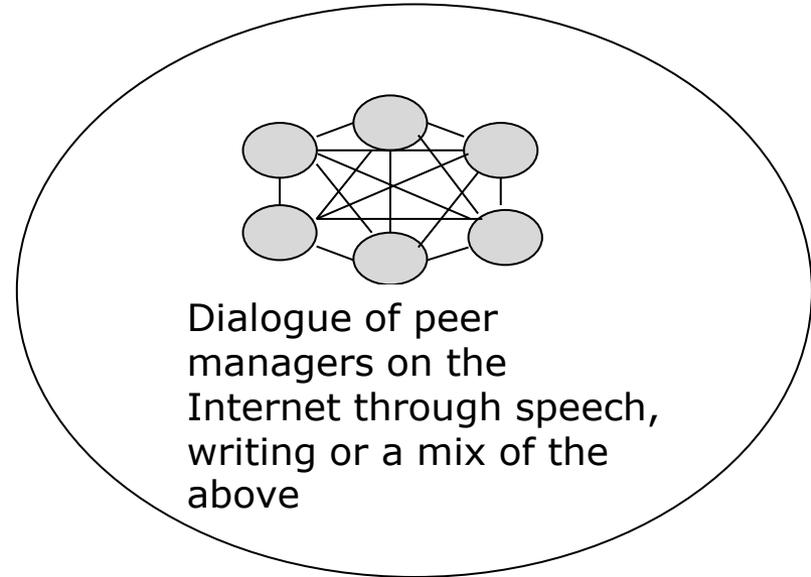
Online mentoring provides an opportunity to receive support flexibly in terms of time and place from a more experienced manager in the practical issues of developing as a manager.

- 60% of respondents *agreed somewhat* (value of 4 /1-5) with the above statement and 40% *agreed completely* (value of 5). The attitude to e-mentoring was positive.
- 50% were interested in e-mentoring for leadership skill development.
- 30% felt web-mediated mentoring dialogue could remove barriers to developing as a female manager. 60% ticked "not sure".
- HE female managers would like to discuss on the internet with their colleagues or a trusted mentor or World Female Presidents' Forum participants about, e.g. the following:
 - their national/continental university system vs. European university systems
 - R&D, accessing funding for specific projects, linking with industry for knowledge utilisation
 - encouraging young academics to apply for leadership positions in academia (cf. tenure track-system in HE)
 - including more students from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Global education challenges, funding, cultural operational environment specific issues, ties to the local society, and collaboration between HE and work were raised as mentoring themes.

Applicability of mentoring models

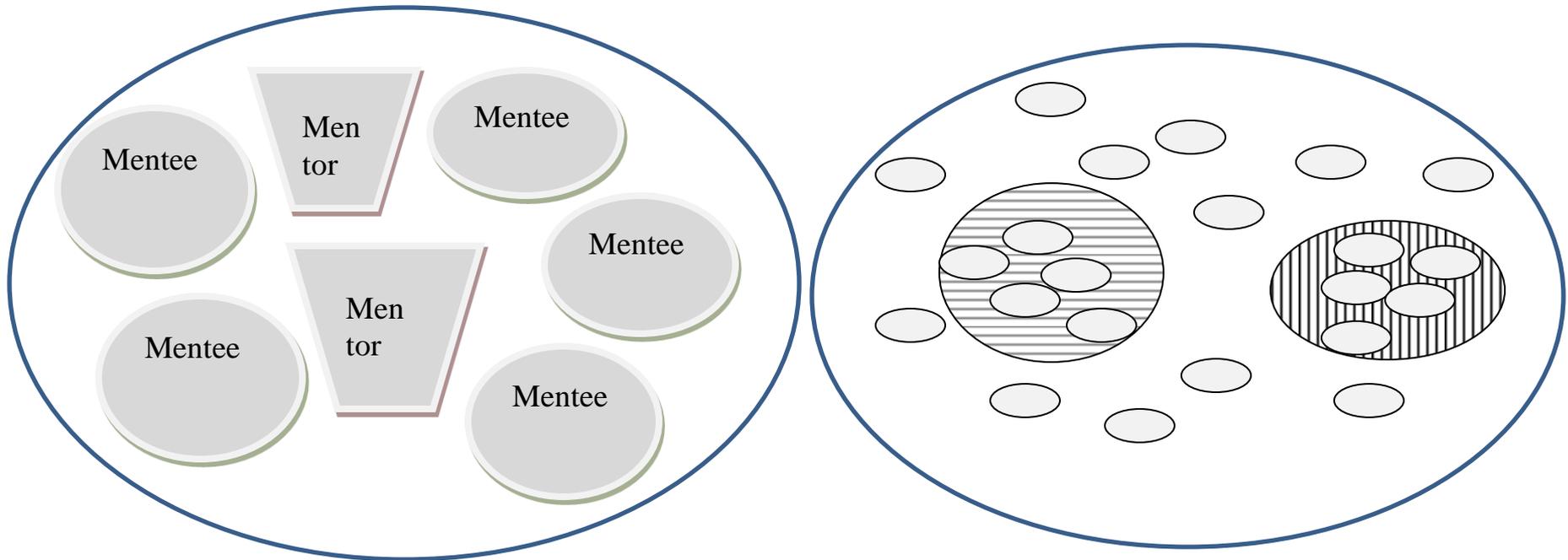


A total of 90% (values 4 and 5 on a scale of 1-5) of HE female managers were interested in **one-to-one** (one experienced and one in the early stages of her management career) individual **e-mentoring** on the internet.



- *I would like to learn from other managers and also share my own abilities and experiences with my peers in a group. I can benefit from my colleagues' perspectives and skills in my growth and questions.* **Peer e-mentoring** interested 90% of respondents. However, on the *completely agree* level, 20% were more interested in one-to-one mentoring than online peer mentoring.

Applicability of mentoring models



- *I want to learn and share my expertise in a group comprising several female managers at the start of their career and one or more mentors. An experienced leader, or more, guide the group's online work.*
- **Group e-mentoring** interested 60% of respondents.

"I would like to follow the discussion of a wider network and participate in the work of a virtual community (theme groups, e.g. Presidents' Forum)."

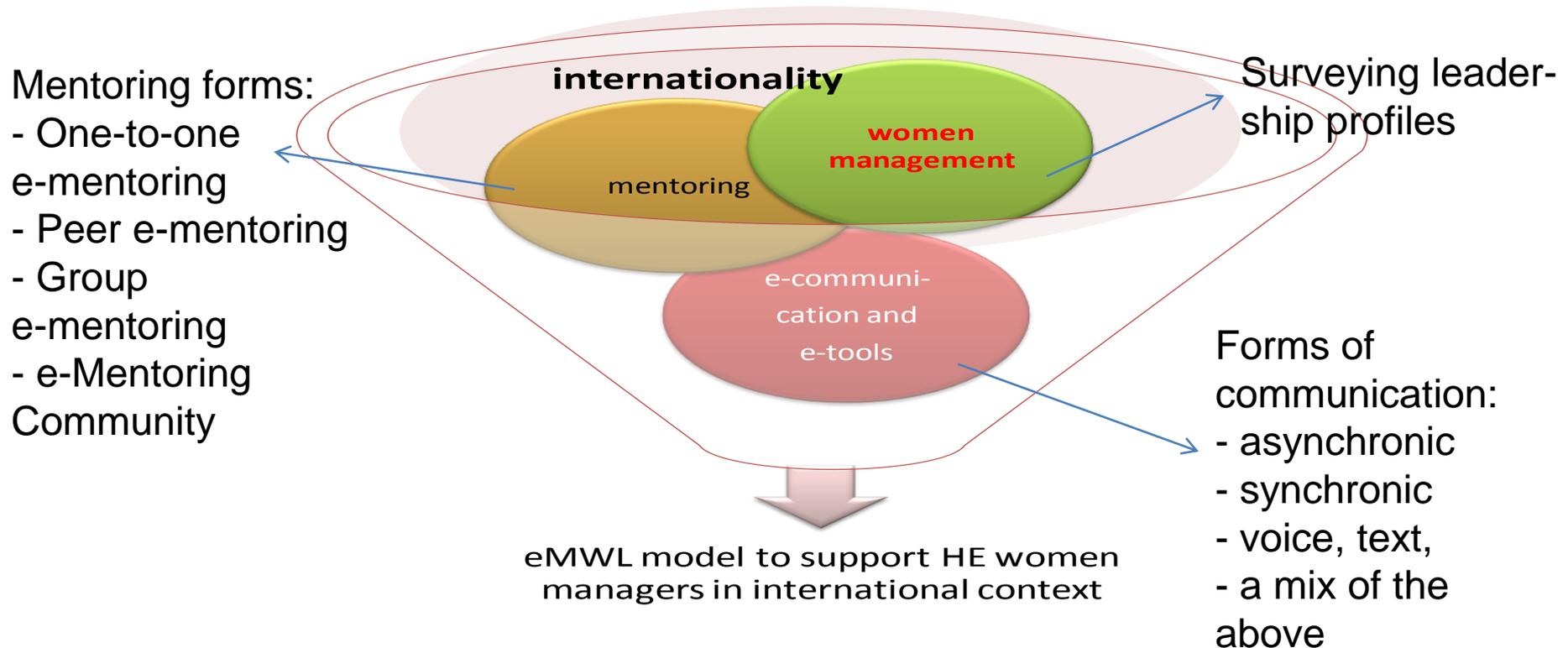
This form of mentoring interested 70%. **eMentoring Community** interested this cohort slightly more than did group mentoring.

Views on international e-mentoring

- Respondents felt e-mentoring facilitates interaction among female managers of different ages and operating in different cultural environments, helps to identify solutions to global challenges facing HE and increases female manager's work productivity.
- Internationally implemented e-mentoring *allows one to interact across borders, it is a more anonymous and therefore a safer space in which to share problems within a local institution. It allows for totally different solutions to be brought to one's attention.*
- Managers are in a key position to promote global learning practices: *We're entering an international world and international contacts and understanding is significant to every school's development, boards respect leaders with international affiliations and connections.*
- Women in the weakest positions in their society can receive support as they work in the important role of developing society: *Higher education develops its function first after that come industry and other areas.*
- International e-mentoring requires time to understand the cultural context of the mentee / peers.
- Successful implementation of the model requires careful planning and skilful leadership, to link it to the daily life of busy female managers.

e-Mentoring promoting Women Leadership operational model

- The eMWL model allows mentoring forms and communication tools to be flexibly selected according to development needs to address issues of female leadership in international mentoring collaboration.



Conclusions

- E-mentoring is a significant opening in the updating of models that support female managers' career development and can offer reciprocal peer support among female managers in operational environments requiring new kinds of strategic leadership.
- Attitudes of HE female managers to e-mentoring were positive, but its application to leadership development was rather cautious (cf. lack of e-mentoring experience). A wider follow-up study is needed before these research results can be generalised.
- Leadership profiles were not clearly related to mentoring needs in this small-scale study. However, responses identify the strategic business areas and support services emphasised in HE today. The greatest need for mentoring was in *Innovation work (including regional development)*.
- One-to-one mentoring, peer mentoring and a virtual mentoring community interested respondents slightly more than group mentoring.
- Working at cultural interfaces strengthens authentic career development of female university managers and indirectly promotes higher education global quality in border-crossing educational development.

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