Journal of Construction Project Management and Innovation Vol. 6 (2): 1392-1412, 2016
ISSN 2223-7852

THE INFLUENCE OF MENTORS' GENDER ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL AND CAREER MENTORING OF WOMEN IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the influence of gender on the psychosocial and career mentoring of women in the South African construction industry, assessing whether there are statistical significant differences in the mentorship provided, based on gender. A cross-sectional survey approach was adopted in the study; and a purposive sampling method was used to select the female mentees and mentors working in the construction industry. The data collected from this cohort of respondents – who are based in the nine provinces of South Africa – were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings suggest that gender plays no role in the successful mentorship of women, as there is no significant difference between the mentorship functions provided by either female or male mentors. Female mentees and mentors were selected independently to participate in the study. However, participants who were in matching mentoring relationships would have brought about improved results. The study provides new knowledge that there is no difference in the mentoring capacity based on gender in the South African construction industry, and that male and female mentors can produce the same level of success.There is no significant difference in the mentoring functions provided by male and female mentors to female mentees. This findings suggest that even though female mentees may be uncomfortable or feel disadvantaged in cross-gender mentorship relationships, these relationships provide the same mentoring benefits to females as those with the same gender. It is, therefore, recommended that female mentees enter cross-gender relationships with open minds. The results of this study are limited by the smallness of the sample size. Therefore, further studies would be required to further validate these results.

Female mentees and mentors who are in matching mentoring relationships should also be invited to participate in future studies.

Keywords: Construction Industry, Gender, Mentees, Mentors, Mentorship, South Africa, Women

1 INTRODUCTION

While previous studies have confirmed a successful mentorship of women is influenced by the gender of their mentors (Blake-Beard, 2001:336; Hansman, 1998:66; Hansman, 2002:40); this kind of patriarch relationship between a woman mentee and her mentor has not yet been widely explored in South African construction industry context.

The patriarch concept is defined as the father's role to be the ruler of the family and tribe and this was established during the Biblical times (Oxford Dictionary, 1969:980). The Patriarchy nature is still one of the strongest ideologies in cultures world-wide (Visagie, 1999:7). In fact, the father's role of leading and protecting the family was extended to other spheres of society, and further dominating all other forms of social associations (Coetzee, 2001:300). Patriarchy is deeply rooted on both Eurocentric and Afrocentric cultures in South Africa (Van der Walt, 1994:160). The Commission on Gender Equality (1998:1) refers "patriarchy as the common denominator of the South African nation." The patriarchy system has made men to dominate over women in areas such as economic systems, eras, regions and class (Boonzaaier & Sharp, 1988:154). Nandal (2011:119) adds that women are globally under-represented at all levels of property rights and economic decision making. Fuller, Fonderville-Gaoui and Haagdorens (2010:3) and Statistics South Africa (2009:11) reveal that even in senior management women are under-represented even though they make up nearly half of the workforce. Felden, Davidson, Gale and Davey (2000:115) found that the distribution of women in the construction industry is highly skewed, with almost two thirds working in secretarial or clerical positions in United Kingdom. Felden *et al.* (2000:115) revealed that the contribution of females in the workplace is not as competent as that of males because their skills are not used in areas where they could make an important difference to the production levels of the industry.

Tsukudu (1996) cited in Mathur-Helm (2005:61) indicates that white men still have privileges of being top management positions in South African organisation; they make major

decisions and will continue to maintain their privileged positions by barring opportunities to women and black people. Catalyst (2011:online) revealed that women constitute 15.8% of directors; 21.6% of executive managers; 5.3% of chairpersons and 4.4% of CEOs and Managing Directors in senior management positions of government in South Africa. This shows that women are still under-represented at senior management level in the work place, and that the advancement of women into managerial positions is happening slowly, even though programmes such as mentorship programmes are established in some organisations.

In South Africa, gender-related human-resource management policies and legislation were established in the beginning of the democratic era, in 1994 (Ozumba & Ozumba, 2012:30). In the human-resource management policies and legislation, mentorship programmes were encouraged in the workplace, as a method of advancing women (Ozumba & Ozumba, 2012:30; Co, Groenewald, Mitchell, Nayager, van Zyl Visser, Train & Emanuel, 2006:113, 199-201; Staessel, 2006:5); since they experienced oppression under apartheid (Nelson, 1981:online). Hansman (1998:66) complains that it is difficult for women to be involved in mentorship programmes; and even if they are, most of them are provided with less mentorship functions. Scholars, such as Stoessel (2006:5) and Washington (2007:6) view mentorship as a tool that can be used to advance women in their professional careers. Hansman (1998:66) and Verwey (2007:3090) posit that women receive less mentoring functions in non-traditional industries, such as construction, because there are few female role model mentors; while Hatipkarasulu and Roff (2011:online) established that women progress more slowly than their male counterparts in male-dominated industries, such as the construction industry.

Hansman (1998:66) and Blake-Beard (2001:336) add that people are uncomfortable in cross-gender mentorship relationships, because of sexual harassment concerns, sexual tension, gossip and sexual innuendos from co-workers. Kalbfleisch (2000, cited in Hansman, 2002:41) opines that women and men both prefer, and are more comfortable, being mentored by those of the same gender. However, the construction industry is a male-dominated industry; consequently, it is evident that female mentees are mostly mentored by male mentors. In addition, Chandler (1996:93) and Hansman (2002:40) argue that both female and male mentors are not interested in mentoring women, because people believe that women are not serious in the workplace because of possible family-work conflict situations. Therefore, the problem can be stated as follows: The limited progress of females in the construction industry is affected by the gender of their mentors.

This study, therefore, examines the influence of gender on psychosocial and career-mentoring of women in the South African construction industry, and whether the gender of the mentors leads to differences in the mentorship functions provided. The study hypothesises that: there is no statistically significant difference between (1) the mentor's gender, and level of psychosocial mentorship functions (role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship); and (2) career mentorship functions (exposure, sponsoring, coaching, protection, and challenging tasks) provided to female mentees.

2 MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES

Mentoring relationships involve a mentor, who has more experience, and a mentee who has less experience and knowledge (Gordon, 1999:3; Meyer, Naudè, Shangase, Van Niekerk, 2009:160). Mentoring relationships are based on encouragement, constructive comments, mutual trust, respect, and the willingness to share and learn (Meyer *et al*., 2009:161 and ARMA UK, 2011: online). Furthermore, the mentor assists the mentee to grow in the organisation and life (Meyer *et al*., 2009:161; ARMA UK, 2011: online).

There are two types of mentoring relationships, namely, formal mentoring and informal mentoring (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006:410). In formal mentoring, relationships are established by the organisations by pairing together a mentee and a mentor. Such relationships usually last for a short period; and the mentees are not committed to their mentors; but they rather commit themselves to the programme (Philip-Jones, 1983:38). In informal mentoring relationships, the relationship develops naturally through unstructured social interactions. It is more than a career-related issue; and it is often deep – in the personal sharing of interests, needs and values (Wanberg *et al.,* 2006:409). Furthermore, the informal mentoring develops because of shared interests, admiration, or job demands that require the skills of two or more persons (Wanberg *et al.,* 2006:410).

The informal mentoring relationship is considered to be more effective than the formal mentoring relationship (Wanberg *et al.,* 2006:410; McDowall-Long, 2004:523). According to Steinmann (2006:4), the benefits of a mentorship include an enhanced promotion rate, accelerated employability, and career mobility, greater professional competence, better approval within, and alliance to the organisation, as well as the possible earning of higher salaries. It has been reported that people who are mentored have better career outcomes, as indicated by both objectives measures, such as compensation and promotions; and subjective

measures, such as career satisfaction, expectation of advancement, job satisfaction, intention to stay, and career commitment – than those who are not mentored (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000:1183; Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004:130).

Moreover, mentoring is a relationship that provides people with the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process (Gordon, 1999:3). The goal of mentoring is to improve the mentee's psychosocial and career development (Agumba & Fester, 2010:1961; Kram, 1985 cited in Ragins & Cotton 1999:529). There are two types of mentoring functions, namely, the psychosocial-mentoring function and the career-mentoring function (Kram, 1985:22). Allen et al. (2004:130) note that the career function is related to objective measures; while the psychosocial function is related to subjective measures.

The following are the mentorship functions:

2.1 The Psychosocial-Mentoring Function

The psychosocial-mentoring function is a process that encompasses the interpersonal aspects of mentoring (Kram, 1985:23). The mentee's sense of self-competence and self-efficacy are developed (Scandura & Hamilton, 2002:295). The following are the psychosocial-mentoring functions offered to mentees: role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship.

2.1.1 Role-modelling

The mentee studies the behaviour of the mentor in given situations, noting the outcomes of those behaviours, and applying this knowledge in shaping personal behaviour in a similar context, in the expectation of similar results, and for the building of their professional identities (Singh, Vinnicombe & James, 2006:67; Gibson, 2004:145).

2.1.2 Acceptance-and-confirmation

Acceptance and confirmation provide fundamental trust that encourages the mentee to take risks and to venture into unfamiliar ways of connecting with the workplace (Kram, 1985:35). The mentor counsels the mentee; and this helps the mentee to receive a positive sense of self in the workplace (Kram, 1985:36). The mentor's acceptance-and-confirmation allows the mentee to experience unconditional positive consideration, and to be comfortable enough to express any disagreement with their mentors (Kram, 1985:35).

Ragins and Cotton (1999:539); and Vanderbilt (2010:49-51) examined the mentorship functions in the social work, engineering and journalism professions; and their studies showed that acceptance-and-confirmation constitute the most influential functions.

2.1.3 Counselling

The mentor and mentee discuss openly any anxieties, fears and ambivalence, which could cause the mentee to be unproductive at work (Kram, 1985:36). The counselling process involves identifying a problem, analyzing it, establishing a solution, and committing to it (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002:13). Counselling allows the mentee to explore personal concerns that could hinder one in the organisation (Kram, 1985:36). Counselling helps the mentee to be able to deal with personal concerns more effectively (Kram, 1985:36).

2.1.4 Friendship

The mentee and mentor share personal experiences, eat lunch together, and find thereby a friend with whom they can escape from the pressures of work (Kram, 1985:38). The mentee learns increasingly valuable interpersonal skills by observing the mentor, and increased network associations (de Janasz, 2006:131). Mutual liking and understanding are developed during the social interaction of the mentee and the mentor in the functional friendship (Kram, 1985:36). Furthermore, friendship provides satisfaction and enjoyable informal exchanges about work and external work experiences (Kram, 1985:38). Through this friendship, the mentee gains confidence and self-awareness (de Janasz, 2006:131).

2.2 The Career-Mentoring Function

The purpose of the career-mentoring function is for the mentor to provide support that would grow the mentee in the organisation (Kram, 1985:22). The mentor teaches the mentee the organisation's objectives, norms, and values, as well as the mentee's duties and responsibilities (Kram, 1985:24). The following are the career-mentoring functions offered to mentees: exposure, sponsoring, coaching, protection, and challenging tasks (Kram, 1985:22, Ragin & Cotton, 1999:547).

2.2.1 Exposure

The mentor provides the mentee with networking opportunities (Kram, 1985:25), which help the mentee to be in contact; and also to interact with the key players in the organisation

(Scandura & Hamilton, 2002:295). Key players could influence the career of the mentee positively (Vanderbilt, 2010:12).

2.2.2 Sponsoring

Scandura and Hamilton (2002:295) explain that sponsorship is when the mentor provides the mentee with recommendations for desirable lateral moves, and creates opportunities for progression in the organisation. Kram (1985:25) revealed that these opportunities frequently happen during formal committee meetings or informal discussions with colleagues. It is not only the recommendations from the mentor that cause the mentee to receive promotion; but it is also the knowledge empowered by the mentor that creates opportunities for movement and progression (Kram, 1985:25).

2.2.3 Coaching

MacLennan (1995:4) and Hamilton (2003:62) revealed that coaching needed is to unlock the mentee's natural abilities, to perform, to learn, and to achieve, as well as to increase awareness of those factors, which determine performance, to increase their sense of responsibility and ownership of their performance, to self-coach, and to recognize, and also to surmount any barriers to achievement. The mentor observes and records the behaviour of the mentee, gives feedback, reflects by asking questions of the mentee, encourages him/her to improve, listens and analyses behaviour, as it relates to professional skill and knowledge (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2007:online).

2.2.4 Protection

The mentor shields a talented mentee from stumbling blocks, difficult relationships and threats to the mentee's lateral progress in the organisation (Steinmann, 2006:54; Kram 1985:26). Mentors usually have a successful track record in the organisation; they are more familiar with organisational realities, such as politics, and the unique culture, or way of doing things in the organisation (Steinmann, 2006:54). Mentees lack these characteristic skills, such as experience and work politics (Dreher and Dougherty, 1997:117), which the mentor can provide to the mentee.

2.2.5 Challenging tasks

Mentees receive challenging tasks from the mentor (Scandura & Hamilton, 2002:295); these enable the mentees to further expand their skills through programmes that are organised by

the organisation (Vanderbilt, 2010:12). The challenging tasks, which the mentor provides, allow the mentee to improve particular competencies, and to experience a sense of accomplishment (Vanderbilt, 2010:12).

3 OVERVIEW OF THE INFLUENCE OF MENTORS' GENDER ON THE SUCCESSFUL MENTORSHIP OF WOMEN

3.1 Gender versus type of mentoring provided

Mullen (1998:319) studied the identification of mentors who had successfully provided vocational and psychosocial mentoring functions. The study revealed that the gender of the mentors and that of the mentees does not determine the mentoring functions provided to mentees (Mullen, 1998:328). The work of Allen and Eby (2004:135) contradicts that of Mullen, revealing that male mentors provide more psychosocial mentoring to female mentees than to their male mentee counterparts. Allen and Eby (2004:135) report that male mentors usually provide more career mentoring; while female mentors usually provide a better psychosocial mentoring function. Female mentors provide more emotional support and counselling than male mentors (Allen & Eby, 2004:135). Ragins and McFarlin (1990:333,334) state that in same-gender mentoring relationships, role modelling is better provided to female mentees than it is to male mentees.

3.2 Gender versus mentoring opportunities

According to Stoessel (1981), mentoring can be used as a tool to advance women in their career in the workplace. However, Hansman (1998) and Ragin and Cotton (1998) found that mentoring relationships are often not as frequently available to women, as they are to men such that female mentees are not usually chosen by male or female mentors. This stems from the rationale that women are perceived as not being serious enough about their careers (Chandler, 1996). Hansman (1998) argues that women who have too many family responsibilities – that can so often result in delaying or interrupting their careers – face problems, participating in mentoring relationships. In addition, sexual harassment concerns have also been adduced as reasons why mentors decide not to choose mentees of the opposite sex Hansman (1998).

3.3 Mentorship relationships

Traditionally, male mentors have more centralised and critical positions than do female mentors. These give them access to valuable information, job opportunities, pending projects and managerial decisions – often shared through the 'old-boy network' (Noe, 1988b:71; Steinmann, 2006:92). As a result, male mentors have greater power; and this helps them to set realistic career goals, to provide greater visibility to mentees, and to have access to valuable resources (Woodlands Group, 1980 cited in Noe, 1988b:67). Blake-Beard (2001:336) argues that in cross-gender mentoring relationships, there are challenges of sexual tension, gossip and sexual innuendos by co-workers regarding the mentoring relationship between the male mentors and their female mentees. Steinmann (2006:92) recommends that in cross-gender or cross-race mentorship, mentors consider specific issues that impact on the relationship.

Ragins and McFarlin (1990:333,334) stated that in same-gender mentoring relationships, female mentees do not always experience detrimental sexual issues. Instead, they have a close interactive relationship (Singh *et al.,* 2006:67). Stone (2007:172) adds that female mentors have a great influence on their mentees, because their behaviour, style and attributes are so often imitated by them.

Hansman (2002:40) argues that even if female mentees are involved in mentoring relationships with women mentors, there is no guarantee that their mentorship would necessarily be successful. Ervin (1995, cited in Hansman, 2002:40) discovered that female mentees complain when female mentors handle situations, just as male mentors do. Kalbfleisch (2000, cited in Hansman, 2002:41) opines that women have much less power and influence than their male counterparts in the workplace. Female mentors are perceived as having less ability to boost the career of the mentee – thereby enabling it to succeed (Hale, 1995). This results in female mentees having no desire to be mentored by female mentors (Hansman, 2002:41).

Allen and Eby (2004:135) state that the gender relationship between the mentees and mentors influences the type of mentoring received. Klasen and Clutterbuck (2002:118) stated that each and every mentorship relationship is unique. The standard of learning and development depends on the quality of the mentorship relationship (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002:118). The quality of the mentorship relationship depends on the trust and openness of the relationship (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002:118).

It emerged from the literature review that there are two types of mentoring functions – psychosocial mentoring and career-mentoring. It was revealed that the psychosocial

mentoring functions in use are role-modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship; while the career-mentoring functions offered are: exposure, sponsoring, coaching, protection and challenging tasks. In addition, it was revealed that mentorship programmes provide positive outcomes; and they empower women. It was also found that female mentees in the South African construction industry have been provided with fewer mentorship functions – due to insufficient mentorship programmes for women being available. Furthermore, there are conflicting findings about the influence of the mentorship functions provided by male and female mentors.

This study posits that female mentees are uncomfortable in cross-gender mentoring relationships, while in same-gender mentoring relationships, they do not get enough exposure to various mentoring functions coupled with the fact that there are fewer female role models. Few studies have been undertaken on the mentorship of females in the construction industry. This study will examine the level of mentoring functions available to women in the South African construction industry and whether this is influenced by the gender of mentors.

4 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach was adopted in the study, in order to investigate research problems objectively (Creswell, 1994, cited by Naoum, 2003:38). The data were gathered in South Africa by means of a questionnaire self-administered and by e-mail. A survey research design was employed to enable the generalisation of the results obtained to the population of female mentees in the South African construction industry being studied (Alreck & Settle, 2004:447; Girden & Kabacoff, 2011:67). A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 171 female mentees working in the construction industry from a register of female mentees with the Built Environment professional councils in South Africa. At the end of the study period, complete responses were obtained from 24 female mentees representing a response rate of 14.04%. The low response rate is adduced to the technical problems experienced in the online survey monkey tool; the fact that few women are involved in mentorship relationships; the potential participants showed little interest in participating in the study; and some questionnaires were partially and incorrectly completed; and these could not be used.

A nominal scale was used in categorising the demographics of the female mentees (Wegner, 2009:20); while an ordinal 5-point Likert scale was used to rank the productivity and knowledge gained by the female mentees. An ordinal scale is usually used to serve between the implied classifications (Wegner, 2009:20). The data were analysed, using both

descriptive and inferential statistics. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test whether a distribution was normal or not (Pallant, 2006:57). When the test significant is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it means that the difference was not significant; the distribution of the sample was not significantly different from a distribution, meaning that it was not normal (Pallant, 2006:57).

When the significant difference is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), this means that the test is significant; and, in this case, the distribution in question was significantly different from a normal distribution; in other words, it was normal. The test of normality in the psychosocial-mentoring function and in the career-mentoring function was found to have a significance of 0.05 in Shapiro-Wilk, which was greater than 0.05; indicating thereby, that the distribution was not normal, and that a non-parametric test should rather be used (Field, 2013:144).

The Mann-Whitney test is a non-parametric test that looks for differences between two independent samples; it tests whether the populations, from which the two samples were drawn, have the same location (Field, 2013:878). The Mann-Whitney test is applied in small sample size that are less than 25 (Geert van den Berg, 2016:online; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:520). Cronbach's reliability technique was used to test the reliability-of-scale questions. The results for the reliability test on the career-mentoring function-scale questions showed that the degree level of alpha was 0.84, and in the psychosocial-mentoring function, it was 0.71. Maree (2007:216) states that the reliability-of-scale questions are acceptable when the alpha value is above 0.70.

5 THE FINDINGS

5.1 Profile of the respondents

5.1.1 Gender of the mentors

Table 1 shows the gender of female mentee participants' mentors.

Table 1**:** Gender of mentors

Gender	Mentors	
	N	%
Female	7	29.2
Male	17	70.8
TOTAL	24	100

From Table 1, the female mentors comprise 29.2%; and male mentors comprise 70.8%. This means that the number of male mentors constitutes a majority; and female mentors are in the minority.

5.1.2 Participant companies

In Table 2, the percentages are given of the mentees' participant companies: contractor firms (40.9%); quantity surveying-consultant firms (3.6%); engineering-consultant firms (13.6%); subcontractor firms (9.1%); public sector (4.5 %); retail property (4.5%); environmental consultant firms (4.5%); research units (4.5%); and health and safety firms (4.5%).

Table 2**:** Distribution of Participant companies by Practice

Practice	**Mentees**	
	N	**%**
Contractor firms	9	40.9
Quantity surveying consultant firms	3	13.6
Engineering consultant firms	3	13.6
Subcontractor firms	2	9.1
Public sector	1	4.5
Property retail/development firms	1	4.5
Environmental consultant firms	1	4.5
Research units	1	4.5
Health and safety firms	1	4.5
Architectural firms	0	0
TOTAL	**22**	**100**

5.1.3 Positions of mentees and mentors

The study sought to determine the positions held by the mentees and the mentors. In Table 3, the positions of mentee participants include: engineer in training; intern; civil engineer and engineering technician (20.8%); candidate, assistant and full/professional quantity surveyor (16.7%); research assistants (12.5%); construction health and safety officer, junior health and safety agent (12.5%); environmental practitioner and heritage officer (8.3%); commercial manager (8.3%); supervisor and junior foreman (8.3%); associate (8.3%); and labourer (4.2%).

Table 3**:** Positions of participants

Positions of participants	Mentees	
	N	%
Engineer in training, intern, civil engineer, engineering technician	5	20.8
Candidate, assistant and full/professional quantity surveyor	4	16.7
Research assistant	3	12.5
Construction health and safety officer, junior health and safety agent	3	12.5
Environmental practitioner and Heritage officer	2	8.3
Commercial manager	2	8.3
Supervisor + Junior Foreman	2	8.3
Labourer	1	4.2
Associate	2	8.3
Construction project manager	0	0
Professional Architect	0	0
Chief works inspector	0	0
TOTAL	**24**	**100**

5.1.4 Description of the mentorship of female mentees

The study sought to find out the types of mentorship provided: whether the mentees were mentored in the same organisation and industry.

Table 4**:** Types of mentorship provided

Types of mentorship	Mentees	
	N	%
Formal	19	79.2
Informal	5	20.8
TOTAL	**24**	**100**

Table 5**:** Mentor or mentee working in the same organisation

Same organisation	Same organisation		Same industry	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	20	83.3	22	100
No	4	16.7	0	0
TOTAL	**24**	**100**	**22**	**100**

Table 4 shows that a significant number of the mentees (79%) were provided with formal mentorship; while that of informal is 21%. This shows that the majority of mentees are in formal mentorship relationships. Table 5 shows that a significant number of the respondents (83%) work in the same organisation with their mentors; while 17% were not. It can be seen that all the mentees that responded were working in the same industry with their mentors. It also emerged that all the mentors were working in the same industry with their mentees.

5. 2 The testing of hypotheses

5.2.1 Psychosocial-mentoring function

The study sought to know whether there was any statistically significant difference between the genders of the mentors, as genders perceived by the female mentees – influencing them successfully in their psychosocial mentorship in the construction industry. Female mentees were asked to rate the influence of their mentors. Each of the 15 items was grouped into one

of 4 main areas on the survey that represented the psychosocial-mentoring function provided by their mentors. The findings are shown in Table 6. A 5-point Likert- type scale was used for each item, where: 1 = not at all; 2 = to a limited extent; 3 = to some extent; 4 = to a large extent; 5 – to a very large extent. The data collected in this regard are presented in Table 4.

Table 6: Psychosocial mentoring function

Psychosocial-mentoring function	**Mentees**				
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**Rank**	**Sig**
Role-modelling					
I try to imitate the work behaviour of my mentor.	24	3.54	1.02		0.66
I agree with my mentor's attitudes and values regarding the industry.	24	4.00	0.83		0.66
I admire my mentor.	23	4.04	0.88		0.67
I will try to be like my mentor when I reach a similar position in my career.	23	3.74	0.81		0.87
Average	23	3.82	0.74	1	0.87
Counselling					
My mentor has demonstrated good listening skills in our conversations.	24	3.83	1.01		0.66
My mentor has discussed my questions or concerns regarding feelings of competence, commitment to advancement, relationships with peers, and supervisors or work/ family conflicts.	24	3.50	1.06		0.95
My mentor has personal experiences as an alternative perspective to my problems.	23	2.96	1.19		0.62
My mentor has encouraged me to talk openly about anxiety and fears that detract me from work.	23	3.48	1.08		1.00
My mentor has conveyed empathy for the concerns and feelings and doubts I shared with him in strict confidence.	23	3.61	1.03		0.62
My mentor has kept feelings and doubts I shared with him in strict confidence	22	3.95	1.05		0.33
Average	23	3.54	0.89	2	0.49
Acceptance and confirmation					
My mentor has encouraged me to try new ways of performing my job.	24	3.33	1.09		0.85
My mentor has conveyed feelings of respect for me as an individual.	23	4.17	0.89		0.82
My mentor has asked me for suggestions concerning problems s/he encountered at work.	24	3.04	1.37		0.90
Average	23	3.52	0.82	3	1.00
Friendship					
My mentor has interacted with me socially outside the work situation.	23	1.91	1.00		0.82
My mentor has invited me to join him / her for lunch.	24	2.25	1.23		0.06
Average	23	2.04	0.92	4	0.05
TOTAL	**23**	**3.23**	**0.52**		**0.84**

The study found that the most influencing function in the psychosocial-mentoring function is role-modelling (3.82), followed by counselling (3.54), and acceptance-and-confirmation (3.52). The least-influencing function provided to female mentees was friendship (2.04). A total mean score of 3.23 was achieved by the mentees on the influence of psychosocial-mentoring function they were receiving from their mentors.

A Mann-Whitney test revealed no statistically significant difference (p=0.84) in the average mentor's gender related to psychosocial-mentoring functions. The results reveal that the gender of mentors does not influence the level of psychosocial-mentoring function provided to female mentees. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no statistically significant difference between mentors' gender, as perceived by female mentees, influencing them successfully in their psychosocial mentorship, should not be rejected.

5.2.2 Career-mentoring function

The study sought to discover whether there was any statistically significant difference between mentors' gender, as perceived by female mentees in successfully influencing them in their career in the construction industry. Female mentees were asked to rate the extent of the influence of 13 career-mentoring functions grouped into 5 main areas, as presented in Table 7. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used for each item, where 1 = not at all, 2 = to a limited extent, 3 = to a moderate extent, 4 = to a large extent, 5 = to a very large extent. A total mean score of 3.35 was achieved for the rating of the influence of career-mentoring function, as perceived by the female mentees.

Table 7: Items of Career-mentoring function provided to female mentees

Career-mentoring function	Mentees				
	N	Mean	SD	Rank	Sig
Coaching					
My mentor has encouraged me to prepare for advancement in my career.	22	3.73	0.99		0.33
My mentor has shared the history of his/her career with me.	22	3.64	0.95		0.14
Average	21	3.69	0.86	1	0.12
Providing challenging assignments / tasks					
My mentor has given me assignments or tasks that presented opportunities to learn new skills.	23	3.57	1.20		0.49
My mentor has provided me with support and feedback regarding my performance as an employee.	23	3.52	1.20		0.31
My mentor has suggested specific strategies to me, as the mentee, for achieving my career goals.	23	3.65	0.94		0.38
My mentor has given me feedback regarding my performance in my present job.	23	3.65	1.03		0.92
My mentor has suggested specific strategies to me (as the mentee) for accomplishing my work objectives.	24	3.63	0.88		0.62
Average	23	3.61	0.97	2	0.45
Exposure					
My mentor has assigned responsibilities to me that have increased my contact with people in the district who could judge my potential for future advancement.	24	3.42	1.18		0.45
My mentor has given me assignments that increased written and personal contact with work administrators.	23	3.17	1.15		0.06
My mentor has helped me to meet new colleagues.	24	3.13	1.08		0.69
Average	23	3.23	1.00	3	0.43
Sponsoring					
My mentor has given me assignments or tasks in my work that prepare me for a higher position.	23	3.17	1.19		0.85
Average	23	3.17	1.19	4	0.85
Protection					
My mentor has helped me finish assignments / tasks, or to meet deadlines that otherwise would have been difficult to complete.	24	3.33	1.31		0.40
My mentor has reduced unnecessary risks that could threaten the possibility of receiving a promotion.	22	2.91	1.19		0.68
Average	23	3.13	1.02	5	0.63
TOTAL	**23**	**3.35**	**0.80**		**0.63**

It is evident that the most influential career-mentoring function provided to female mentees from a ranking perspective is coaching (3.69), followed by providing challenging assignments / task (3.61), exposure (3.23), and sponsoring (3.17). It emerged that the least influential career-mentoring function provided to female mentees is protection (3.13).

A Mann-Whitney test revealed no statistically significant difference (p=0.63) in the average mentor's gender related to career-mentoring functions. The results reveal that the

gender of mentors does not influence the career-mentoring function provided to female mentees. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is a significant difference in the level of career-mentoring function provided to mentees by mentors should be rejected, while the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the level of career-mentoring function provided to mentees by their mentors based on gender should be accepted.

6 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study examined the level of mentorship functions provided to females in the South African construction industry by mentors and whether the level of mentorship functions provided are influenced by the gender of their mentors. Two mentoring functions – psychosocial and career – were identified through a review of the extant literature (Kram, 1985:22; Scandura & Hamilton, 2002:295). The psychosocial mentoring functions comprise of subjects, such as role modelling, acceptance, and confirmation, counselling and friendship; while the career-mentoring functions cover subjects, such as exposure, sponsoring, coaching, protection, and challenging tasks.

It emerged that while role-modelling is perceived as the highest ranking psychosocial-mentoring function provided by mentors to female mentees in the South African construction industry, coaching is perceived as the highest ranking career-mentoring function provided by mentors to female mentees. It also emerged that friendship is the least ranked psychosocial-mentoring function provided by mentors to female mentees. These findings are aligned to the findings of previous studies by Noe (1988a:464) and Vanderbilt (2010:49). However, these findings are not supported by the results of earlier studies undertaken by Ragins and Cotton (1999:536). The study findings confirm earlier deductions made by Hansman (1998:66) and Verwey (2007:3090) that the mentorship functions provided to female mentees are lacking and not available to a large extent. However, Kram (1983:613) and Steinmann (2006:5) claim, in contrast, that the mentorship functions provided to mentees depend on their particular needs.

The study also revealed that the gender of the mentors did not influence the mentorship functions provided to female mentees. The study findings are aligned with the findings of Mullen (1998:319), while the findings of earlier studies by Allen and Eby (2004:135) and Ragins and McFarlin (1990:333) that female mentors were influential in their psychosocial-mentoring function, while male mentors were influential in their career-mentoring function, contrast with the study findings.

The results further reinforces the importance of policies and legislations in South Africa such as Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998; Labour Relation Act, Act 66 of 1995 and Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service 2002-2006 that have been enacted to empower the career of previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa such as Blacks and women. The study creates knowledge about mentoring functions to help build mentoring capacity within the framework of statutory institutions such as the Council for the Built Environment (CBE). The CBE has developed a Structured Candidacy Programme for candidates registered with the six Built Environment Professions such as architecture, engineering, landscape architects, projects and construction management, property valuation and quantity surveying, and ensures that candidates are provided with learning opportunities that help develop professional skills and learning opportunities to promote professional growth and individual achievement (Council for the Built Environment, 2016:3). The mentorship programmes such as that provided by the CBE are proven as one of the best tools to assist women to advance in their careers (Stoessel, 2006:5; Washington, 2007:3090). This study supports ongoing discussions in the area of women mentoring and that mentoring functions are equally provided to women by mentors, irrespective of gender.

7 CONCLUSION

It has been viewed by many that females have a limited advancement in the construction industry, because both male and female mentors are not providing enough mentoring functions. Therefore, the study examined the gender influence of mentors on the mentorship functions provided to female mentees. The findings reveal that role modelling and coaching are the highest ranking mentoring functions provided by mentors to female mentees, while friendship was the least ranked mentoring function provided by the mentors. The results of the study also suggest that statistically there is no significant difference in the mentorship functions provided by male and female mentors to female mentees. Based on these findings, it may be concluded that role models and coaching are to a large extent available to female mentees in the construction industry, while the friendship mentoring function is available to a lower extent to female career advancement, and that the lack of progress of female mentees in the construction industry may be as a result of the low friendship functions found to be provided to female mentees by their mentors, irrespective of gender.

Female mentees may feel uncomfortable or disadvantaged in a cross-gender mentorship relationship. At the same time, however, these relationships bring the same

mentoring outcomes to females as they do to same-gender relationships. There is evidence that the mentoring skills of both female and male mentors in the industry are being improved, and that they are not determined by gender characteristics. This means that females are developing in their careers; and they have the same opportunities as males. Furthermore, even though the progress in improving the advancement of women is slow, the country is doing its best to diminish gender inequalities, and to create opportunities for women too.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

The study recommends that mentees should provide their mentees with more friendship mentoring functions, in order to enhance the career advancement of females in the construction industry. Female mentees should consider entering into more than one mentorship relationship with mentors from different background cultures. In this way, they could learn how to handle different situations, and to experience different career-exposure opportunities.

The results of this study are limited by the smallness of the sample size; therefore, further studies would be required to validate it. Mentors and male mentees should also be included to participate in any future studies.

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