

A NORMATIVE INSTRUMENT FOR ASSESSING THE MENTORING ROLE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to develop a normative instrument for assessing the mentoring role in the South African context. The sampling frame for the study constituted the 1200 employees of a division of a large transport organisation. A convenience sample including all 1200 employees yielded 637 fully completed records (a 53% response rate). First and second level factor analyses, followed by an iterative item analysis on the scale of 26 items, yielded a seemingly robust scale with a Cronbach alpha of 0,97. The psychometric properties of the scale are further discussed.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om 'n normatiewe instrument te ontwikkel vir die beoordeling van die mentorskaprol in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks. Die steekproefraamwerk vir die studie bestaan uit die 1200 werknemers van 'n divisie uit 'n groot vervoeronderneming. 'n Gerieflikheidssteekproef wat al 1200 werknemers ingesluit het, het 637 volledi- voltooide rekords opgelewer ('n responskoers van 53%). Eerste- en tweedevlakfaktorontledings gevolg deur 'n iteratiewe itemontleding op die 26 items van die skaal het 'n oënskynlike robuuste skaal met 'n Cronbach alfa van 0,97 opgelewer. Die psigometriese eienskappe van die skaal word verder bespreek.

Organisation socialisation – the process of introducing new members into the organisation and thereby entrenching the organisational culture and values – is an often underestimated tool for improving organisational effectiveness and efficiency, especially in a diverse work-force context such as South Africa. Organisation socialisation can be divided into three stages, namely:

- the pre-contract (also called the pre-arrival) stage,
- the induction (or the encounter) stage; and
- the role management (or the adjustment) stage (cf. Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996).

Mentoring is an integral part of this socialisation process, (in the second and third stages where the first encounter and the adjustment takes place) (Storm & Roodt, 2002) and is crucial for socialising new members (Kram, 1985) into the organisation. Mentoring is amongst others a training and development tool to assist individuals in the upward progression in companies (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978; Roche, 1979). Mentoring is also a mechanism by which employees are equipped to adapt to organisational change (Eby, 1997). Interestingly, research has shown that maximum benefit may be achieved in the mentoring process, where the protégé is driving the process (Clutterbuck & Abbott, 2003). The development of a measure for assessing the mentoring role may therefore be an important aid in identifying and developing suitable candidates for the mentoring role. The purpose of the study is therefore to develop such a measuring instrument.

The origins of mentoring

The description of mentoring can be traced back to ancient Greek mythology (cf. April, 1979; Chao, 1997; Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992; Clawson, 1980, 1985; Rogers, 1992). Most of the empirical research has been conducted in the last two decades, but this research is fragmented (Chao, 1997; Chao et al., 1992). Some of this research includes phases of mentoring (Kram, 1983, 1988), functions served by the mentor (Noe, 1988a; Orth, Wilkinson & Benfari, 1987; Schockett & Haring-Hidore, 1985; Tack & Tack, 1986), and the outcomes of mentoring (Chao et al., 1992; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1988, 1989; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Jacobi, 1991; Orpen, 1995; Riley & Wrench,

1985; Scandura, 1992; Whitely, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991). Research also focuses more on the protégé. Some studies have been conducted on the mentor *per se* (Allen, Poteet & Burroughs, 1997). Fagenson (1994) suggested that a multi-perspective approach be followed to include both the mentor and the protégé.

Mentoring is a process of transferring specific knowledge from the mentor to the protégé (Hendrikse, 2003). This knowledge has two components, namely tacit and implicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that you can see or show. Implicit knowledge comes from years of practical experience and the mentor can only demonstrate this knowledge. Part of the knowledge transfer includes knowledge of the organisation (organisation culture)(Hendrikse, 2003). Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe (2002) supported this and according to them, this is crucial for organisational effectiveness and success.

Kram (1988) identified four phases of mentoring:

- **Initiation.** A younger person (protégé) is flattered that someone with a high level of management chooses him/her and the manager is pleased that someone younger seeks his/her advice. This normally has a timeframe of six months to a year.
- **Cultivation.** The mentor/protégé relationship develops symbiotically over this period. The timeframe is normally two to five years.
- **Separation.** The protégé outgrows the need for a mentor. The timeframe is over a period of six months to two years.
- **Redefinition.** The relationship develops to such an ideal level that these two parties are on a peer level.

Hunt and Michael (1983) referred to the four stages of mentoring as initiation, protégé learning, break-up and lasting friends. Chao (1997) supported Kram's sequence of the four mentoring stages and indicates that the protégés in the initiation phase report the lowest levels of support compared to the protégés in other phases.

The timeframe of mentorship is important and Cohen (1999a; 1999b) also divided it into four phases, namely the early, middle, latter and final phases, which support Kram's (1988) phases.

Besides the different stages of mentorship, one can also identify different types of mentoring. The next section deals with types of mentoring.

Types of mentoring

Five types of mentoring can be identified from the literature, namely hierarchical, peer, diversity, supervisory and executive mentoring that can be applied in different contexts.

Hierarchical mentoring

Hierarchical mentoring can be divided in mentors on a higher or lower grade:

Mentoring from a higher grade

Hierarchical mentoring is when a senior person (mentor) with regard to age and experience agrees to share his/her information, advice and emotional support with a junior person (protégé) (cf. April, 1979; Burke, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978; Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio & Feren, 1988; Phillips-Jones, 1982; Walbrugh & Roodt, 2003). Hunt and Michael (1983); Kram (1988); Levinson et al. (1978); Noe (1988a) and Owen (1991) were in favour of the aforementioned and refer to mentoring as a junior-senior relationship where the common purpose for both parties is the personal growth of the junior person.

Mentoring from a lower grade

According to Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003), the focus has recently been on relevant experience rather than on hierarchy level and therefore upward mentoring can occur where a junior employee mentors the senior manager, for example, on diversity issues.

Peer mentoring

Eby (1997) and Kram and Isabella (1985) were of the opinion that the traditional mentor-protégé relationship had to adjust to accommodate the flatter structures and this has led to lateral (peer) mentors. Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003) were in favour of peer mentoring. Kram and Isabella (1985) differentiated between information, collegial and special peer mentoring:

- Information peer mentoring is when an exchange of information occurs in the workplace, with less commitment involved.
- Collegial peer mentoring occurs when information exchange is linked to increasing levels of emotional support.
- Special peer mentoring entails an intimate relationship with a peer, which is scarce and takes years to develop.

When assisting in job-related skills development, intra team, inter team, co-worker, survivor mentoring, peer mentoring for domestic relocaters and international forms of mentoring can be used. When assisting in career skills development, internal and external collegial peer mentoring can be useful (Eby, 1997).

Diversity mentoring

There are two types of diversity mentoring, namely cross-cultural and cross-gender mentoring:

Cross-cultural mentoring

Ndlovu, the Executive Manager of the Black Management Forum, suggests inter-cultural mentorship programmes, whereby whites and blacks can learn from each other. He also agrees that women could have more problems if black men were ruling (Alpersen, 1993).

According to Atkinson, Neville and Casas (1991) and Thomas (1990), blacks are more likely to be in cross-race relationships than whites. White protégés on the other hand rarely form cross-race mentoring relationships (Thomas, 1990). Gunn (1995) suggested that the partners must also be trained in the sensitivity of the cross-cultural mentor-protégé relationship. Blacks were also more likely to find positive mentor relationships outside the department with other races than mentors of the same race (Thomas, 1990). According to Wingrove (2002), a short-term solution for protégés could be to get a role model in the black

empowered group outside the company. Thomas and Alderfer (1989) found in their study that black people found it necessary to have white sponsorship, but also needed to have a mentoring relationship with a same race individual.

Cross-gender mentoring

In a study conducted by Olian et al. (1988), no consistent evidence of same sex mentor preferences (preference of male protégé to male mentor) was found. Ragins and Cotton (1999) and Ragins and McFarlin (1990) found that cross-gender mentoring leads to less social activities than same gender mentoring. Noe (1988a) indicated that protégés in cross-gender mentor relationships utilised these relationships more effectively than protégés of the same sex mentor relationship.

The problem is that there are only a few women in top management positions (Blau & Ferber, 1987; Ueckermann, 2004) that can act as role models (Bowen, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Warihay, 1980). Other researchers have also found this shortage of female mentors (Brown, 1986; Noe, 1988b; Parker & Kram, 1993; Ragins, 1989). Junior female employees experience less support from the top women than the top women managers feel they render to the juniors (Warihay, 1980).

Brefach (1986) and Erkut and Mokros (1984) found that both genders see men as having more power and Erkut and Mokros (1984) found that male protégés avoid female mentors because of this. Rogers (1992) referred to the mentoring circles (e.g. one mentor for three protégés) to assist females and focus on gender awareness in mentoring. Kayle and Jacobson (1995) referred to this as group mentoring.

Everybody must be able to have access to mentoring opportunities with senior managers, and cross-gender mentorship creates an environment to make this possible for young women (Kram, 1988). According to Bowen (1985), both male mentors and female protégés benefit positively in their work or non-work relationships and this outweighs the problems that can be experienced.

As more women enter the business world, the pressures of tokenism are reduced and women can therefore be free from the stress of being the only one in this business environment (Kanter, 1977). Secondly, as more women enter the managerial levels, there will be female mentors available and role modelling will be easier (Daily, Certo & Dalton, 2000; Kram, 1988). Blake (1995) conducted a study on black women and found that they lack black role models and this causes frustration. They did not trust white women and this affected their relationships.

Supervisory mentoring

Only a few studies have focused on supervisory mentoring (Douglas & Schoorman, 1988; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994). Burke, McKenna and McKeen (1991) suggested that the quality of mentoring would be affected by a protégé's status. Scandura and Schriesheim (1994) found that supervisory mentoring was linked to higher salary and promotion rates for subordinates. Mullen (1994) suggested that protégés who have bosses as mentors communicate more comfortably with them.

When the supervisor/manager is the mentor, the protégés are likely to adopt the leadership style of their manager if the managers are perceived to be competent and respected (Bass, 1990). According to Burke, McKeen and McKenna (1993) and Ragins and McFarlin (1990) the advantage of having a boss as a mentor is that they receive more opportunities for career development. Fagenson-Eland, Marks and Amendola (1997) supported the results of Ragins and McFarlin (1990) that supervisory mentors were perceived as providing more effective mentoring than non-supervisory mentors.

In a study conducted by Green and Bauer (1995) on doctoral students and their advisors, they found that students who had higher verbal aptitude and commitment to the programme,

received higher levels of psychosocial and career mentoring functions by their supervisors (advisors). Thus, the most talented students gained the most from the mentoring functions.

Women are also more likely than men to develop mentoring relationships with their supervisors as a result of male barrier networking (Brass, 1985). It seems that supervisory mentoring is increasingly becoming a part of the supervisor role (Green & Bauer, 1995; Hisson, 1993; Kerkes, 1994; Marien, 1992; Parson, 1991).

Executive mentoring

Informal mentoring is normally applicable to executives and directors (April, 1979; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). In a study completed on women, executive women perceived the mentor as an important tool in assisting them in becoming more visible to top management and helping them to learn how to handle organisational politics. Most of these relationships were informal (Clutterbuck & Devine, 1987). An increasingly common practice has recently been that the retiring Chief Executive Officer becomes a mentor to his/her successor (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). A word of caution was raised against self-styled gurus who make themselves available for coaching/mentoring and it was recommended that protégés do their homework before engaging in such a relationship (April, 1979).

Executive mentors can play the following roles, e.g. be a sounding board, critical friend, counsellor, career advisor, networker and coach. The protégé expects a mentor to play three common roles, namely executive coach, elder states person and reflective mentor (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999). According to Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999), an important part of mentoring is the management of emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (1996), emotional intelligence involves five key skills:

- Knowing one's emotions (self-awareness).
- Managing emotions (handling feelings).
- Motivating oneself.
- Recognising emotions in others (empathy).
- Handling relationships (social competence).

The mentor can assist the protégé in obtaining these five skills. Part of the complexity of executive mentoring is the different processes involved as well as the fact that the mentor must assist on several levels to adhere to the protégé's needs. A model including different executive mentoring processes such as business processes, concepts and models, business results, self-awareness, intellectual leadership processes, behaviour, and emotional processes and values was developed by Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999).

Some of the qualities a mentor can have are experiences outside the organisation, asking good questions, role modelling, credibility, good listening skills, patience, networking, balancing processes and content, helping to manage knowledge and being dependable (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999).

Against the background of the different types of mentoring relationships, the next section of the discussion will deal with critical issues in the mentor-protégé relationship.

The mentor-protégé (mentoring) relationship

The allocation of a mentor can be done formally or the protégé can informally choose a mentor (Fracaro, 2002; Hofmeyer, 1987; McGregor, 1993). There was a debate earlier on whether the informal mentor/protégé relationship can be formalised. Hofmeyer (1987) was of the opinion that due to the natural development of the mentor-protégé relationship over time, this relationship cannot be institutionalised (or formalised as a relationship), but organisations can try to create conditions to develop such relationships. Burke and McKeen (1989); Geiger-DuMond and Boyle (1995) and Zey (1985) mentioned that organisations attempt to replicate informal mentoring into

formal mentoring programmes. According to Kram (1985), mentoring affects the whole organisation and if everybody is committed (spends time, patience and effort) it is much more useful than a formal programme with little relevance for the individual and the organisation. Fracaro (2002); Ragins and Cotton (1999) and Viator (2000) supported the notion that informal mentoring has more benefits for the protégé than formal mentoring.

Time is the criteria for choosing between formal and informal mentoring. Organisations do not have the time to wait for the development of the relationship and therefore choose a formal mentoring programme (Hunt, 1991). Douglas (1997); Murray (1991) and Zey (1985) indicated that formal mentoring is less time consuming than informal mentoring. Dinsdale (1990) emphasised the fact that formal mentoring does not attempt to replace the informal process, but rather supplement it. According to Dinsdale (1990), these formal mentoring programmes should be flexible for protégés to select mentors other than supervisors and managers.

Chao et al. (1992) compared the formal and informal mentoring relationships. They found that protégés in informal mentoring relationships benefited more in terms of career-related support than protégés in formal mentoring relationships, but no differences were found in psychosocial support. The importance of their discovery was that regardless of the mentoring relationship, mentoring was beneficial to the individual (higher organisation socialisation, job satisfaction and salary). In contradictory results, Fagenson-Eland et al. (1997) found that protégés received greater psychosocial mentoring in informal mentoring and that formal mentoring did not influence the perceptions of career mentoring.

Informal mentoring develops spontaneously without the involvement of the organisation (Chao et al., 1992). Through programmes the company manages formal mentoring. McGregor (1993) supported the concept of formal mentoring and suggested that formal mentoring in organisations has manifested itself in training programmes and that the success of an employee development programme (such as affirmative action or mentoring programmes) depends on the mentor as well as the training and commitment of both sides (McGregor, 1993). It is important to note that the protégé must also take responsibility and initiatives for activities in the above-mentioned programme and part of this programme includes keeping a protégé's journal (Cohen, 1999a). The formal programmes also lead to additional organisation commitment from the mentor and the protégé (Phillips-Jones, 1983).

Matching the right mentor and protégé is critical for the success of the mentoring (Cohen, 1999a). In this regard, the informal mentoring relationship is more positive because in a formal mentoring relationship, the programme coordinator decides on the match (Chao et al., 1992; Douglas, 1997; Gaskill, 1993; Murray, 1991; Singh et al., 2002). Possible criteria for successful matching range from working out the logistics of "who can meet when" to finding the "ideal" match. Gender, ethnicity (Burke, 1984; Thomas, 1990) and religion (Cohen, 1999a) are important variables. One viewpoint is also that the more similar the participants' background, the greater the chance of personal and professional compatibility. The background similarities were supported by Furano, Roaf, Styles and Branch (1993); Garcia (1992) and Ragins (1997). Ensher and Murphy (1997) found that the more protégés perceived themselves as being "similar" to the mentor, the more they would like the mentor and be satisfied with the mentor, and the more contact there would be. A "similar" concept in mentoring was supported by Allen et al. (1997) and Burke et al. (1993). Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003) were more in favour of differences rather than similarities, because more learning occurs in such a relationship.

The mentor will also be more attracted to higher performers than moderate performers (Fracaro, 2002; Olian, Carroll &

Giannantonio, 1993; Willbur, 1987). According to Fagenson (1992), the mentor-protégé relationship is based on mutual attraction and respect, while anticipated satisfaction is the key of this attraction (Olian et al., 1988).

One key aspect of the mentor-protégé relationship is trust (Clawson, 1980; Cohen, 1999b) and according to Hunt (1991), trust is critical irrespective of formal or informal mentoring. Hendrikse (2003) supported this and, according to him, if change occurs in the organisation it can have an impact on the mentor-protégé relationship.

Another key aspect of the mentor-protégé relationship is interpersonal communication and both parties should listen affectively (Kram, 1988). Clawson (1980) indicated that effective mentors communicate more frequently with their protégés. Managers with greater levels of interpersonal skills are more often preferred as mentors (Olian et al., 1988).

With a better understanding of the mentoring relationship, the next section will more specifically focus on the mentoring role.

The mentoring role

Cohen (1999a, 1999b) referred to six dimensions of the mentoring role. These six dimensions are incorporated in the behavioural profile for both the mentor and the protégé and provide the key thrust for each dimension (Cohen, 1999a) (See Table 1).

**TABLE 1
BEHAVIOURAL PROFILE OF A MENTOR AND PROTÉGÉ**

Behavioural Profile	
Mentor behaviour	Protégé behaviour
<p>1. RELATIONSHIP Key point – Trust Shares and reflects on experiences. Listens empathetically. Understands and accepts.</p>	<p>Offers detailed explanations. Expects mentor to listen and to ask questions.</p>
<p>2. INFORMATION Key point – Advice Offers facts about career, education, plans, progress. Comments about use of information. Exhibits tailored, accurate and sufficient knowledge.</p>	<p>Provides facts and records. Expects mentor to review use and depth of sources.</p>
<p>3. FACILITATIVE Key point – Alternatives Explores interests, abilities, ideas and beliefs Provides other views/attainable goals. Shares personal decisions about career.</p>	<p>Explains choices and decisions. Expects mentor to pose options and other views.</p>
<p>4. CONFRONTATIVE Key point – Challenge Shows respect for decisions, actions, career. Shares insight into counterproductive strategies and behaviours. Evaluates need and capacity to change.</p>	<p>Reflects on initiatives. Expects mentor to examine goals and approach.</p>
<p>5. MENTOR MODEL Key point – Motivation Discloses life experience as role model. Personalises and enriches relationship. Takes risks; overcomes difficulties in education and career.</p>	<p>Expresses main concerns. Expects mentor to share ideas and feelings.</p>
<p>6. EMPLOYEE VISION Key point – Initiative Thinks critically about career future. Considers personal/professional potential. Initiates change: Negotiates transitions.</p>	<p>Visualises own future. Expects mentor to examine plans and encourage progress.</p>

[Adapted from Cohen, 1999a.]

Kram (1988) identified nine mentoring roles which will serve as the theoretical framework of the instrument developed in this study. According to Kram (1988) these roles can be categorised into two dimensions, namely career functions (sponsorship, exposure and visibility, protection and challenging work assignments) and psychosocial functions (role modelling, acceptance and conformation, counselling and friendship). Each of the nine roles will be briefly described:

- *Protection* – providing protection to the protégé on risky issues within the organisation;
- *Challenging tasks* – assigning challenging tasks for growing the protégé’s experience and competence;
- *Counselling* – encouraging open communication on the protégé’s anxiety and fears that may hamper work performance;
- *Coaching* – introducing alternative ways of behaving on the job to the protégé;
- *Friendship* – being a best friend to the protégé;
- *Sponsorship* – acting as a sponsor to promote the career interests of the protégé;
- *Exposure/visibility* – providing exposure to the protégé through networking with other managers in the organisation;
- *Acceptance* – showing feelings of respect to the protégé; and
- *Role model* – serving as a role model to the protégé.

It becomes evident from the above descriptions that the mentor provides two types of support to the protégé, namely **instrumental** support (protection and challenging tasks) and **psychosocial** support (counselling, coaching and friendship) (Ensher & Murphy, 1997) that also support Kram’s nine roles. The studies that support Kram’s work include Burke (1984); Gibb and Megginson (1993); Noe (1988a); Olian et al. (1988); Scandura (1992) and Schockett and Haring-Hidore (1985). The psychosocial support to which Kram (1988) referred includes help through the managers’ network of relationships, which can also include peers (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

From the above section it should be clear that mentoring is an important tool in the development of managerial capacity in organisations. It has a multitude of applications in a diverse work-force context and can make a large contribution to organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

Problem statement

South Africa is currently facing a serious shortage of competent and experienced managers, especially in the ranks of black managers. It seems that mentoring can play an important role in developing the required skills in these ranks. An instrument for assessing the mentoring role can be an important tool in identifying and developing mentors. The objective of this study therefore is to develop a normative instrument for assessing the mentoring role in the South African context.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

The research approach followed in the study is from the quantitative paradigm and the application of measuring instruments in a cross-sectional, non-random field survey generated the primary data for the study. An *ex post facto* approach to data analysis was used in exploring the inter-relationships between variables in the data set.

Research methodology

The research methodology followed, is described according to the following three headings:

Sample of participants

The largest division of a large transport organisation was targeted for the research. A convenience sample including all employees from a sampling frame of 1200 employees yielded 637 completed

questionnaires. A response rate of 53% was obtained. Only fully completed records were used for the data analyses.

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of the respondents were Whites (62%) followed by Africans (24%) and Coloureds/Indians/Asians (13,5%). Most of the respondents were male (80,5%) and a smaller group (19,5%) female.

TABLE 2
BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Background Information	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Race		
Africans	154	24,2
Coloureds/Indians/Asians	86	13,5
Whites	397	62,3
TOTAL	637	100%
Gender		
Males	513	80,5
Females	124	19,5
TOTAL	637	100%
Age		
30 years and younger	104	16,3
31-35	92	14,4
36-40	82	12,9
41-45	141	22,1
46-50	115	18,1
Older than 50	103	16,2
TOTAL	637	100%
Tenure		
10 years or less	158	24,7
11-20 years	130	20,4
21-25 years	124	19,5
26-30 years	100	15,7
More than 30 years	125	19,7
TOTAL	637	100%
Marital Status		
Single, divorced or widowed	171	26,8
Married or living together	466	73,2
TOTAL	637	100%
Educational Level		
Standard 9 or lower	131	20,6
Standard 10	179	28,1
Post-matric diploma/certificate	218	34,2
Degree or higher	109	17,1
TOTAL	637	100%
Home Language		
Afrikaans	320	50,2
English	162	25,4
African	155	24,4
TOTAL	637	100%
Job level		
Junior employees	173	27
Management	464	73
TOTAL	637	100%
Union Membership		
Do not belong to a union	188	29,5
Belong to a union	449	70,5
TOTAL	637	100%
Type of Mentor		
Hierarchical mentor in a higher grade	119	18,7
Hierarchical mentor in a lower grade	11	1,7
Supervisor as mentor	88	13,8
Peer mentor (same grade)	30	4,7
Executive mentor	13	2,1
No mentor	376	59
TOTAL	637	100%
Mentor Type		
Same race	98	15%
Different race	63	10%
Same sex	61	10%
Opposite sex	39	6%
No mentor	376	59%
TOTAL	637	100%

Mentor Phase		
Initial	61	10%
Learning	72	11%
Independency	64	10%
Redefinition	64	10%
No mentor	376	59%
TOTAL	637	100%

Mentor Age		
<25	6	1%
25-30	17	3%
31-35	41	6%
36-40	31	5%
41-45	61	10%
46-50	45	7%
51-55	45	7%
56-63	15	2%
No mentor	376	59%
TOTAL	637	100%

Measuring instrument

A comprehensive measuring instrument was designed for the purpose of another study (Janse van Rensburg, 2004). This questionnaire, the Employee Commitment Questionnaire, consisted of 127 items measured on a five-point intensity scale (excluding the biographical questions).

The mentioned questionnaire consisted of seven sections: Section A and B – the background information of the respondents; Section C – F consisted of different scales that will not be discussed here; and Section G – The Mentorship Role Questionnaire - a 29 item questionnaire which was used for the purpose of this article. The latter scale was designed by the authors.

The questionnaire will be discussed in more detail next focussing on the rationale for inclusion in the study, the composition of the questionnaire as well as the reliability and validity of the instruments.

The Mentorship Role Questionnaire (adapted from Dreher & Ash, 1990)

The questionnaire of Dreher and Ash (1990) was used as a foundation for developing this questionnaire, also supported by the theory of Kram (1988) – the nine roles of a mentor – and it was a shorter version of Noe's (1988) questionnaire based on the same theory. Twenty-nine items in question format were included in this questionnaire. No information on the reliability is available on this instrument, but findings of this study will be reported under the results section.

The first three questions were based on the fact that the respondent has a mentor. Questions 1a, 1b were about the type of mentorship and question 2 was about the mentor phase in which the protégé currently finds himself/herself. Question 3 was about the mentor's age. From question 4, the questions were phrased in such a way that everybody could answer them regardless of whether they had a mentor or not. The questionnaire has a five-point intensity scale. Question 4 to question 6 was about the quality of the mentorship and the frequency of the interactions. The rest of the 29 items were based on the nine roles of a mentor (Kram, 1988).

Cited below are examples of two items in question-format and their response scales:

Question G6:

To what extent should a mentor protect one from working with other managers before one is informed about their opinion on controversial topics?

To no extent

1	2	3	4	5
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 To a very large extent

Question G10:

To what extent should a mentor give one challenging assignments that present opportunities to improve one's competence?

To no extent

1	2	3	4	5
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 To a very large extent

No information on the reliability is available on this instrument. This instrument seems to have content and face validity based on the item content.

Research procedure

The measuring instrument was distributed via the organisation's intranet to all individuals in the division, excluding those on the lowest levels who were not able to read or write. A hard copy was also sent to employees via Human Resources Practitioners. All the ethical codes, e.g. control procedures, were adhered to. A letter of reminder was sent at a later stage to urge individuals to participate in the study. Individuals could respond anonymously and all the returned responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identity (anonymity) of all the individuals was thus protected to ensure reliable responses.

RESULTS

The item distribution statistics are displayed in Table 3. Item distribution curves are slightly negatively skewed (based on negative skewness coefficients) and mesokurtic.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

	N		Mean	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Valid	Missing					
G4	636	1	3,74	4,00	5,00	-0,876	-0,227
G5	636	1	3,67	4,00	4,00	-0,913	0,408
G6	636	1	3,90	4,00	4,00	-1,119	0,657
G7	636	1	3,62	4,00	4,00	-0,685	0,034
G8	636	1	3,65	4,00	5,00	-0,725	-0,256
G9	636	1	3,52	4,00	4,00	-0,603	-0,099
G10	635	2	3,77	4,00	4,00	-0,985	0,520
G11	635	2	3,23	3,00	4,00	-0,517	-0,409
G12	636	1	3,77	4,00	4,00	-1,038	0,727
G13	636	1	3,66	4,00	4,00	-0,800	0,190
G14	636	1	3,97	4,00	5,00	-1,186	0,830
G15	636	1	3,71	4,00	4,00	-0,762	0,056
G16	636	1	3,19	3,00	3,00	-0,399	-0,566
G17	636	1	3,51	4,00	4,00	-0,574	-0,525
G18	636	1	3,73	4,00	4,00	-0,789	-0,044
G19	636	1	3,56	4,00	4,00	-0,624	-0,152
G20	636	1	3,85	4,00	4,00	-1,023	0,443
G21	636	1	3,63	4,00	4,00	-0,787	0,256
G22	636	1	3,55	4,00	4,00	-0,596	-0,238
G23	636	1	3,87	4,00	5,00	-0,997	0,381
G24	636	1	3,37	4,00	4,00	-0,516	-0,542
G25	636	1	3,32	3,00	3,00	-0,386	-0,529
G26	636	1	2,94	3,00	3,00	-0,133	-0,821
G27	636	1	2,70	3,00	3,00	0,283	-0,565
G28	636	1	3,06	3,00	3,00	-0,025	-0,773
G29	636	1	3,58	4,00	4,00	-0,714	-0,094

In order to determine the sampling adequacy and sphericity of the item intercorrelation matrix, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity were respectively conducted on the item intercorrelation matrix of the instrument. A result of 0,6 and higher is required from the MSA to be acceptable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). Three items were omitted at this stage, leaving 26 items in the scale. The results are reported in Table 4. From Table 4 it is clear that matrix is suitable for further factor analysis.

TABLE 4
KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF THE ITEM INTERCORRELATION MATRIX OF THE MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0,972
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	15392,06
	df	1
	Sig.	0,000

First level factor analysis

The eigenvalues of the unreduced item intercorrelation matrix were calculated. Two factors were postulated according to Kaiser's (1970) criterion (eigenvalues-greater-than-unity) (The eigenvalues of the unreduced item intercorrelation matrix are given in Table 5) and extracted by means of Principal Axis Factoring. The two factors explained about 67% of the variance in the factor space.

TABLE 5
EIGENVALUES OF THE UNREDUCED ITEM INTERCORRELATION MATRIX OF THE MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
G1	<u>15,448</u>	<u>59,414</u>	<u>59,414</u>
G2	<u>1,913</u>	<u>7,357</u>	<u>66,771</u>
G3	0,939	3,611	70,382
G4	0,843	3,243	73,625
G5	0,724	2,785	76,411
G6	0,538	2,070	78,481
G7	0,479	1,844	80,325
G8	0,453	1,742	82,067
G9	0,444	1,709	83,776
G10	0,394	1,515	85,291
G11	0,372	1,430	86,721
G12	0,343	1,319	88,041
G13	0,315	1,213	89,253
G14	0,292	1,123	90,376
G15	0,280	1,078	91,454
G16	0,275	1,059	92,513
G17	0,258	0,991	93,504
G18	0,237	0,913	94,417
G19	0,222	0,854	95,271
G20	0,211	0,810	96,081
G21	0,203	0,783	96,864
G22	0,191	0,736	97,600
G23	0,181	0,698	98,298
G24	0,166	0,640	98,938
G25	0,157	0,602	99,541
G26	0,119	0,459	100,000

Trace = 26

The factor matrix obtained was rotated and sorted to a simple structure by means of varimax rotation (see Table 6). Only items with values greater than 0,3 were reported.

TABLE 6
SORTED AND ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX OF THE
MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

	Factor	
	1	2
G10	0,868	
G12	0,845	
G6	0,842	
G13	0,756	0,366
G7	0,739	0,372
G5	0,738	0,338
G20	0,734	0,387
G14	0,734	0,376
G23	0,698	0,486
G4	0,688	0,308
G9	0,679	0,464
G18	0,632	0,486
G15	0,627	0,549
G21	0,625	0,471
G8	0,602	0,456
G19	0,580	0,545
G29	0,575	0,428
G26		0,809
G25	0,364	0,768
G28		0,677
G27		0,672
G24	0,375	0,660
G17	0,464	0,650
G16	0,374	0,599
G22	0,527	0,586
G11	0,482	0,570

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
The rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Second level factor analysis

Sub-scores were calculated on the two obtained factors and they were subsequently intercorrelated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were not repeated here because only two factors were extracted.

During the second level factor analysis, eigenvalues were calculated and Kaiser's (1970) criterion (eigenvalues-greater-than-unity) was applied and only one factor was postulated. The eigenvalues of the unreduced subscore intercorrelation matrix appear in Table 7. From Table 7, it can be seen that the one postulated factor explains about 90% of the variance in the factor space.

TABLE 7
EIGENVALUES OF THE UNREDUCED SUB-SCORE INTERCORRELATION
MATRIX OF THE MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,795	89,769	89,769
2	0,205	10,231	100,000

The sorted and rotated factor matrix appears in Table 8 and it is apparent that both sub-factors have equally high factor loadings.

TABLE 8
SORTED AND ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX OF THE
MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sub-scores	Factor 1	Communalities Extraction
(Factor 2) G: Mentor	0,891	0,795
(Factor 1) G: Mentor	0,891	0,795

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
1 Factor extracted. 8 iterations required.

Iterative reliability analysis

The results obtained from the iterative reliability analysis on the Mentorship Role Questionnaire yielded a Cronbach Alpha of 0,9718, indicating a highly acceptable reliability. See Table 9.

TABLE 9
ITERATIVE ITEM ANALYSIS: THE MENTORSHIP ROLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item - Total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Alpha if item deleted
G10	88,2835	495,1403	0,7655	0,8075	0,9706
G12	88,2898	494,1146	0,8011	0,8122	0,9704
G6	88,1591	495,0740	0,7443	0,7725	0,9707
G13	88,3921	493,6835	0,8015	0,7448	0,9704
G7	88,4378	493,3506	0,7934	0,7189	0,9704
G5	88,3811	494,9744	0,7723	0,7224	0,9706
G20	88,2094	492,0491	0,7961	0,7529	0,9704
G14	88,0819	493,2425	0,7881	0,7272	0,9704
G23	88,1890	490,0589	0,8351	0,7565	0,9701
G4	88,3134	492,2281	0,7154	0,6780	0,9710
G9	88,5354	493,2838	0,8085	0,7316	0,9703
G18	88,3213	492,3004	0,7856	0,7100	0,9705
G15	88,3465	492,0344	0,8213	0,7404	0,9702
G21	88,4283	495,1979	0,7691	0,6660	0,9706
G8	88,4031	492,3041	0,7465	0,6196	0,9707
G19	88,4961	493,1873	0,7841	0,7000	0,9705
G29	88,4740	496,1235	0,7078	0,5465	0,9710
G26	89,1213	498,5894	0,6395	0,6789	0,9715
G25	88,7307	493,5220	0,7567	0,7046	0,9707
G28	88,9937	499,6750	0,6102	0,6224	0,9717
G27	89,3575	504,0723	0,5433	0,5769	0,9722
G24	88,6882	495,0509	0,6989	0,6427	0,9711
G17	88,5433	490,8700	0,7601	0,6781	0,9706
G16	88,8661	498,4978	0,6611	0,5527	0,9713
G22	88,5102	493,5847	0,7696	0,6645	0,9706
G11	88,8252	496,1918	0,7256	0,6134	0,9709

N of cases = 637
N of items = 26

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha = 0,9718

The iterative item analyses further indicate that total score means vary between 88,08 and 89,12, somewhat above the total score midpoint (52). The item-total score correlations vary between 0,54 and 0,83. The item reliability coefficients vary between 0,9701 to 0,9722 and the internal consistency of the scale yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0,97. This concludes the results on the Mentorship Role Questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

In the construction of the instrument, the theoretical model proposed by Kram (1988) [studies that support Kram's work

include Burke (1984); Gibb and Megginson (1993); Noe (1988a); Olian et al. (1988); Scandura (1992) and Schockett and Haring-Hidore (1985)], was used as a foundation for constructing this instrument. Items in the questionnaire were formulated in such a way that all the dimensions (sub-domains) of the theoretical construct were systematically covered – a prerequisite for sound questionnaire construction (cf. Swart, Roodt & Schepers, 1999). This procedure has ensured that the content validity (a facet of construct validity) as well as the face validity of the instrument was established (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2004).

An important assumption often made in the construction of psychometric tests is that the items in the test form a linear scale. This assumption of the dimensionality of the vector space of test items must first be tested. Schepers (2004) suggested that if it turns out to be multidimensional, the test must first be categorised according to the construct to be measured. The categorisation can be done with the aid of factor analysis, but the procedure is not free of problems (Schepers, 2004).

This procedure for overcoming the effects of differential item skewness as proposed by Schepers (2004) was followed in the factor analyses of this study. Before proceeding with the first level factor analysis on the item intercorrelation matrix, two tests (the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and the Bartlett's Test) were conducted to test the suitability of the matrix for factor analysis. After establishing the affirmative, eigenvalues were calculated on the unreduced matrix and two factors were postulated based on the eigenvalues larger than unity.

Subscores were calculated on each of these postulated factors but owing to the fact that only two factors were extracted tests for the suitability of the matrix for further factor analysis were not again repeated. Eigenvalues were again calculated on the unreduced subscore intercorrelation matrix and one factor was postulated. Only one factor was extracted by using Principal Axis factoring. The one extracted factor suggests that the Mentorship Role Questionnaire complies with the requirements of factorial validity, a sub-component of construct validity (Allen & Yen, 1979).

The statistical analyses were concluded by iterative item analyses on the scale. The obtained Cronbach alpha of 0,97 confirms the high internal consistency of the scale, suggesting that the measuring instrument is capable of consistently reflecting the same underlying constructs. Furthermore, it indicates a high degree of homogeneity between the questionnaire items. These obtained reliability coefficients suggest that the scale measures the mentorship role construct with a low standard error of measurement (SEM).

Based on the above discussion, it seems as if the Mentorship Role Questionnaire has acceptable metric properties as it succeeded in measuring the mentorship role construct in a reliable and consistent manner. Hereby the primary objective of the study was met.

No analyses were conducted to give an indication of the scale's differential (discriminant) validity, a facet of construct validity. Future research can address this issue by comparing different groups that were composed on expected *a priori* differences.

It seems as if the newly constructed instrument can play a valuable role in identifying and developing prospective mentors for this key role in organisations and also to identify their comparative training and development needs. In doing so, this instrument can assist in developing South Africa's much needed black management talent and thereby improving the effectiveness and efficiency of South African companies to enhance much needed economic growth.

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