

**MENTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BIG
BROTHER BIG SISTER MENTOR TRAINING PROGRAMME**

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**Mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MPsych in the Department of Psychology, University of the Western Cape, Bellville**

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment, with the text "UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE" below it.

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Rubina Jano

Key words:

Mentor

Mentee

Training Programme

Evaluation

Big Brother Big Sister

Support mechanism

Perception

Relationship

Personal Growth

Mentor Role



ABSTRACT

Mentoring has gained a great deal of popularity across various professional fields and disciplines over the past few years. More recently, planned mentoring has become an important form of intervention with young people (Philip, 2003). Although mentoring can be an effective strategy for dealing with youth, the mentoring is only as good as the relationship that develops out of the process between mentors and mentees and the match that is made between the two parties. The number of mentor programmes that is running continues to grow yet the quality of these programmes remains unknown as this area lacks agreed upon sets of standards and / bench marks that could be used to determine the effectiveness of these programmes (Sipe, 1988 - 1995). The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the mentors' perceptions of the effectiveness of a mentor training programme run by Big Brother Big Sister South Africa. A qualitative research design was used to explore the mentors' experiences of the training programme offered by the organisation. Information was obtained through conducting in – depth interviews with the participants of the study. A thematic analysis was used to analyse the information obtained. Themes that emerged centred on areas of personal growth, skills obtained and changes in their relationships with others. The findings of the study suggest that there is a growth process that occurs for many involved in the training to different degrees. Additional research, however, is required in this area as there is a paucity of research material available that looks at the effectiveness of the training programme from the trainees' perspective. The overall findings of the current study highlight that many participants reported a positive experience. Recommendations to improve future experiences are suggested by both the participants and the researcher.

DECLARATION

I declare that “Mentors’ perception of the effectiveness of the Big Brother Big Sister mentor training programme” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or any other examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete reference. It is submitted for the degree of MPsych at the University of the Western Cape.

Full Name:

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Date:

November 2008

Signed:

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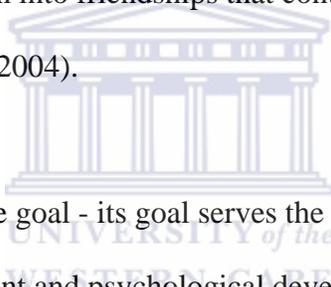


Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Mentoring is a friendship with someone who is little more experienced in aspects of life and who acts as a guide for the younger individual. A mentor is thus someone who shapes the growth and development of the mentee. A good mentoring relationship is one where the mentor and the mentee have mutual respect, recognise their need for personal development and have at least some idea of where they both want to go. Most successful mentoring relationships blossom into friendships that continue long after the need for tutoring has passed (Chowwen, 2004).



Mentoring serves more than one goal - its goal serves the function of personal development, career development and psychological development. The career function of mentoring (also known as sponsoring) is a relationship in which the mentor promotes the mentee and assists him or her to move forward in the work place. From the psychological perspective the function of the mentor includes acting as a role model for the mentee providing unconditional acceptance. This psychological perspective also relates to an emotional relationship at times. As a powerful emotional interaction occurs between the two parties, it enables the mentee to develop on a personal, as well as on a professional level relationship with someone that he / she trusts (Blunt & Conolly, 2006; Chowwen, 2004).

In a study done by the National Mentoring Working Group in the United States of America, Jekielek, Moore, Hair and Scarupa (2002) identified *Responsible mentoring* as a structured, one-to-one relationship or partnership that focuses on the needs of the mentored participant as well as fostering caring and supportive relationships. They further identified that responsible mentoring encourages individuals to develop to their fullest potential as well as helps an individual to develop his or her own vision for the future. This relationship can also be seen as a strategy to develop active community partnerships.

According to these authors a *responsible mentoring programme* requires (i) a well-defined mission (ii) established operating principles (iii) regular and consistent contact between the mentor and the participant and (iv) support by the family or guardian of the participant. A responsible programme also requires additional community support services, an established organisation of oversight, adherence to general principles of volunteerism and paid or volunteer staff with appropriate skills. It has also been identified that it is important to have written job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions, adequate financial resources, written administrative and programme procedures as well as written eligibility requirements for programme participants. A responsible mentoring programme also has an aspect of programme evaluation and ongoing assessment, a long-range plan that has community input and risk management and confidentiality policies. The authors also noted that a prudent and reasonable rationale for staffing requirements is based on the organisation's statement of purpose and goals, the needs of mentors and participants, community resources and staff and other volunteers' skill level (Jekielek et al., 2002).

According to Evans (2000), research has shown that one way of supporting those in need is through mentoring. The following factors for becoming an effective mentor (also referred to as a 'buddy' or 'sponsor') have been identified by various authors (Brookes & Sikes, 1997; Lewis, 2001; Valeau, 1999) as: genuine willingness in wanting to help someone, a high degree of self confidence, respect and tolerance for the view points of others, a positive attitude towards working with others and a penchant for making a difference. Additional characteristics include: a sympathetic and understanding approach, a positive and encouraging attitude, supportive role, a good communicator and a good listener and a commitment to the role as a mentor (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

Lewis (2001) noted that in order for any mentoring programme to be successful, mentors and mentees should be involved in a process from start to finish. In this way, the rules and regulations are understood from the beginning of the process. Rules and regulations are therefore set up in order to ensure that the mentor and the mentee know what is expected of them. Lewis (2001) also points out that a workbook be created for the mentor so as to have a quick reference guide that can be referred to in cases of emergency.

Two types of mentoring exist, namely natural mentoring and planned mentoring. Natural mentoring is seen as happening through friendship, collegiality, teaching, training and counselling. Planned mentoring, on the other hand, occurs through structured programmes in which the mentors and participants are chosen and paired through a prearranged process (Cave & Quint, 1990; Miller, 2002).

1.2. Rational and motivation for the study

To date, there appears to be very limited information available on the perceptions of the training programmes that mentors receive. Much of the studies conducted and research available looks at the effectiveness of mentoring from the perspective of the mentee and not the mentor and thus research literature in this area proves to be minimal and unavailable.

Research indicates that the actual success of mentoring programmes remains to be vague as there is very limited research evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring training programmes (Da Anda, 2001). The Big Brother Big Sister mentor programme has been shown to be a very effective programme in the United States. However, this training programme has not been measured from a South African perspective. This study is thus aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the BBBS South Africa mentor training programme.

1.3. Aim of the study

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the mentors' perception of the effectiveness of a mentor training programme. Key questions that are addressed are:

- 1) Is the training programme a suitable one?
- 2) Does the training that was given by the organisation benefit the mentor in his / her relationship with the mentee?
- 3) Does the programme meet the requirements that were set out?
- 4) Is the programme replicable?

- 5) Does the programme offer any assistance for the buddy / mentor once the training is completed?

1.4. Programme evaluation

Evaluation can be described as the systematic process of judging worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purposes (Patton, 1987). The evaluation of the mentors' perception of this training programme would assist the BBBS organisation to determine whether any changes need to be made to the training programme in order to be more effective for the mentors.

To date, there appears to be very limited information available on the perceptions of mentors' experiences of mentor training programmes. Much of the studies done and research available looks at the effectiveness of mentoring from the perspective of the mentee and not the mentor and thus research literature in this area proves to be minimal and unavailable.

According to Lee (2003), classic training evaluation theory maintains that there are four levels of training evaluation. Kirkpatrick (1996 cited in Lee, 2003) identified these levels as:

Level 1: Reactions – How positively did the participants react to a training programme? Was the training enjoyed by the participants, were they satisfied with the training that they received, etc.

Level 2: Learning – did the participants acquire the desired tools in the training programme? i.e. skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.

Level 3: Behaviour – Did the actual behaviour improve after the training was conducted?

Level 4: Outcomes- Have the key aspects of the business improved since the training? i.e. productivity, profitability, etc.

For this study, Level one, that is, evaluation is ideal as the current research will be addressing the participants' reactions of the BBBS training programme in order to assess the effectiveness of the training programme.

1.5. Overview of the study



In Chapter one, the aims, rationale and motivation for the study are put forth.

Chapter two reviews existing literature related to mentoring and explores various mentoring programmes already in existence. This chapter furthermore looks at the characteristics of a good mentor programme, mentor programmes currently in South Africa, as well as the different types of mentoring relationships.

Chapter three focuses on the methodological approach used in the study. The theoretical framework used, the participants and selection criteria, research instrument, procedure, interpretation of results and ethical considerations are delineated.

Chapter four entails the discussion of the results that were obtained in this study.

Furthermore, where possible, comparisons are drawn with findings from other studies.

In Chapter five a summary of the findings is highlighted and conclusions are drawn based on the obtained results. The chapter concludes by elaborating on the limitations of the study and provides recommendations for further research.

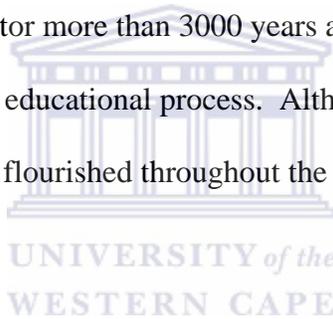


Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Mentoring is not a new concept and its origins can be traced back to Greek mythology. It has a long and distinguished history dating back at least as far as Homer's *Odyssey*, wherein a character, Mentor, acted as a guide and counsellor to the King Odysseus' son (Gibbs, Brigden & Hellenberg, 2005; Miller, 2002; Mirriam, Thomas & Zeph, 1987; Murray & Owen, 1991; Ross, 1996; Terblanche, 2007). Since Odysseus had entrusted the education of his son to Mentor more than 3000 years ago, the concept of mentoring has become associated with the educational process. Although the term mentor is rooted in mythology, it has grown and flourished throughout the history of education (Janas, 1996).



Mentoring can be seen as a relationship in which one person, usually a more experienced and senior individual in the community helps another younger individual discover more about himself or herself, as well as his / her potential and capabilities (Harris, 2007). In South Africa, organisations such as BBBS South Africa encourage mentoring relationships as they believe that these relationships are beneficial for both the mentor and mentee.

There are different intervention strategies that can be utilised when offering assistance to individuals, particularly the youth. One intervention strategy that seems to offer an involved approach to help individuals deal with aspects in their lives more efficiently and

effectively is a mentor (or buddy) programme. Mentoring can be seen as a way of helping people make the best use of their own resources, by bringing out the best of their capabilities. It also helps people set goals and then strive to attain those goals. Mentoring can focus on virtually any area of life of the individual, for example business, career, family, health, personal growth, spirituality, intimacy, simple living, and financial development (Jekielek et al., 2002; Valeau, 1999).

Ideally mentoring takes place on a one-to-one basis. While it mostly occurs face-to-face, it can also be successfully accomplished through telephone and e-mail contact.

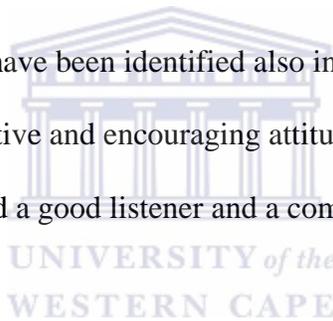
Mentoring can be short-term, where the mentor helps a client create a vision, achieve a specific goal, or complete a particular project, or deal with specific issues. It can also be long-term, where the mentee wants help for a number of projects, issues and goals (Brookes & Sikes, 1997; Valeau, 1999). To help people attain the results they want in life, mentors use a variety of tools. They teach, explore alternatives, inspire, act as a sounding board, build confidence and capability, facilitate learning, ask questions, listen with compassion, develop skills, create ownership, provide a challenge, act as a model, and explore potential. A mentor often acts as a partner, providing mentees with the tools, support, and structure to achieve more than they might be able to do by themselves (Evans, 2000).

Every child or young person needs a role model to look up to other than their parents. A mentor can be described as an experienced and trusted friend, big brother or sister for the child or young person and can be a guide, a friend, a coach, a responsive adult, a positive peer and a listener. This is a person who gives to a child wisdom, friendship, guidance and caring, in a supportive relationship.

In order to develop into a good mentor, there are some characteristics that would assist the relationship between the mentor and mentee. The following characteristics for becoming an effective mentor/ buddy have been identified by various authors (e.g. Brookes & Sikes, 1997; Lewis, 2001; Valeau, 1999):

- 1) genuine willingness in wanting to help someone,
- 2) a high degree of self confidence,
- 3) respect and tolerance for the view points of others,
- 4) a positive attitude towards working with others and a penchant for making a difference.

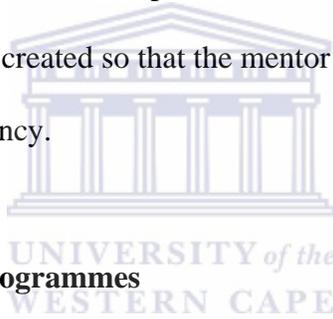
Additional characteristics that have been identified also include a sympathetic and understanding approach, a positive and encouraging attitude, playing a supportive role, being a good communicator and a good listener and a commitment to the role as a mentor (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).



Although mentoring roles may evolve over time, an effective mentor (one that possesses all the ideal characteristics as those listed above) is important to the success of the mentor / mentee relationship. Noller (1982) identified several important strategies for effective mentoring. These include a positive attitude, valuing, open-mindedness, creative problem-solving, awareness, discovery, flexibility, and confidence. Other characteristics that have also been identified in order to become an effective mentor also include: a genuine willingness to help someone else succeed, a high degree of self-confidence, respect and tolerance for other points of view, a positive attitude toward working with people of different cultural backgrounds, a demonstrated interest in working with

minorities and women, a solid understanding and intellectual grounding in one's field, and a desire for making a difference (Brookes & Sikes, 1997; Noller, 1982).

A mentor programme will not be effective if only the mentor has the ideal characteristics. Lewis (2001) noted that in order for any mentoring programme to be effective and successful, both the mentor and the mentee must be involved in the mentoring programme from the start till its conclusion. By being involved from the onset, clear rules and regulations can be set up thus ensuring that these rules and regulations are understood by both parties. This furthermore ensures that both parties also understand what is expected and required of them. The final aspect that Lewis (2001) points out is that a workbook or manual should be created so that the mentor has a reference that he / she can turn to in the case of an emergency.



2.2. Current Mentoring Programmes

In South Africa consideration must be given to redressing the imbalances of the past within both the organisational, as well as educational sector. Mentors play an important role here by sharing their experiences as well as wisdom and technical 'know how' with their mentees. They should assist in creating an environment in which the mentee is given the opportunity to grow, learn and develop the talents that they already possess. Companies as well as non-governmental organisations have incorporated mentoring into a number of their programmes in order to overcome past imbalances (Morgan, 2002). Morgan (2002) goes on further to state that currently in South Africa, mentoring is done on an ad hoc basis with each 'programme' developing and evolving its own style and these ad hoc mentoring exercises have become catalysts for bigger and formalised programmes.

2.2.1. Overseas Mentoring Programmes

Traditional mentoring programmes have been joined by school based programmes, independent life skills programmes, court mandated programmes and recreational ‘buddy’ programmes (Newman, 1990). Some of the better known mentoring programmes overseas are for example the following in the United States of America and the United Kingdom (Dennis, 1993):

1) *Big Brothers Big Sisters*. This programme provides quality and professional services to helping children become responsible adults. It is an international organisation based on the concept of a one to one relationship between an adult volunteer and disadvantaged child. They provide children with positive adult role models and mentors who help enrich the child through weekly interaction. This programme has extended itself and has become an internationally utilised one with offices operating in more than 33 countries. This programme was introduced to South Africa in 1998 with the aim of positively reinforcing youth within the community.

The current study focuses on the BBBS programme with the main aim of looking at how effective the programme is and the impact that programmes like these have on the lives of those individuals who went through the training programme. This will be further discussed under the section looking at mentor programmes offered in South Africa.

2) *Help One Student to Succeed*. This is an American nationwide structured mentoring programme in language arts that combines community mentors, a computerised data base and a management system to improve student achievement.

3) *One Hundred Black Men, Inc.* A non-profit organisation of men who share the common goal of improving the quality of blacks and other minority groups. This is a mentoring programme in which members are paired off on a one to one basis with other students.

4) *The National One to One Mentoring Partnership.* This partnership brings together leaders of various sectors and encourages them to gather together within their networks to recruit mentors, support mentoring programmes that already exist, as well as to assist with new mentoring initiatives.

2.2.2. *South African Mentoring Programmes*

Mentoring is a well known-known concept around the world but it is considered to be a relatively new concept in South Africa. Despite mentoring being such a new concept in South Africa, there are numerous organisations that are involved with mentoring in South Africa. The following are some of these programmes (CJI, 2002):

1) *Big Brothers Big Sisters.* This international programme is a community-based programme that does not remove the child from his / her community but looks at ways in which the child can attain his / her goals within the community. Their aim is to provide children with positive adult role models and mentors who help enrich the child through weekly interaction. Children are also encouraged to develop their own vision and strive towards their goals. In this programme, mentors go through a stringent selection process before being chosen as mentors. They are then thoroughly trained as mentors. This study aims to look at this mentor training and assess if it meets the needs of the mentor and whether it prepares them for the situations they find themselves in with their mentees. The BBBS programme is a national programme with offices and training programmes

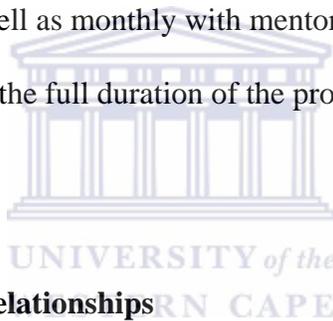
being held throughout the country. This study however focuses on the programme that is carried out in the Cape Town area. Mentors are trained at the BBBS Office based in Observatory, Cape Town (now based in Milneron) and the mentors then mentor their mentees throughout Cape Town. The organisation is hoping to extend their programme to all the other provinces in South Africa.

2) *DIME (Diversion into Music Education)*. The DIME project was developed in collaboration between the Community Law and Psychology Departments at the University of the Western Cape. This programme was made up of children who had committed offences and had subsequently been sentenced to jail. Instead of carrying out their jail time, these children's sentences were diverted into the music programme where they learnt to play the marimba. The aim of this programme was to reduce the number of incidences of criminal offending behaviour especially in children (Adam, Mathiti & Dlakulu, 2000). This programme wanted to equip the children with measurable skills with the end point being performance (playing instruments). The programme was carried out at a school in the Khayelitsha area where the instruments were kept. The researchers furthermore identified the aim of this project as: a) to improve the children's relationships with their families and friends; b) to improve the children's performance as well as conduct and behaviour in school and c) to expose the children to experiences that would boost their perceptions of themselves as well as their emotional well – being (Adam et al., 2000).

3) *Tough Enough Programme (NICRO)*. The tough enough programme is one of the many programmes that is run by NICRO. This programme works with adult prisoners. They are released from prison and reintegrated back into the community. NICRO

however, continues to grapple with the question of whether the community is ready for and prepared for these prisoners to be reintegrated back into the community.

4) *Boys –to – Men Programme*. This programme is run by USIKO and runs in the Bonteheuwel area in Cape Town where adult men in the community are trained as mentors for younger men. Older male figures are seen as positive role models for the younger men. The key idea of this programme is to ensure that there is a transfer of ideas and skills from the programme into the community and to work towards building the skills of those in the community thereby ensuring that the programme remains rooted in the community. The programme is a year long one and regular meetings are held weekly with mentors and mentees as well as monthly with mentors and individuals therefore have to commit themselves for the full duration of the programme.



2.3. Types of Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring programmes and relationships exist in various formats ranging from structured to spontaneous, formal to informal, one on one basis to group settings, virtual to real (Healy, 1989; Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1995).

Two types of mentoring exist. These are natural mentoring and planned mentoring.

Natural mentoring is characterised by a relaxed environment in which the mentoring relationship develops spontaneously. This relationship is seen as constantly being negotiated between mentor and mentee depending on the needs of the relationship.

Planned mentoring on the other hand occurs through structured programmes in which the mentors and participants are selected and matched through a formal process. In this type

of mentoring the requirements, needs, duration and contact time between mentor and mentee should be noted. The expectations of the relationship between mentor and mentee should also be taken cognisance of before hand when the relationship starts out (Cave & Quint, 1990; Gilmore, Coetzee & Schreuder, 2005; Miller, 2002; Pinho, Coetzee & Schreuder, 2005).

In a study conducted by Phillip and Hendry (2000) investigating natural mentoring relationships, the following five types of natural mentoring relationships were identified:

1) Classical mentoring

This is seen as a one to one relationship where a more experienced adult would provide support, advice and challenges to the younger person. This would typically occur in the context of a shared interest or hobby where the adult would act as a positive role model. Historically, the classic model was viewed as the relationship between the expert and the apprentice who was trying to learn a new craft; however in more recent times, it can be seen as the relationship of a mentor and his mentee.

2) Individual team mentoring

This is where a group of young people would look to an individual or small group for support, advice and challenges. This is usually found in youth work groups like “girl guides”, “brownies” and “boy scouts”.

3) Friend to friend mentoring

This type of mentoring was found to be most common amongst young people. It is seen as providing a safety net for those individuals who are mistrustful of adults. This type of

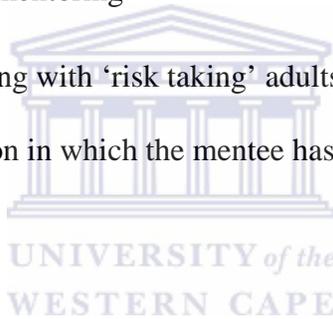
mentoring is particularly common for those who have been through abusive relationships and trauma and have difficulty trusting those unfamiliar to them. In cases such as these, the individual feels more at ease and is usually more responsive to someone known to them as these are considered to be “safe” people.

4) Peer group mentoring

This type of mentoring is often found among groups of friends often in the context of exploring certain issues within specific contexts. This mentoring can often be seen in school contexts where students often need to work together.

5) Long term relationship mentoring

Long term relationship mentoring with ‘risk taking’ adults is similar to classic mentoring, but it usually involves a situation in which the mentee has a history of rebellion and challenging authority.



Planned mentoring on the other hand involves structured programmes with clear objectives and mentors and mentees are matched using formal processes (Miller, 2002).

2.4. Mentoring Models

In spite of the variety of definitions of mentoring all the experts appear to agree that it has its origins in the concept of apprenticeship. In the days when the guilds ruled the commercial world, the road to the top in business began in an early apprenticeship to the master craftsman, a trader, or a ship’s captain. This older, more experienced individual passed down his knowledge of how the task was done and how to operate in the commercial world (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

2.4.1. *The apprenticeship model and the mentor as skilled craftsperson*

Apprenticeship historically represents the formal attempt to teach an individual a specific skill. Training was carried out on site and involved trainee and trainer in a pupil-master craftsperson relationship. The learner was inducted into the profession by an experienced teacher / practitioner. This type of mentoring did not prove to be effective as it did not give the mentee / learner the opportunity to access knowledge and understand the actions for certain tasks at hand and the reasons behind why certain tasks are done. The mentee / learner was not given the opportunity to utilise the theory that was learnt as all that was required was for the him / her to imitate the actions of the mentor / teacher. This apprenticeship was thus seen as providing little or no opportunities for established practices to be challenged (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

2.4.2. *The competence based model and the mentor as a trainer*

As with the apprenticeship model, this model features on the job training as well as a relationship based on subordination. The trainer is seen as being in possession of skills and capacities into which the trainee / mentee must be inducted. In the competency based model, the training programme is fuller and more varied and the role of the trainer as an instructor is more fully developed. Competence based models can therefore be seen to be based on pre specified behavioural outcome and skills related competencies which the training processes are tailored to meet (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

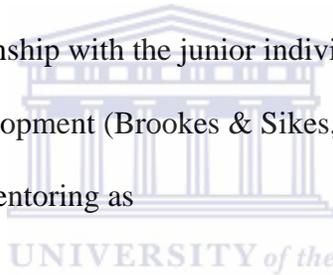
2.4.3 *The mentor as co - enquirer*

Whereas the apprenticeship and the competence based models are grounded in relationships of subordination, the co-enquiry relationship is a more equal one between mentor and mentee. Unlike the competence training model where the training has been

specified in advance, in co-enquiry the priorities of the training programme are negotiated with the mentee. This model places the onus on the mentee to accept responsibility for his or her development (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

2.4.4 Anderson and Shannon's model of mentoring

Anderson and Shannon's model (Brookes & Sikes, 1997) goes back to the origins of mentoring where the role of Mentor in Homer's *The Odyssey* leads to a characterisation of the mentor as a role model who is engaged in a process which combines nurturing, insightfulness, support and protection. Anderson and Shannon go on further to consider the more recent definitions of mentoring in which the mentor is depicted as a more senior individual whose relationship with the junior individual is to promote the mentees personal and professional development (Brookes & Sikes, 1997). They have thus developed their definition of mentoring as



“a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person serving as a role model teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and / or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and the protégé” (Anderson & Shannon, 1988 cited in Brookes & Sikes, 1997, p. 28).

From Figure 1 below, it can be seen that Anderson and Shannon consider mentoring to be a fundamentally nurturing relationship in which the mentor serves as a role model to the mentee. In this relationship, the mentor must also exhibit certain characteristics that will assist in the mentoring process. Figure 1 clearly indicates that the functions of mentoring are teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending. It is a relationship in

which the mentor and mentee build a relationship which will benefit the mentee in the long run. The mentee learns from the mentor who acts as a support structure and teacher.

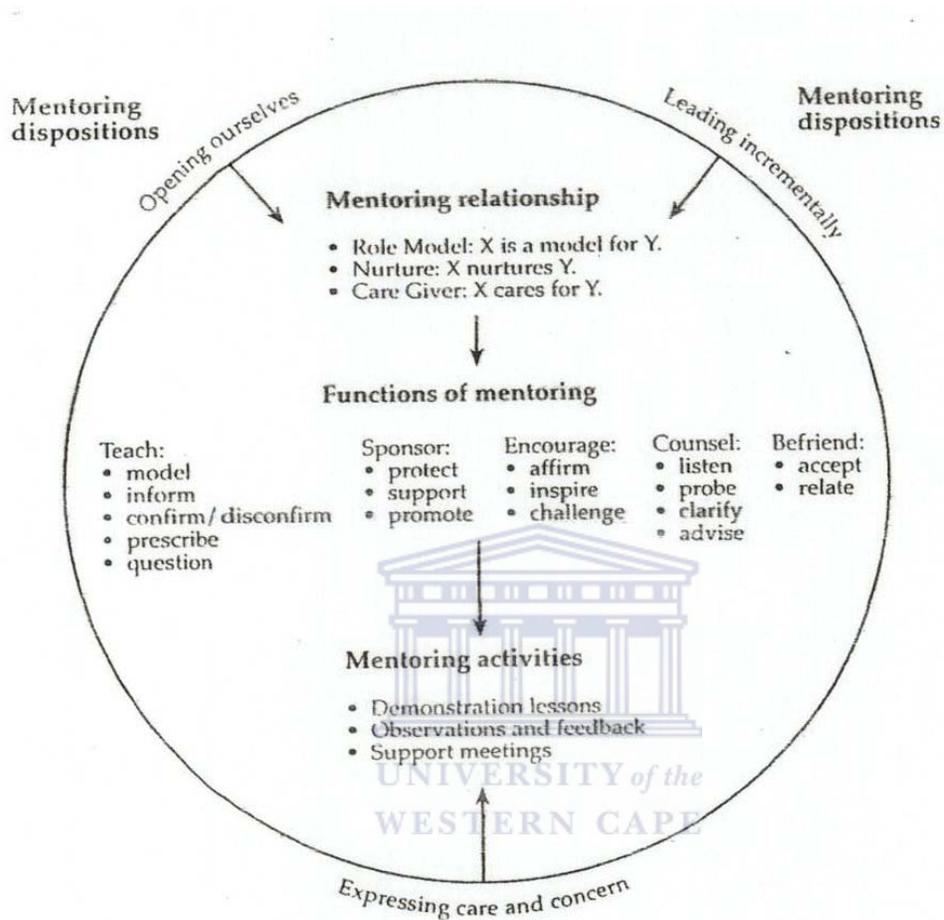


Fig 1. Anderson and Shannon’s Mentoring Model

This model shows us how the mentor becomes the “teacher” / “parent” figure for the mentee. The role of the mentor is that of a guidance one in which the mentor teaches and encourages the mentee in order to develop a good self esteem. The mentor also befriends the mentee and becomes a confidant that can counsel and encourage the mentee to achieve whatever he / she sets as his / her goals. Through this relationship the mentor’s role is to assist the mentee to be a well adjusted individual by demonstrating, supporting and encouraging the mentee when needed or required.

This model appears to be the one utilised by organisations like BBBS when implementing mentor programmes as mentors are seen as individuals who help the mentees develop by being positive role models for them.

2.5. Big Brothers Big Sisters Programme

2.5.1 Background information to the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme

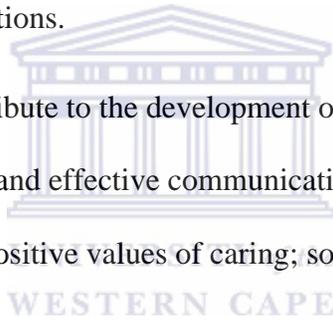
The first mentoring programmes namely, Big Brothers and Big Sisters were founded in 1904 and 1905 respectively in the USA. By 1977 the usefulness of this programme was noted and the two organisations merged and formed Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America. Currently there are approximately 350 000 children participating in the United States' programme. In 1998 the volunteer programme became an internationally established programme with 33 countries implementing the programme around the world. South Africa became the first African country to join the programme in September 2000. This organisation has since then continued in the training of volunteers to assist youth from disadvantaged backgrounds with its main purpose being to promote positive youth development by providing positive role models and constructive life experiences to younger individuals (www.bbbsa.org.za).

The mission of BBBS International is to promote the establishment of consistent caring and goal directed one to one relationships between an adult volunteer and a youth in need so as to provide a role model, mentor and mostly a friend who will inspire the capacity for positive living.

In its 2002 annual report (Louw, 2002), BBBS of South Africa formulates their objectives as: Although each match between the “Big” (volunteer) and the “Little”

(youth) has its own specific goals and objectives and each relationship is based on the needs of the “Little” referred, each and every match strives to achieve the following objectives, which are core to the organisation as a whole:

- 1) To establish and create a trusting relationship between the “Big” and “Little” that will provide a safe space to encourage the “Little” to openly express and share his/her feelings.
- 2) To assist the “Little” in setting realistic, achievable and measurable goals so as to allow him/her to develop and strive for a positive sense of self and life vision as well as to provide support in coming to terms with, and rising above life circumstances and situations.
- 3) To encourage and contribute to the development of positive behavioural patterns through role modelling and effective communication so as to enable the “Little” to adopt and maintain positive values of caring; social justice; honesty and responsibility.
- 4) To contribute to the development of a healthy self-esteem of the “Little” by appropriately encouraging, recognizing and acknowledging achievements by the “Little”.
- 5) To develop anger management, conflict management and relationship building skills that could assist the establishment of positive familial interactions by supporting relationships within the "Little's" own home and/or school environment.
- 6) To assist and encourage the “Little” with his/her academic work so that he/she is able to become conscious his/her full potential and effectively open up



opportunities for his/her future (Louw, 2002).

BBBS of South Africa provides training to new volunteers to provide them with skills that will enable them to be mentors. The training programme is 21 hours long and all volunteers have to attend this course. The duration of each phase is approximately three hours and all mentors have to complete the entire training programme before any training certificate is obtained. All trainees are encouraged to spend at least one hour a week with their “Little” offering them some positive role model and constructive life experience.

2.5.2. The mentor preparation training course

This 21 hour course is compulsory for all potential mentors and is intended to provide them with knowledge, skills and insight into the following areas:

a) *Relationship building*

New volunteers are given an understanding of:

- what the mentor relationship will entail,
- what their role will be, and
- what they can expect to happen.

All of this aims to build their confidence in dealing with their “Littles”.

b) *Self-esteem development*

This part of the training is aimed at:

- broadening the participants’ self-knowledge,
- creating an awareness of their self concept, and
- promoting a positive attitude towards themselves.

This should develop insight into factors that may influence their views of their “Littles” as well as how the “Littles” view themselves.

c) *Communication skills*

Volunteers are trained to:

- identify effective styles of verbal and non-verbal communication,
- to identify and develop their own personal communication skills, and
- to understand communication from a child’s perspective.

The volunteer mentors are also given opportunities to practice their communication skills.

d) *Values and ethnicity*

Volunteers are encouraged to:

- explore their own value systems within a diverse set of value systems that may exist among “Littles”,
- recognise , define and verbalise their own values, and
- become aware and sensitive to diverse value systems that they may have to their “Little”.



This aims to bring awareness to how culture and race are considered as important influences on the values of an individual.

e) *Child development*

Volunteers are provided with:

- a foundation in child development that will enable them to interact at the appropriate level with their “Little”,
- familiarity of developmental stages and patterns of childhood, and

- the ability to enable them to develop realistic expectations of their “Littles” according to their age.

This session aims at empowering the mentor with the skills to communicate effectively with his / her little as well as to assist in understanding the level at which the “Little” is developmentally at.

f) *Sexuality*

The training aims to make volunteers:

- aware of their own sexuality and provide a comfort level in the area of sex related topics, and
- to give them insight into the myths and realities surrounding sexual development.

This training hopes to develop effective interactions which will assist the mentor in helping the “Little” negotiate developmental milestones



g) *HIV/AIDS*

This section is aimed at:

- increasing mentors’ knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and
- to confront stereotypes about HIV/AIDS.

With this information, mentors will be able to address the issues of HIV / AIDS with their “Little” should the need arise.

2.5.3. The role of a mentor

The mentor is a model, a motivator and a counsellor. It has been shown that the responsibilities of a mentor include:

- 1) helping the mentee set long term career goals and short term learning objectives;

- 2) helping the mentee understand the organisational culture and structure;
- 3) recommending and creating learning opportunities;
- 4) transferring knowledge in areas such as communication, critical thinking, responsibility, flexibility and teamwork;
- 5) pointing out areas of strengths as well as areas requiring further development;
- 6) providing guidance; and
- 7) being available for support to the student.

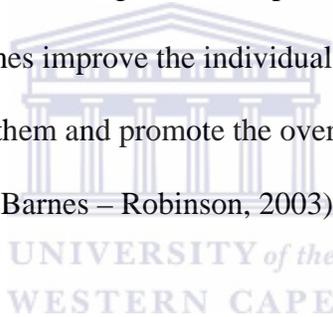
The role of the mentor changes depending on the skills desired by the mentee. To demonstrate his point, Schein (1978) and several other authors (e.g. Adams, 1998; Edward & Keane, 2001; Holiday, 2001; Murray, 1991) identified several roles a mentor might play in a relationship, namely

- a) a teacher / coach / trainer uses basic skills and content training;
- b) a protector role arises when the mentee is ready to take on new roles and risk;
- c) a role model relies on shadowing - the mentee is able to watch the mentor in action during work situations and observe how to handle situations;
- d) an opener of doors helps to position a mentee with opportunities for visibility, such as key committee appointments, conference attendance, and paper presentations; and finally, a provider of inspiration motivates the mentee while encouraging personal and professional development.

In the Big Brother Big Sister mentoring relationship, the aim of the programme is to equip the “Bigs” with the tools to assist their “Littles” develop into well adjusted individuals by following the roles of the mentor as noted above.

2.6. Mentors perceptions of the effectiveness of mentor training programmes

Past research has shown that youth mentoring programmes differ widely in scope, structure and duration. It is for this reason that it becomes difficult to measure the effectiveness of mentoring programmes (Brown, 1995). Much of the research done on mentoring programmes looks not at the effectiveness of the mentor training programmes, but at the success of the mentoring programme in the form of testimonials obtained from mentor and mentees during research conducted. The outcome of these studies measure the success of the programme by looking at the benefits of the programme for mentor and mentee. The success of the effectiveness of the mentoring training programme is measured by the success of the mentoring relationship. Research has found that successful mentoring programmes improve the individuals self concept, positively changes others' perceptions of them and promote the overall motivation in themselves (Shevitz, Weinfield, Jeweler & Barnes – Robinson, 2003).



From the past research conducted, it becomes evident that the success of the mentoring training programme is measured by the successful relationship that emerges between mentor and mentee, and not the mentors' experiences of the mentoring training programme.

2.7. The stages in a mentoring relationship

There are several ways of conceptualising the stages of a mentoring relationship. Miller (2002) introduced four models to describe the stages of the mentoring relationship. These four models are:

- 1) the mentor protégé relationship model
- 2) the chronological model

- 3) the life cycle model
- 4) the career development model

2.7.1. *The mentor protégé model*

The mentor protégé model is considered to be one of the earliest approaches that were based on adult mentoring in the corporate context. The relationship can be seen passing through four stages or levels, signifying that as the competence and the experience of the mentee grew, the more equal his / her relationship became with the mentor (Miller, 2002):

- Level 1: The mentee has limited experience and displays very little competence. In this situation, the mentor acts more in a teacher role and assumes greater direction for what happens in and between mentoring meetings.
- Level 2: The mentor acts as a guide to the mentee, based on greater experience and expertise.
- Level 3: The mentee acknowledges the mentee's growing competence and experience and facilitates a more equal participation during meetings.
- Level 4: The mentor and the mentee both engage in the learning process and the relationship is on equal footing.

2.7.2. *The chronological model*

The chronological view is the most common approach to discussing the stages of the mentoring relationship. In this model the stages can range from three to eight. In the simplest model, there are three obvious stages that mirror the stages to group formation (Miller, 2002):

- Stage 1: 'Forming and storming' includes the first meeting, developing trust and rapport, making an agreement and some 'testing out' of each other
- Stage 2: 'Norming and performing' includes the bulk of meetings where goals are set, achieved, reviewed and the sustaining of good relationships formed. Some relationships can at this stage remain stuck in Stage 1 due to poor matches formed earlier or students continuing to test their boundaries
- Stage 3: 'Closing' the relationship when targets have been reached. At this point in time the mentee has developed and become a more independent learner.

2.7.3. *The life cycle model*

The mentoring life cycle model can be seen as comprising of eight stages. At the most complex, the stages of mentoring are compared to life and / or relationships (Kram, 1985; Miller, 2002).

- Stage 1: Gaining commitment to the mentoring process ('conception')
- Stage 2: Getting involved through selection and matching ('birth')
- Stage 3: Getting together at the initial meeting ('babyhood')
- Stage 4: Getting to know each other at the start of a relationship ('childhood')
- Stage 5: Working together to action plan and address issues ('adolescence')
- Stage 6: Learning together what involves mutual learning and development ('adult maturity')
- Stage 7: Looking back together on what has been achieved through the relationship ('old age')
- Stage 8: Saying goodbye when goals have been achieved and it is time to move on independently ('death')

According to Kram (1985), a ninth stage of ‘rebirth’ or redefinition could be added for those relationships that decide to continue meeting as friends after the formal mentoring programme has ended.

2.7.4. *The career development model*

Career development is considered to be one of the main aims of mentoring. There exists a six stage model for career development through mentoring (Miller, 2002).

- Stage 1: Meeting the needs of the mentee and supporting the mentee in negotiations with other agencies
- Stage 2: Mentoring to improve social and life skills including time management, appearance, coping mechanisms and strategies to overcome barriers to progress.
- Stage 3: Mentoring to improve self awareness
- Stage 4: Mentoring to improve self image
- Stage 5: Mentoring for career exploration
- Stage 6: Mentoring for career management and gradually passing initiative to a younger person

The stages that the mentoring relationships go through can be seen as similar to human development as understood by developmental psychology. In developmental psychology, Erik Erikson, for example, discusses the stages that all individuals go through during their lifespan (Gerdes, 1988). Just as the young adult has to accomplish a number of tasks before proceeding to the next stage, so do the mentee and in both cases before the next stage can be reached, these tasks have to be achieved through competency and achievement (Gerdes, 1988). Within the working environment as well as through life

skills programmes, these stages are easier to accomplish with the assistance of a mentoring programme.

2.8. Conclusion

Mentoring programmes can be seen as one of the best means of bringing a person who can represent the concerns and support of the community into the lives of young people. In many ways, mentoring can also be seen as representing a return to tradition, calling upon the community to provide the youth with care and guidance as well as to nurture and challenge them in different aspects of their lives as is currently being done by the BBBS programme.



Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the methodological framework used to inform this study is discussed. The methodological framework of this study is a qualitative approach. An overview of the aims and objectives of the study is outlined, which is followed by a description of the procedures and issues regarding the selection of participants and method used to collect data and lastly how data were analysed.

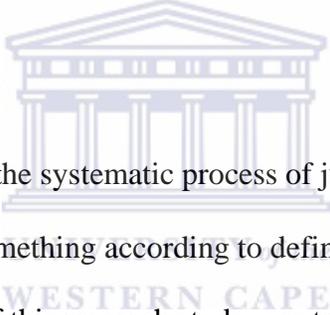
3.2. Methodological framework

This study will take on a qualitative approach to the research. This study was conducted with the assistance of the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) organisation. Participants were those individuals who had completed the mentor training programme offered by the organisation. These participants were all volunteers and offered their assistance in their free time.

As the subjective experiences of the mentors are being evaluated in this study, a qualitative research design has been utilised for this study. A qualitative research design allows the researcher to build up rapport and a trusting relationship with the participants of the study. This design will offer the researcher an insider's perspective of the study. Qualitative research methods provide means of accessing an immeasurable amount of facts about the actual people researchers observe and talk to. It allows researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others, as well as to investigate how people structure and give meaning to their lives (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor &

Tindall, 1994; Berg, 2001). It also allows the researcher to explore the everyday world of the research participants and to produce research grounded in their experiences (Denzil & Lincoln, 2000; Reinhartz, 1992). This type of research method aims to collect in depth data through which the research participants can speak in their own words. According to Patton (1987) and Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2002), qualitative research allows the researcher to enter the person's world and to understand it from his / her perspective. Interviewing thus provides the researcher with some knowledge about how the participants feel about the programme that is being studied. Patton (1987) goes on further to say that the interview provides an inner perspective to a usually outward behaviour.

3.3. Programme evaluation



Evaluation can be described as the systematic process of judging worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purposes (Patton, 1987). The main aim of this research study was to explore the mentors' experiences of the BBBS training programme. The evaluation of this training programme would thus assist the BBBS organisation determine whether any changes needed to be made to the training programme in order to be more effective for the mentors.

3.4. Participants and selection criteria

The participants of this study were chosen by the organisation BBBS according to the requirements of the organisation. The initial number of participants for the mentoring programme was eight. Some of the aspects looked at when selecting participants are the motivation for wanting to become a mentor; the individual's ability to relate to people;

does the individual have a warm and friendly disposition and does he / she have the ability to maintain confidentiality. Other aspects that are also looked at are the individual's commitment to the programme and the organisation; whether the individual has any past community experience and if he / she has any prior criminal record.

All participants that joined the mentoring programme were over the age of 18 and apart from completing an application form to become a mentor, also presented themselves for interviews at the Big Brothers Big Sisters offices. Lastly, all volunteers had to commit themselves to at least one hour a week to see their "Little".

3.5. Procedure

Although the organisation has found that the training programme offered has been a successful one internationally, they welcomed a local evaluation of the mentor programme that would assess the effectiveness thereof. Before any independent research occurred, the researcher was introduced to the staff of the organisation as well as introduced to the training programme.

The researcher approached BBBS South Africa and requested to conduct the research through the organisation. Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the BBBS organisation in Mowbray (now based in Milnerton, Cape Town). This permission was obtained verbally after meeting with the programme director and explaining the purpose of the study. The organisation was approached by the researcher and was given a brief overview and description of the study. The purpose of the study was explained and a request was made for volunteer mentors to be interviewed. An announcement was made by the organisation for volunteers and these names were then forwarded to the

researcher who contacted the mentors for appointments for the interview to be conducted. Of the eight participants that volunteered to participate in the study, only six arrived for their interview.

Figure 2: Participant Demographic Table

PARTICIPANT NO	RACE	GENDER	AGE
1	“WHITE”	FEMALE	57
2	“COLOURED”	MALE	38
3	“COLOURED”	FEMALE	26
4	“WHITE”	FEMALE	24
5	“COLOURED”	MALE	36
6	“COLOURED”	FEMALE	23

Once the participants had completed their training workshops and were successfully placed with their “Little”, those who agreed to participate in the study, were contacted telephonically by the researcher to set up interview appointments. All interviews with the participants were audio recorded and transcribed. Individual interviews were conducted three months after the training programme in order to assess the effectiveness in helping the “Big” deal with the issues brought to him / her by the “Little”. The researcher introduced herself to all participants individually and explained the purpose of the study. It was also explained to them that there would be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. It was however explained to the participants that a copy of the study would be made available to the organisation in order for improvement suggestions to be made.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and it was audio taped with the permission of the participants.

3.6. Research Instrument

The study employed the interview method as its primary form of data collection. The semi-structured interview method that was utilised in the interviews allowed for liberty to formulate questions as they come to mind around the issue being researched (Kumar, 1996). All responses from the participants were recorded on audio tape. An 'interview guide' was used from which arose many 'spontaneous' questions (Kumar 1996). The interviews were all conducted on a 'one-to-one' situation and this method facilitated in obtaining the data that was needed (Babbie & Mouton 1998; Kumar 1996).

Indepth interviewing involves asking open ended questions, listening to and recording the answers and if necessary to follow up with any other additional relevant questions.

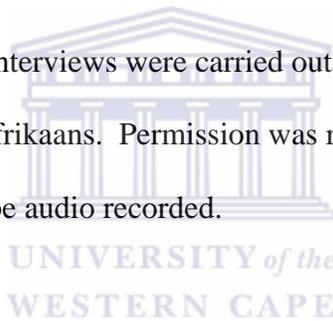
Indepth interviewing can therefore be seen as an important source of qualitative data in evaluation (Neuman, 1997). Indepth interviews have several advantages and these were highlighted by Mouton and Marais (1990) as follows:

- (i) They allow for the collection of the most extensive data on each individual being interviewed.
- (ii) They allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to explore the meaning of the central themes in the world of the interviewee.
- (iii) They focus on themes and are not specifically structured or non directive.
- (iv) They are flexible and can be adapted to the situation in order to accommodate both parties.
- (v) Any misunderstandings to arise can be clarified immediately.

(vi) It gives the interviewee the opportunity to answer the question to his / her discretion and motivate if required.

This study aimed at investigating the experiences of the mentors in the mentor training programme and the interviews focused on the effectiveness of the training programme and whether skills obtained in the training programme assisted the mentor in dealing with the mentoring process. Key questions were used to guide the discussion and were related to the participants' experiences of the training received and this related to the aims and objectives of the study.

As the researcher is bilingual, interviews were carried out in language choice of the participant, either English or Afrikaans. Permission was received from the participants of the study for the interviews to be audio recorded.



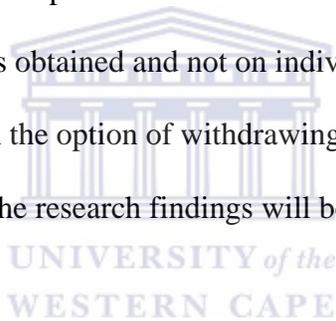
3.7. Interpretation of results

Information was gathered by means of a semi-structured interview guide that covered the following main themes:

- What aspect of the programme proved to be most useful?
- Was the programme presented to their satisfaction?
- Did they benefit from the programme
- Would they like follow up workshops?
- What more should be added in the training programme to make it more useful?

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The researcher approached the BBBS organisation to conduct the research with the main aim of evaluating their current mentor programme. Permission was granted for the research to be conducted at the organisation. The researcher obtained informed consent of the participants for the recording of the interview sessions, as well as for the use of the information obtained during the interview sessions. From the onset of the study, participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. All transcripts and audio records were kept confidential and were made available to only the researcher. Furthermore, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were protected in the research design as the interpretation of the results focused on themes obtained and not on individual statements. Finally, all participants were provided with the option of withdrawing from the research study should they wish to do so. A copy of the research findings will be made available to the BBBS organisation.



Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained as well as a discussion thereof. Findings are discussed in terms of the themes that emerged from the results. Parallels will be drawn to related research and studies. As this study focused on the BBBS programme, links are made between the findings of this study and previous research conducted. The main focus of the study is on the participants' (mentors) experiences of the mentor training programme.

4.2. Findings

Most of the literature on mentoring focuses on how mentees and mentors benefit from being involved in a mentor programme. Very little literature research has been done on mentors' experiences of mentor training programmes.

The main themes that emerged from the study can be divided into the following:

1. Personal Growth (communication and listening, self growth, reaction to others)
2. Quality of the training course (presentation style and course content, duration, follow up, mentor assistance)
3. Effectives of the pairing of mentors and mentees
4. Impact of programme on role as mentor (relationships with self and others, relationship with mentee)

From the emerging themes, it can be concluded that much of the responses centred on the aspects of personal growth and skills development. These two aspects are important when assessing mentoring programmes as they usually determine the success of the programme. The more growth that takes place and the more skills learnt, the more the mentor is equipped to handle situations with the ‘Little’ that he / she is mentoring. This shows that the skills that the mentor obtained during the training programme are helpful which reflects on the success of the training programme. The more confidence the mentor has in himself / herself, the more effective he / she will be in dealing with situations that may arise with their ‘Littles’.

4.2.1. Personal Growth

4.2.1.1 Self Growth

One of the themes that emerged from the study was that of personal growth (in particular self growth) that had taken place particularly among the younger mentors.

Four participants in the study stated that by just going through the mentor training programme, their perception of themselves and the world had changed in some way or the other. They felt that the manner in which they addressed certain issues had definitely altered. The programme has given them an opportunity to reflect on their functioning and allowed them to respond in a more mature way. Furthermore, they felt that the programme also contributed to their personal growth.

I got to know myself a bit better, learnt to have a bit more self confidence. It feels good to know that there is someone that needs you and always looks forward to seeing you. [P3]

I think only time will tell the full extent of my growth. [P4]

I think once again I am going to come back and say that a lot of my life skills are skills that I had long before I attended this programme. Some of the things the programme just reinforced what I know and I believe there are some things that I can possibly contribute to their programme in future, if I'm given the opportunity to, because I've got plenty experiences. [P5]

Two older mentors on the other hand felt that the course did not really do much for their personal growth but rather their life experiences equipped them better to deal with problems that arose from their relationship that they had with their 'Little'. They furthermore felt that their life experience helped them understand some aspects of the course better. These mentors felt that they could share their life experiences with others and help others by utilising these experiences.

No, I, well obviously it does to some extent, but I think my participation in the programme is to share my historical personal ... and to pass it on to other people, and that is why I participated in this. Because I believe I have grown tremendously over the years ... and there are life skills that I believe that I've got and I would like to share with others and help them, that is where my passion lies in life, is to help other people[P5].

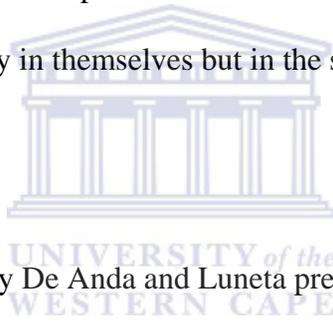
Although some participants may have felt that they did not develop personally, they did express that the course was an eye opener for them. This is clearly expressed in particular by participant 1.

I don't know if personal growth is the right term. It's been an eye – opener, certainly, and it's been more difficult than I expected it would be, quite a lot more difficult. Not people, just specifically with my little, you know I've got four kids of my own and grandchildren. They were a breeze in comparison to taking on another child, even for a couple of hours a week. Because with your own I think everything you do more or less comes naturally. With the 'Little' you've got to think very carefully all the time. [P1]

From the above insert, it can thus be seen that various mentors experienced the course differently. Although some felt that the course contributed to their self- growth, others felt that they could assist someone through their own personal life experiences and

triumphs. For others it gave them an opportunity to use their own life experiences to assist others and offer something back to their community.

In previous research done by De Anda (2001) it was also found that mentoring assisted the mentors to deal with his / her own feelings and receive feedback from others. It was felt that the role of a mentor offered an experience of self growth because mentoring enables individuals not only themselves but others as well. These shared experiences ultimately lead to an increase in self esteem. This is further reiterated in research done by Luneta (2006) who found that mentors experienced that their own skills were enhanced. The mentors had managed to reflect upon themselves and found that they had grown and become more confident not only in themselves but in the skills that they learnt in their course as well.



The research which was done by De Anda and Luneta presents similar findings as in the present study. It illustrates the positive experiences of the mentors who participated in the BBBS training programme and indicated that they grew from their experiences of the training programme and of being a mentor. Additionally, Clutterbuck (2005) postulates the mentor becomes more aware of himself / herself and others when they grow in the training process. This self – awareness helps them to recognise if there is a dissonance between what they are advising the mentee about and what the mentor does his / herself.

4.2.1.2 *Communication and Listening*

With any training programme, listening and communication are necessary tools that a participant must have in order to benefit from the programme. Mentors in the BBBS training programme indicated that they had developed more effective listening skills.

These improved listening skills were not only found when dealing with their “Little”, but also in dealing with others in their daily lives. They also found that since they were listening more carefully to what was actually being said, they communicated much better with the people in their lives.

It has altered the way I listen to people. I now find myself listening to what people say and not to what it is that I want to hear. [P4]

In some cases, mentors found that they drew a lot from the “Listening and Communication module” of the training programme when dealing with their “Little”. In some cases mentors who thought that they were good listeners actually found that they were not really listening to what was being said and usually jumped in too soon with a conclusion.

Ja, I think the thing that really registered with me is that I thought I was a much better listener than I am, you know, I tend to, as I said, I tend to take charge, instead of keeping my mouth shut. So I think that was quite an eye-opener. [P1]

Whilst communicating with their “Little”, the “Bigs” also found that they sometimes played the role of a counsellor. As highlighted in the abovementioned statements by the participants, they acquired better listening skills when they interacted with people socially or with their “Little”. In order to discuss issues with their “Littles”, the “Bigs” had to develop effective listening skills so that they could act the role of counsellor if required. Ivey, Ivey and Simek–Morgan (1993) identified that basic listening skills are imperative to be an effective counsellor. Some mentors found that they became more alert to what was really being said – they started listening for the hidden message, that message that the “Little” was unable to express openly and freely. By listening to their “Little”, mentors found that they not only listened to what was being said, but they were able to listen to the underlying messages that were not being verbalised. Often the

“Little” did not express openly what his / her needs were for fear of what the consequences may be. But by listening carefully to what was being said, the mentor had a better sense of what the “Little” is trying to say.

.... I would say why are you talking about cigarettes, without him really saying so. ... Ja, you look at what they say and not what they do... [P2]

I have learnt to really listen to what people are telling me. I don't cut in and say what I think that want to say. I no longer take for granted that I know exactly what they are saying. I really listen to what they say and I now have more patience with those around me. I no longer expect them to do as I say but now let them do things at their own pace. [P3]

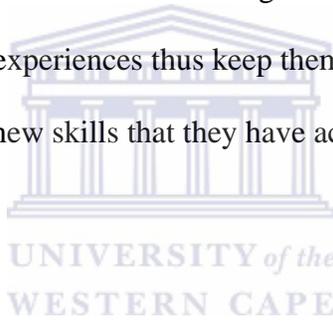
Mentors also found that they now listened more and interrupted less when conversing with their “Little”. They felt that the course taught them to refrain from interrupting their friends, colleagues and “Little”. For many, the ability to listen without interrupting has had a positive impact on their daily lives. This skill appears to have given the mentor a sense of accomplishment and self worth as others now find them more approachable.

Ja, I think the thing that really registered with me is that I thought I was a much better listener than I am, you know. ... I tend to take charge, instead of keeping my mouth shut. So I think that was quite an eye-opener. [P1]

I don't cut in and say what I think that want to say. I really listen to what they say and I now have more patience with those around me [P3]

Based on the findings it can thus be said that more than half of the members (4 out of 6) found the Communication and Listening skills aspect of the mentor training course to be beneficial to them. It not only assisted them in communicating better with their “Little” but it also helped improve their personal relationships. Overall from their comments, it can be seen that mentors were now viewed as more approachable, friendlier and easier to talk to since completing the course.

The findings of this study is similar to the one reported by De Anda (2001) who found that the relationship between mentor and mentee is a special one of friendship that offers a supportive and trustworthy listener. This is further supported by Taaffe McLearn, Colasanto, Schloen and Shapiro (1999) and Terblanche (2007) who found that most mentors gained something personally from their mentoring experience, including feeling that they were better people, had increased patience, friendship as well as feeling that they were effective in what they were doing. They also gained new skills such as listening skills and better knowledge of working with people. Many participants in this study had found that they had had a positive experience and would try to stay involved with the programme. The sense of satisfaction is so great for the mentors and they want to continue helping. The positive experiences thus keep them motivated to want to continue learning and improving on the new skills that they have acquired (Taaffe McLearn et al., 1999).



4.2.1.3 *Relationship with mentees and others*

As new skills have been acquired by the mentor, the mentors tended to apply the skills gained in their relationships with the mentees and others in their daily lives. The new skills that they have learnt have not only made the mentors more tolerant but it has also impacted positively on the manner in which they react and interact with their peers and family members.

Participants noted that since completing the mentor training programme and becoming a mentor, they have become more open to communicating with others (with friends, relatives and “Little”). As indicated earlier, they are more friendly, approachable and tolerant than they were before. This development assisted them with establishing new

relationships more effectively. They were now also more open to new experiences, as well as more tolerant of themselves and others.

I would say, you see I've got a very good relationship with my family, my immediate family really.... they never hesitate to tell me my weaknesses, so we are not a family that doesn't discuss things or that sweep things under the carpet... I am now just more diplomatic and they seem to be more comfortable around me and chat more freely with me. I suppose I am more approachable now because I listen more to them.....[P1]

My relationship with others is still the same. I have used what I have learnt from my relationship with others in my relationship with my Little. We can interact better with the skills I have and the new ones I learnt. [P3]

I wasn't [indistinct] by far not in-depth, there were a whole lot of things kept from me that I thought were entirely relevant... once Boys Town got to know me a little better they kind of inducted about my "Little". We could communicate better. But I mean there are things about him that I thought were of extreme relevance of his past, ... [P2]

Many mentors attributed the changes in their relationships with others to the skills that they acquired on the mentor programme. They found themselves now to be warmer, friendlier, more empathic and genuine in their relationships with others. They also found that since becoming involved in the BBBS mentor programme, they have become more appreciative of what they have, and appreciated their family and friends more.

4.2.2. Quality of the course

Participants were also asked about their experiences on the quality of the training and the presentation of the course and if they had any further recommendations for the improvement of the training programme.

4.2.2.1. *Quality and content of training programme*

As discussed in Chapter 2, the programme consisted of various models presented over a period of seven weeks with a total time spent of 21 hours. Most of the participants (five out of six) felt that the course was well presented and in the time was sufficient.

I think the training programme was very good. It was also quite an eye opener. Especially about my own weaknesses to be doing something like this. [P1]

The training programme specifically I thought was really, really good. The topics were of absolute relevance, especially in the early stages, that was two years ago now, I've been doing it for two years. But I think the training was really good. [P2]

I think the training that I received has been adequate. ... [P3]

I think the programme is very good considering the diverse group of people they are actually trying to train.... ...I think it's sufficient as an initial, I just believe there should be follow-ups. [P5]

I think the training was very well done in that it made you look at yourself first before you even considered how you would have handled a child. It is very good at making you look at your own life and your own background. [P6]

One participant however felt that the course did not equip her enough for her role as a mentor. Despite having learnt a lot in the training session, she reported still feeling inadequate and ill - equipped.

I have a long way to go as I feel very inadequate and ill equipped at times. [P4]

The quotations illustrated above show that a majority of the participants had a positive experience of the training programme, as well as found the content of the programme adequate in dealing with their “Littles”.

When questioned regarding the content of the course, mentors were asked what they liked most and least about the course. Some mentors indicated that they enjoyed the course as it gave them the opportunity to express themselves and interact with others. It also gave them the opportunity to look at themselves in a creative way and get to know themselves better. The following were highlighted:

I had fun in the group. I enjoyed being able to express myself and showing a different way of thinking to the rest of the group... .. the were some things that I did find to be superficial though. Things that weren't addressed adequately like you just came out of training but you were not given the opportunity to relate with other "Bigs" on the experiences.. this would have made it more real. [P2]

I liked the training because I got to know myself a bit better by doing the different activities that sometimes needed you to be a bit creative. I also like the fact that the staff at BBBSSA is always there to listen and help if you're having a problem with your little... There was not anything that I didn't like [P3]

I enjoyed the Q and A (questions and answers) and liked it least when there were roleplays. I was not comfortable doing this [P4]

From the above, it is evident that the participants enjoyed the training programme and felt that they learnt from it and each other. The only aspect that they felt should be looked at carefully is that it should be less superficial and take note of participants' uncomfortable areas. By enjoying the training process, this encourages the participant to open up and contribute and share with a group. This also ensured that they felt comfortable to interact with the group and ask questions if necessary. In 'forcing' an individual out of his / her comfort zone (roleplays), the individual is forced to look at the reasons for their uncomfortableness and work through the process in order to move forward with the group thus becoming a more positive and experienced mentor.

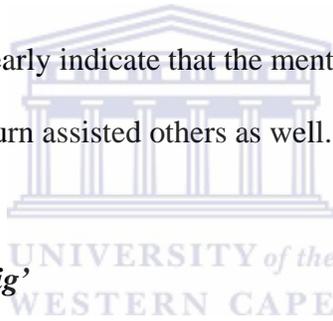
4.2.2.2 *Satisfaction with training programme*

All six of the mentors reported being satisfied with the training programme, despite one person feeling inadequately equipped with skills. All participants reported either learning something from the training course, or having learnt something about themselves from the course.

A very big impact, especially the training, I think the training was very well done in that it made you look at yourself first before you even considered how you would have handled a child. It is very good at making you look at your own background. [P6]

I get a hell of a lot more out of it than I put into it. I've learned a hell of a lot about teenager.... [P2]

The abovementioned quotes clearly indicate that the mentors felt that not only did they benefit from the course but in turn assisted others as well.



4.2.3. *Pairing 'Little' with 'Big'*

At the beginning of the training programme, all “Bigs” were asked to indicate the “type” of “Little” that they would like to mentor. Those who indicated the characteristics that they wanted in their “Little” were accommodated as best as possible. There were those who also indicated that they had no preference regarding the “type” of “Little” to be allocated to them. From the quotations below, it can be seen that BBBS South Africa attempted to meet all requirements as best possible.

They matched me, they really matched me very well. I can't believe they matched me so well. Ja, I wanted an older one which I also, thank God, I did get an older one, because if it was a little one I think I would be locked in forever, I don't think I would be able to ... [P1]

I think we were a brilliant brilliant match. I mean there were things, there were some things that I had no idea how to handle..... And so in terms of the match

itself, I would have liked to have known a bit more about his parents in terms of where he comes from. [P2]

Despite the "Bigs" reporting that they were happy with the "Littles" that they were paired with, careful consideration should be taken with this pairing as an incorrect pairing could not only be devastating for the "Little" but also so for the "Big". From the quotes it can also be concluded that the pairing of "Bigs" and "Littles" were successful and it is this successful pairing that aides and assists in the success of this BBBS programme.

According to Shevitz et al. (2003) and Ryan et al. (2002), obtaining the right mentor is crucial for the effectiveness of a programme. The authors feel that it is of utmost importance that mentors come from a background where they have either interacted with or have had working experience with children. By meeting these criteria, mentors will find it easier to communicate and interact with their mentee. This will therefore result in a successful pairing of mentor and mentee who are capable of communicating with and understanding each other.

4.2.4. Programme improvements – Changes to be made to the programme

None of the participants of the training programme had any complaints with regard to the content of the programme and the manner in which it was conducted. Some participants did however feel that there were areas that could be improved upon. Amongst others, they reported that ongoing training, follow up sessions and regular get-together would be helpful in learning from each other.

I believe the only thing lacking at the moment is ongoing follow up training as opposed to just the once off type of training. [P5]

Maybe they could have covered it more in-depth because I found myself not sure at times. [P1]

... I believe there should be on-going, on a regular basis, get-togethers, discussion groups, sharing, so that the mentors can mentor each other as well as where there are problems that are already solved by other people, they try to re-solve them, just by regular get-togethers and sharing of information. [P5]

An area to be addressed was identified as having more interactive follow up sessions where the participants could be learn more from the training co-ordinator, as well as from each other. Ryan, Whittaker and Pinckney (2002) are of the opinion that successful mentor programmes include appropriate screening of mentors, matching of mentors and mentees and the training of mentees. They also concluded that mentors will be more likely to be committed to a programme if they understand its goals and expectations, and receive appropriate orientation that is always followed by ongoing training and support from the organisation.



Research continuously points out that training is critical for a programme to be successful programme. Training can equip mentors with the information and strategies that they require to develop and equally satisfying relationship with their mentees. Training thus prepares the mentor in understanding his / her mentee and can prevent both mentor and mentee from having unrealistic expectations of the relationship (Taaffe McLearn et al., 1999). Both mentor and mentee thus become aware of what can be accomplished in the relationship and feelings of failure and disappointment can be avoided. Research has also found that ongoing supervision and support by the organisation's staff members can help in the mentor – mentee relationship developing into a positive one. It is in instances where there are regular contact with staff that meaningful relationships develop with mentees, as mentors always feel that they have the support of the organisation to fall back on (Taaffe McLearn et al., 1999).

According to Taaffe McLearn et al. (1999), regular meetings with other mentors are also helpful as these groups act as support structures for the mentor. In these groups, the mentor can discuss their frustrations and problems with others who have faced similar situations and challenges.

It is clear from the findings that the mentors felt that they benefited from the mentor training programme offered by BBBS South Africa. The training was found to be successful by all and assisted the “Bigs” in dealing with their “Littles” however, the programme should continue to invest time in the mentors by having ongoing follow up sessions and support groups for the mentors.

4.2.5. Motivation for completing the training programme

From the study conducted, it was found that mentors all had different motivations for completing the training programme. The different reasons for this included:

- a) Sharing of historical experiences with others
- b) Learning from and understanding teenagers
- c) Contributing back to society

4.2.5.1 Sharing of past experiences with others

Some mentors believe that their background and life experiences assisted them in becoming a good mentor. They believe that other mentors can learn from them and their past experiences. This background and life experiences is seen as a tool that can be utilised while mentoring a “Little” in order to help develop the “Little”.

I think my participation in the programme is to share my historical personal and to pass it on to other people, and that is why I participated in this. Because I believe I have grown tremendously over the years and there are life skills that I

believe that I've got and I would like to share with others and help them, that is where my passion lies in life, is to help other people. [P5]

Other mentors, however, found that when they were in groups that were of the same historical and cultural background, they were able to interact more and communicate better in the programme.

... I remember thinking at the time that it was a bit of a waste of time, the very first one, and then I changed to the other group, more my kind of background , ja I remember and then I felt better. [P2]

Mentors found that their background history played a role in who they are and who they developed into and the manner in which they interacted with people not only in a group setting but on a one to one basis as well. Research has furthermore shown that mentors can bring a wealth of information from their own life experiences that they can share, not only with their fellow mentors during training, but with their mentees as well (Shevitz et al., 2003). It is this sharing of past experiences that can help the mentor motivate his / her “Little” to strive for better things in life. For example, by relaying positive events of change, the “Big” can motivate his / her “Little” to overcome his / her obstacles and strive for success.

4.2.5.2. Learning from and understanding teenagers

The mentors consisted of people from various backgrounds and age groups. What has been found is that older mentors learnt from their interaction with their teenage “Littles”.

I get a hell of a lot more out of it than I put into it. I've learned a hell of a lot about teenagers. The ‘Little’ I deal with is, he's just turned 15, but he's quite a handful. ... he's a lot younger than his age. Just for me I enjoy working with teenagers, understanding what they mean when they ask because they don't say what they mean, they ask. [P2]

From this it can be seen that older mentors can learn from the younger “Littles” and this assists in them understanding their “Little” and the needs of the “Little” better. In research conducted by Taaffe McLearn et al. (1999), it was found that most mentors learned or gained something personally from their mentoring experience. Mentors reported feeling that they were better people since taking part in the mentor programme, have increased patience with family and friend, developed better friendships and have feelings of being successful and effective in other aspects of their lives. Thus one is able to see that, not only does the mentoring relationship have an impact on the mentee, but the mentor too learns something out of the relationship. Hence, the relationship is a reciprocating one where the mentee not only learns from the mentor, but the mentor learns from the mentee as well.



4.2.5.3. Contributing back to community

Mentors have different motivations for wanting to become mentors. For many the main reason for joining the mentor programme was to give back to society and help individuals reach their full potential.

I wanted to do something for the Community. I went to Child Welfare and they didn't have anything, and I stumbled onto Big Brother and that was that, I got involved. [P2]

Because I believe I have grown tremendously over the years ... and there are life skills that I believe that I've got and I would like to share with others and help them, that is where my passion lies in life, is to help other people. [P5]

I always wanted to do some kind of volunteer work. I wanted to try to make a difference in someone's life. I wanted to let my 'Little' know that no matter what their situation, that if they worked really hard they can make their dreams come true. I don't come from a very privileged background (and I know a lot of others are a lot worse off than me), but I worked really hard to be where I am now and I didn't just blame my situation for all the bad things that happened in my life. Even though it's taking a really long time to be where I really want to be, I will get there someday. [P3]

My motivation was that I feel blessed in life, in many ways, you know, I have been very fortunate, I've got a nice home, I've got a good family, and I just felt that I should give something back. ... you can't keep taking from life without giving anything back. [P1]

From the above it can be seen that the motivation for becoming mentors was to contribute back to the community. In addition to this, they also improve their own sense of worth by helping someone else younger. They can therefore make a difference in the lives of someone less fortunate.

4.3. Conclusion

Past research has shown that mentoring requires a commitment of time and a willingness by mentors to volunteer to work with youth other than their family members. Most mentors have found this mentoring relationship worthwhile for a number of reasons: (i) they are motivated to mentor because they believe that the mentee needs help, (ii) they want to do some good for others or (iii) they simply want to work with youth and contribute back to society (Taaffe McLearn et al., 1999). From this, it can be deduced that mentors not only want to contribute back to society but they believe that they can make a difference and help a young person.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This study explored the experiences of mentors that underwent the BBBS mentor training programme. This chapter aims to provide a summary of the findings. Some of the limitations of this study will be discussed and further recommendations will be made regarding the training programme as well as recommendations for future research.

5.2. Summary of Findings

From the results obtained it can be seen that most mentors had fairly similar feelings regarding the mentor training programme of BBBS. Many felt that the training was of a good quality and would not change much about the content of the programme. Others, however, felt that certain changes needed to be made. These proposed changes will be discussed later in the recommendations section.

As seen earlier, most experiences of the programme were positive. The most positive aspect that was found appears to be the development of new skills that have improved the relationships that some mentors had. The findings have shown mentors reporting that their personal relationships have improved since completing the mentor training programme and becoming a mentor. They communicate much better now with their colleagues and loved ones and appear to be more understanding and patient.

Secondly, they also report a development within themselves – personal growth. The training programme thus appears to have a personal growth aspect which makes the

mentor aware of not only their current circumstances but how their actions in the past influence who they are and what they do. Mentors (participants) described an increase in self awareness, a better understanding of themselves, as well as acquiring new skills that made them more confident.

With the building of confidence and the greater self awareness, participants also found that they had acquired better listening skills, not only do they listen more attentively but they are also capable of listening to underlying messages and identifying what their “Little” really require. The successful teaming up of the "Bigs" and "Littles" also added to the success of the programme.

Throughout the study, when questioned regarding changes to the mentor programme to make it more effective, mentors consistently reported that they would not change any aspect of the programme, but merely place more emphasis on certain areas as well as suggest more follow up support sessions initially. Overall, the training appears to be a success with most mentors.

The aim of the BBBS mentor programme is to equip mentors with the skills that will assist them in their relationships with their mentees. The role of the mentor in this relationship is to help the mentee develop by portraying what a positive role model is. The mentor thus teaches and encourages the mentee so that the mentee develops a good sense of self. During this relationship, a friendship also develops where the mentor becomes not only a friend and confidant for the mentee but is also someone that is constantly encouraging the mentee to achieve all goals that he / she have set for him / herself. From this, it can clearly be seen that the BBBS programme follow these

guidelines and this is also illustrated by the mentoring model as suggested by Anderson and Shannon.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore mentors perceptions of the effectiveness of the Big Brother Big Sister mentor training programme. This has been achieved but the study was constrained by a number of limitations. Discussed below are some of the limitations that were experienced.

- 1) A limitation of the study was related to the recruitment of participants for this study. A mentoring organisation, BBBS was approached and mentors (“Bigs”) were given the option to volunteer to participate in the study. The criteria for participation was that they should have had already completed the course and had been mentoring for at least three months. However, when the study was conducted, the organisation was busy with a training programme and thus much time elapsed before interviews could be concluded. Furthermore, the researcher was dependent upon the organisation to provide the participants.
- 2) The sample of participants comprised of 6 individuals. As the aim of the thesis was to highlight common themes between participants, the sample size comprised only of a few mentors in the BBBS programme and hence compromises the generalisability of the findings to the rest of the BBBS mentor community. Conclusion drawn in this study should therefore be seen in light of the participant size of the research study.
- 3) Most of the participants were working individuals resulting in interviews being conducted after hours or at the workplace of the participant. At times when interviews were held at a public venue, this impacted on the quality of the

recording as well as the amount of information received as participants were pressed for time as a result of work and family commitments.

- 4) There were times when participants did not arrive for their scheduled interviews. These interviews then had to be rescheduled. Often, there were participants who were unable to reschedule and this impacted on the number of participants that took part in the study.
- 5) The researcher's ability to elicit information from the participants and his / her lack of experience in this area may prove to be a limitation.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

According to Flaxman, Ascher and Harrington (1989), mentors provide at – risk youth with access to resources that otherwise would not have been available. These relationships offer psychological and emotional support and encourage behavioural and attitudinal changes. Research indicated that the actual success of mentoring programmes remains unclear as there is a paucity of research evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring training programmes (De Anda, 2001).

As far as making recommendations for further research, it is suggested that more evaluative research takes place from the perspective of the mentor receiving the training so that benchmarks can be created for further research. Research thus needs to be conducted in such a manner that clear results are noted for future research to be compared to.

Furthermore, the training programme needs to be standardised so that accurate evaluations can be made of the training and the training material.

Much research conducted on mentoring focuses on the benefits of mentoring for the mentee. Research needs to be conducted on the benefits of mentoring for the mentor as this may also be suggestive of the effectiveness of a mentor programme. The opportunity should also be taken to compare local studies with international studies so that programmes can be adapted to suit and fit in with the South African context.

5.5. Recommendations to the Organisation

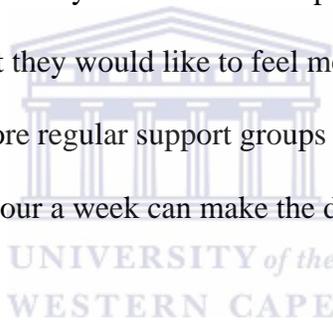
The effectiveness of a mentoring programme depends on individual circumstances – the mentees’ needs, support obtained from parents, family and the organisation as well as the amount of time invested in the programme. The following recommendations were made:

- 1) Volunteers should be carefully screened and selected. More damage is done when people are not committed to the programme. Volunteers should also be made aware of the expectations of the training course and who all will be involved.
- 2) More appropriate matches should be made. Despite the organisation trying to meet the requests of the mentor, some mentors have found that they are matched with someone with a different personality and often much time is ‘wasted’ on building the relationship more slowly. Youth who experience a quality relationship with their mentor experience better results (Jekielek, Moore, Hair & Scarupa, 2002).
- 3) The organisation should offer mentor support groups. Mentor support groups should be held on a more regular basis so that volunteers can learn from each other. Some mentors felt very alone in some of their struggles with their “Littles” as they had no one to talk to and often felt guilty about contacting the offices for trivial queries. By having support groups, mentors can discuss their frustrations and problems with others who may have faced similar problems.

- 4) Provide on - going training. As new issues are always arising, mentors would like to know that they have the support of the organisation at all times.
- 5) Resources should be made available to mentors at all times. Provide consistent supervision and support. This is critical for ensuring that the mentor and mentee meet regularly and are starting to develop a workable relationship.

5.6. Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the BBBS mentor programme through the experiences of the mentors that completed the mentor training programme. The findings of this study revealed that the programme currently meets the requirements of the mentors but they would like to feel more supported by the organisation through having more regular support groups and training in problem areas. It is further highlighted that one hour a week can make the difference in the life of a “Little”.



The current research has shown that mentoring has a positive impact on the development of mentors and mentees. Once a standardised programme has been implemented, this same mentoring programme can serve as a means of not only assisting the mentor in becoming a positive role model for the mentee but also as a means for the mentors to get to know themselves better.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix

INTERVIEW GUIDE

What impact do you think has the programme made on your personal growth?

What impressions has this programme left you with?

Apart from your personal growth, what impact has the programme made on you and your relationship with others

Why did mentoring attract you?



What have you learnt about mentoring in the programme?

How do you perceive yourself as a mentor?

What aspects did you like most of the programme?

What aspect did you like least of the programme?

What if anything would you like to change about the programme?

How has being a mentor affected you as an individual? Do you perceive any individual changes?

Was the training adequate in preparing you to deal with issues that may arise with your Little?

Are there areas that you think should have been covered better in the programme or should be added to the programme to help you deal better with circumstances that may arise with your Little?

Are there any further comments that you would like to make about the programme?

