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**WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR FROM THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF THE MENTEE IN A YOUNG, ELITE  
CRICKETING ENVIRONMENT?**

**(Dissertation submitted under the MANAGEMENT &  
DEVELOPMENT area)**

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO WHAT MAKES AN  
EFFECTIVE MENTOR FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF  
THE MENTEE IN A YOUNG, ELITE CRICKETING  
ENVIRONMENT

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## **Abstract**

Mentoring is when a trusting, developmental relationship forms between a more experienced athlete and an athlete of less experience (Bloom *et al.*, 1998; Hardy, 1994; Alleman *et al.*, 1984). Literature suggests mentoring is beneficial to a mentee's overall development (Raisbeck, 2012). It is evident through research such as Collins *et al.* (2011) and Cushion (2006) that mentoring has become increasingly popular within sport, however little research has been undertaken into the effectiveness of mentorship within elite sport. The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that make for effective mentorship within a young, elite cricketing environment. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews. Six participants from one Marylebone Cricket Club University (MCCU) squad were interviewed. The data was analysed using matrix tables which revealed five key themes to effective mentorship in an elite cricket environment: Informal origin of the relationship; commitment; understanding; psychological support; and the position held by the mentor.

Conclusions of the study supported the literature already present on mentoring, however the findings were specific to that of elite cricket. Limitations of the study include the participants' general lack of prior experience within a mentor relationship and inexperience of the interviewer. The study has contributed to the understanding of effective mentorship with elite sport, specifically cricket. The findings seen to be transferable to other elite team sports. Future research suggestions include undertaking research of similar focus into other team sports; and studying further the psychological support that the mentor provides to young elite cricketers.

# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Research topic**

Before the notion of mentoring is explained, elite sport must be defined and put into context. According to Swann *et al.* (2015) elite sport is performance based, and although there are many acute definitions, the general consensus is that it incorporates athletes who perform at a regional level or above.

Mentoring can be described as helping someone improve their actions and decision making (Raisbeck, 2012). A mentor generally will listen, share their own experiences, and give honest, constructive feedback and support (BIS, 2012), and is most effective when the mentee is going through a period of transition in their lives (Garvey, 2010). The idea of mentoring has become increasingly popular within sport, with research such as Collins *et al.* (2011) and Cushion (2006) who have studied mentoring in the coaching environment. Collins *et al.* (2011) suggest mentoring should revolve around a budding potential athlete, because they are athletes in transition, which mentorship is most beneficial to (Roberts, 2009; Petitpas *et al.*, 1988). This study looks at young elite cricketers who are looking to develop their careers in cricket and be successful in the game; building on the work of Kram (1983) who states that mentorship can enhance the development of young adults. The study is qualitative in nature, with data collection consisting of interviews with six squad members of one Marylebone Cricket Club University (MCCU) who are willing to participate.

### **1.2 Rationale**

Mentorship is currently a leading strategy in improving workplace learning; however, technical models of mentoring are specific to individual fields of study, resulting in mentor research being narrowly conceived (Darwin, 2000). Therefore continued wider research is of importance.

Much research has been undertaken on the topic of mentoring, especially in the domains of medicine and education. However research into mentoring within the sporting environment is limited; therefore this study will aim to build on what is available, comparing the views of young elite cricketers on effective and ineffective mentoring with existing literature. Due to the lack of previous research of mentorship in cricket, a focus area is to discover if mentoring schemes exist within the cricketing world, if at all. This research will pave the way for potential future mentoring schemes within elite sport environments.

Moak and Walker (2015) state that effective mentoring is closely linked to success with medical students, whilst negative experiences with mentors often lead to student dropouts. This outlines the importance of mentorship when experiencing transitional periods in life, as suggested by Cassidy *et al.* (2010), whether that be graduating in the field of medicine or developing sporting talents. Therefore opinions of young elite cricketers on effective and ineffective mentorship will be correlated with the current literature.

### **1.3 Research purpose**

The primary aim of this study is to undertake a qualitative investigation to identify factors associated with effective mentorship within a young, elite cricketing environment.

The research aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Investigate whether mentoring taking place within the current elite cricketing environment and if it is effective;
2. Correlate the views of the participants on what makes a successful mentor;
3. Correlate the views of the participants on what makes an unsuccessful mentor;
4. Compare the correlated views of the participants with the wider literature.

# **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will firstly define the terms elite and mentoring, before rationalising the research by explaining how the benefits of mentoring validate its importance. The mentoring relationship will then be discussed, looking at: who could be a mentor, the difference between formal and informal mentorship, and the key factors involved within the relationship. Finally, a review into effective and ineffective mentoring will take place.

### **2.2 Definitions**

#### **2.2.1 Elite**

Many researchers would categorise elite athletes in the bracket of international competition (Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Woodman and Hardy, 2001). Lonsdale *et al.* (2009) also classify athletes with potential to represent their country in competition as elite performers. Pawlaczek (2007) refers to the Traditional Sport Development Continuum (Hylton, 2013; See Figure 1.) when explaining excellence, or elite sport, as performing at a professional or international level. Cooke's (1994; cited in Hylton, 2013) model 'House of Sport' (See Figure 2.) elaborates on the continuum by categorising elite sport (the Penthouse) into 3 levels: gold, elite and excellence. Although these levels are not explained in text, it can be said they have similar perceptions on what elite sport consists of (Swann *et al.*, 2015; Hylton, 2013).

After looking at the relevant literature, many researchers assume the idea of elite sport as international competition, but do not clearly define it (Keegan *et al.*, 2014; Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Arnold *et al.*, 2012; Woodman and Hardy, 2001). Swann *et al.* (2015) constructed an in depth investigation into the definition of elite athletes and found that people had many different perceptions on what classified an athlete as elite. In total there are eight ways of defining elite sport extending from Olympic champions to regional competitors (Swann *et al.*, 2015). According to Swann *et al.* (2015) elite athletes on average train approximately thirteen hours a week, but this can range from four to forty-eight hours. Athletes can also be defined as elite if they are involved in talent development programmes, university sport teams or perform semi-professionally (Swann *et al.*, 2015). This research used the broadened definition of elite by Swann *et al.* (2015), and applied it to cricket to select a participant sample.

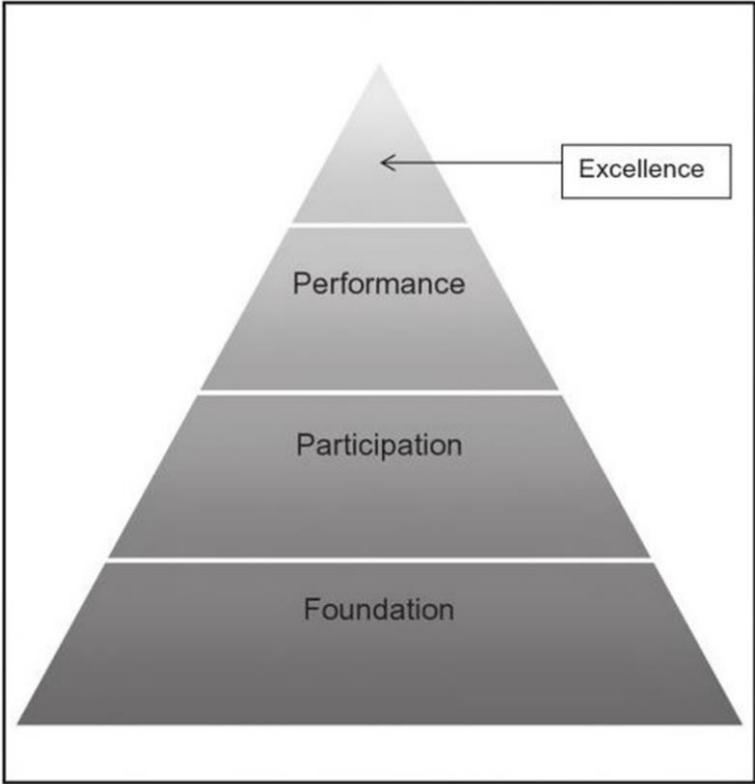


Figure 1. Traditional Sport Development Continuum, source: (Hylton, 2013)

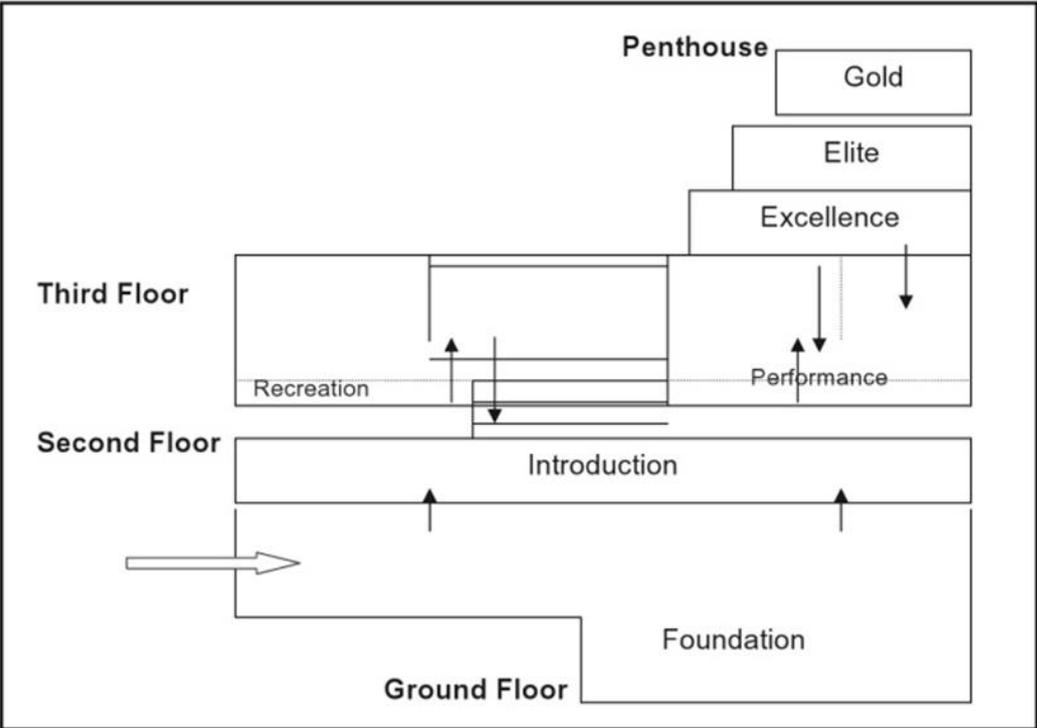


Figure 2. Cooke's House of Sport, source: (Hylton, 2013)

### 2.2.2 Mentoring

Mentoring has varied meanings to people (Galvin, 2004; Kram and Isabella, 1985), causing it to lack a clear conceptual definition. Mentoring is not a term that is easily defined because it is a process with an ever-changing meaning (Wakeman, 2012); mentorship is complex and thus has no singular definition (Sambunjak and Marasiac, 2009), although it does require certain structural, temporal and interactional features.

Over the years many definitions of mentoring have arisen, most of which have similar meanings, with key features of the relationship and common themes recurrent throughout the literature, including trust, guidance and development (Allen and Poteet, 1999). Hardy (1994) defines mentoring as a process where a trusted and experienced individual takes an interest in the personal and professional development of a less experienced individual. Alleman *et al.* (1984) agrees that mentoring is a relationship where a novice is guided and developed in a profession by a more experienced person.

Potrac *et al.* (2012) suggests the definition of mentoring is very much dependent on the scope of the research, and thus differs accordingly. For example, Fletcher (2000) researched mentoring within the school environment whilst Cassidy *et al.* (2010) studied sports coaching; both studies concluded that mentorship is synonymous with guidance and support through a transitional process. These two agreeable interpretations of mentoring could be put down to the clear structural hierarchy that exists in the teaching and coaching fields.

In a sporting context mentoring occurs when a trusting relationship develops between teacher and athlete; after time has been invested in the relationship, behavioural imitation starts to occur (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). Again the key characteristics are highlighted in the definition, but certain relationship micro-factors will differ due to the nature of the relationship. In the case of this study of mentorship in a young, elite cricketing environment, the definition used is:

“Mentoring is when a trusting, developmental relationship forms between a more experienced athlete and an athlete of less experience.”

### 2.3 Importance of Mentoring

Mentoring has been reported to be beneficial in many ways, one of which is the ability for the mentee to take responsibility for their own individual learning and development (Robinson, 2010). It has been widely accepted for many years that mentoring is a key factor in coach development (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). The work of Gould *et al.* (1990) found that textbook learning is much less beneficial to coach development than experiencing coaching first hand and observing elite coaches in practice. This research into the educational needs of expert coaches can be transferable to the needs of the athletes themselves, and show that mentors do play a crucial part in their overall development. Cushion (2001) on the other hand, indicates that mentoring is without much success in the coaching environment due to its unstructured and uncritical method, allowing it to only reproduce existing practice.

Mentoring programmes appear to have positive outcomes, such as it being critical to the mentee's success and well-being (Gutiérrez y Muhs *et al.*, 2012; Haggard *et al.*, 2011). A recent study at Durham University however, claims that under-achieving pupils who are given extra attention do less well than their peers who do not receive the extra attention (Henry, 2002). Another opposed view of mentoring is that the value of the relationship is often lost when the transition into the real world from practice is made (Sharma and Freeman, 2014). These views contrast with most literature which illustrates the numerous benefits of the mentoring process.

A literature review undertaken by Grant *et al.* (2014) looking at strength and conditioning coaching, and the effects of mentoring on the development of these coaches, found that the literature emphasised the significance of mentor relationships in professional development. Brown *et al.* (1999; cited in Watson *et al.*, 2009) makes the point that mentees are provided with insights that without their mentor, would not have gained. Mentorship ultimately familiarises protégés with their profession area of development which allows for future success (Luna and Cullen, 1998; cited in Watson *et al.*, 2009).

Straus *et al.* (2013) state that mentoring success is crucial to a successful career. Although recent studies show that mentoring is an effective tool within a sporting environment, in many other academic fields the idea has come under some scrutiny due to the beneficial claims being largely unsupported (Jones *et al.*, 2009). An alternative view is held by Eby *et al.* (2008), when they say that a mentoring relationship does have many positive impacts on the mentee including: increased job/career satisfaction, increased confidence and faster overall professional development (Borders *et al.*, 2012). Although this is academic based

research, it is comparable with mentor research within the business sector (Hansford *et al.*, 2002).

The mentor can also benefit from the relationship as mentorship can minimise the gap between knowledge and effectiveness (Robinson, 2010), therefore it allows a coach or teacher that mentors to build upon success, maintain their motivation, further develop their skills, and stay up to date with their professional environment (Raisbeck, 2012; Jones *et al.*, 2009). Complementarity is a widely accepted outcome of the mentor relationship, where both individuals involved can improve through the relationship (Kram and Isabella, 1985). Another benefit for the mentor is that there is the opportunity to build their leadership capabilities (Raggins and Kram, 2007). These numerous benefits for both mentor and mentee, guides further research into the subject to gain in depth understanding of what makes mentoring beneficial and effective? Hardy (1994) stated that if research into mentoring in the future continues its paucity with minimal advancement, the field's status will be jeopardized. Although it is clear that good mentoring may well lead to positive outcomes, bad mentoring may also be destructive (Scandura, 1998; cited in Ragins *et al.*, 2000) and, in some cases as Ragins *et al.* (2000) revealed, bad mentoring may be worse than not having a mentor at all.

A study by Bruner *et al.* (2008) focused on an elite sporting environment and found 2 key experiences were evident when transitioning into elite sport: 'On field' performance, and personal relationships and development. Failure to cope with a transition can often be followed by negative consequences such as dropout from sport, therefore mentoring athletes so they are prepared and able to cope with career transitions should be of concern to coaches (Stambulova *et al.*, 2009). Bloom *et al.* (1998) found that a coach's awareness of their athlete's personal needs and interests can enhance their development, as too the coach/mentor can be satisfied by the relationship. This study links closely with these particular studies as mentoring within sport is associated with athletes in transition. For example, Dixon (2007) found that mentoring young black African children in cricket in South Africa can be effective to their overall development. It is evident that mentoring comes with benefits if done successfully, however the specific benefits to athletes have yet to be researched.

## **2.4 Mentoring relationship**

### **2.4.1 Who can mentor?**

Traditionally a mentor will be someone of more experience within the organisation or profession (Mullen, 2005) and more often than not, in a system of hierarchy the mentor will be above the mentee. Bloom *et al.* (1998) discusses the coach's role as a mentor and identifies the benefits involved with mentorship within the coach–athlete relationship. Collins *et al.* (2011) proposed that the role of a mentor should not necessarily be taken up by the coach or parent because one area of the relationship will indefinitely suffer. As well as this, the role is not always best suited to an ex-performer, and can be more effective if the mentor is closer in age and experience (Collins *et al.*, 2011).

Garvey (2010) offers the view that mentoring is essentially just two colleagues engaged in meaningful conversation. Peer relationships can serve much the same purpose as that of a conventional mentor relationship by providing developmental support for both career and personal development (Kram and Isabella, 1985). Key differences in peer relationships compared to conventional mentorship is the hierarchal structure that ceases to exist in a peer relationship; and the idea of mutuality, where both individuals play both roles of giver and receiver, which does not exist in a mentor relationship (Levinson *et al.*, 1978; cited in Kram and Isabella, 1985). Peer mentors can also pose less relationship challenges compared to traditional mentors (Ensher and Murphy, 2011).

Harrison *et al.* (2006) looked specifically at student athletes in university, and discovered that faculty members that interact with the students regularly could in fact act as mentors and be effective in their roles to develop them as students rather than athletes. This poses the question: who student athletes perceive as an ideal mentor?

### **2.4.2 Formal versus informal**

Depending on the initial stage of the relationship, mentoring can be formal or informal in structure (Wright and Smith, 2000). The main difference between formal and informal mentors is their focus. Informal mentorship is generally focused on the protégé's long-term goals and development, whereas formal mentorship is generally revolved around short-term career goals (Geiger-DuMond and Boyle, 1995; Murray, 1991; cited in Ragins *et al.*, 2000).

In order to be effective, mentoring programs need a focus and structure (Holloway, 2001) which is provided by formal mentoring programmes. Martin and Sifers (2012) found that trained mentors give their mentees more satisfaction than untrained mentors. This guides researchers to the idea that formal mentoring is often more successful than informal. A study

on physical education and formal mentoring by Wright and Smith (2000) also suggests that formal mentoring programmes should be implemented due to their outspoken benefits. DeCastro (2013) found in his research that future resilience-building interventions, such as mentoring, should utilize the mentor-mentee relationship and involve a formal mentor support system. This research was undertaken in the field of medicine where formal mentorship has been successful for a number of years.

A contrasting view to the above would be that of Nemanick (2000) who found informal mentoring was more beneficial to the protégé. Underhill (2006) researched the effects of mentoring and found that it improves career outcomes for individuals, with informal mentoring producing larger and more significant effects on career outcomes than formal mentoring. Garvey *et al.* (2004) also suggest that informal mentoring is seen to be the more satisfactory type of relationship; yet scholars have still proposed that more formal mentoring schemes should be put in place. Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003) provides a perspective of this when they point out that satisfaction in a relationship is much different than achieving development and benefiting from it.

Technical mentoring, is a much more traditional style of mentoring in its ideals, as it is a lot more instructive on how to carry out a task, rather than justifying why you may do something (Mullen, 2005). This form of mentorship is needs-based, and a short-term solution, therefore related to formal mentoring schemes and lacks the personal relationship aspect of mentoring. Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) outlined certain significant elements of mentorship, including the importance of accomplishment or acquisition of knowledge between mentor and mentee, emphasising professional development in the long-term, the need for mutual benefits, a highly personal relationship, and a focus on the expertise that the mentor contributes to the relationship. These elements are only found on the whole within an informal mentor relationship.

Whether mentoring is formal or informal in nature there are some key relationship factors such as trust that need to be present in order for the relationship to be influential and successful (Bluckert, 2005).

### **2.4.3 Key relationship factors**

Many factors play a part in the relationship between mentor and mentee, most of which are based around the mentee such as their skill level, strengths and weaknesses; however there are aspects that revolve around the mentor, including: their strengths and weaknesses, and how much time they have available for relationship interaction (Moak and Walker, 2014). This study will be building upon this by looking at the factors that form an effective mentor-mentee relationship.

Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003) state that research suggests mentoring is most effective when it is driven by the mentee. It is further stated that the relationship is most beneficial when expectations are clear, and both mentor and mentee approach the relationship as an opportunity to learn. This refers back to the mutual benefits of mentorship that will only come about if both involved in the relationship approach it in a positive manner.

Borders *et al.* (2011) list four instrumental factors that mentoring must include in order to aid development: coaching, which involves the mentor offering tips and dedicating their time; protection, which consists of prioritisation of opportunities; sponsorship and visibility, which includes helping the mentee network and creating them opportunities; and challenging goals, which involves providing feedback and encouragement. On the idea of coaching within mentorship, Carmichael *et al.* (2011) suggest mentoring is associated more as a long-term development approach, whereas coaching is focused on short term performance; that said it is agreed that mentoring and coaching are similar.

If the relationship is to develop and be successful over a long period, then both mentor and mentee require needs that complement each other because this is what solidifies a mentor-mentee relationship (Kram and Isabella, 1985). This links to Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) who state that reciprocal benefits and emphasis on long-term development are vitally important to the relationship.

It is widely accepted that mentoring is practiced in a social and cultural context (Jones *et al.*, 2009), with engagement going far beyond just offering tips and caring for the protégé's well-being (Cushion, 2006). Therefore, key influences on the relationship include personality, developmental position, career or development stage, emotional intelligence, cultural context and a work-family lens (Ragins and Kram, 2007). On the whole, the most crucial factor in a mentor relationship is the satisfaction of the mentee (Ragins *et al.*, 2000), and it can be said that relational challenges serve as an important mechanism to impact overall relationship satisfaction (Ensher and Murphy, 2011). The three mentorship challenges

identified by Ensher and Murphy (2011) include: Demonstrating Commitment and Resilience, Measuring Up to a Mentor's Standards, and Career Goal and Risk Orientation.

Four common domains of mentor relationships have been identified throughout the literature: 1) emotional and psychological support, 2) setting goals and career pathways, 3) specific knowledge support within the subject, and 4) the presence of a role model (Nora, 2007). These relationship factors are looked at throughout this study, with the focus on what mentees perceive as effective approaches towards these domains of the relationship.

## **2.5 Effective and Ineffective Mentoring**

### **2.5.1 Effective Mentoring**

Kram (1985; cited in Watson *et al.*, 2009) states that effective mentoring should develop the protégé both professionally and psychosocially. The characteristics of the mentor are an extremely important aspect to the mentoring relationship (Fulton *et al.*, 2007). Cho, Ramanan and Feldman (2011) listed 5 ideal qualities of a mentor: 1) admirable personal characteristics; 2) tailored goals and support to each individual mentee; 3) commitment towards the relationship; 4) support both personally and professionally; and 5) set standards and role model those standards. These qualities are echoed by Moak and Walker (2014) who also list characteristics that a mentor must possess in order to be effective, such as: being honest, listening, respecting the mentee, engaging and challenging the mentee, developing their skills, and interacting with them outside of the mentoring environment.

Mentoring reflects interpersonal processes (Bozionelos *et al.*, 2014) and as personality traits influence such processes they play a big part in the process of mentorship (Turban and Lee, 2007; cited in Bozionelos *et al.*, 2014). Mitchell *et al.* (2015) found that compatibility and similarities between mentor and mentee, such as security, are beneficial to effective mentorship because the mentor is able to better understand and relate to their mentee's thoughts and feelings. Personalities can have an effect on what characteristics are admirable in a mentor from the mentee's perspective, as an extravert is more likely to see other extraverts as a desirable mentor; similarly, introverts are more likely to desire mentors who are also introverted (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). Two personality traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness have been found to be effective when compatible between mentor and mentee (Menges, 2015). Relatively little is known about personality traits and mentoring and this study will look to broaden this specific knowledge area.

It is important for a mentor to continuously challenge their mentee with goals to prepare them for potential future responsibilities, however they must also be mindful not to undermine their mentee's confidence (Young, 2012). Mentors must constantly adjust their communications to meet the needs of the protégés (Memon *et al.*, 2015). In order for them to adapt their styles of communication they must first understand their own abilities, then show a willingness to understand the mentee's behaviour through observation, and act accordingly (Radu Lefebvre and Redien-Collot, 2013). This links to the ideal of relationship commitment because getting to know somebody takes time.

Commitment towards the relationship is an obvious quality of a mentor, and can be demonstrated through prioritising the needs of the mentee ahead of almost everything else (Gibson, 2005). A mentor-mentee relationship will work best when both parties are committed to the success of the relationship (Hall and Kahn, 2002).

Professional experience within the area where mentoring is taking place, is another key value that Jones (2014) found in a mentor from the perspective of African American doctoral student mentees. For example, a professional cricketer is better equipped to mentor other cricketers than someone who has not experienced cricket at a professional level. This links to Cho, Ramanan and Feldman (2011) fourth ideal quality of a mentor because experience in the profession will inevitably lead to the mentor being able to support their mentee professionally. In most mentorship relationships the mentee will already possess the relevant knowledge, therefore they just need guidance and support from a more experienced person in the profession in order to utilise that knowledge and develop themselves practically.

Research from Lui *et al.* (2011) has shown that emotional sharing is directly related to learning and mentoring success. Opengart and Bierema (2015) found that emotional intelligence from a mentor can make for effective mentorship, especially if this is shown in the early stages of the relationship. Mullen (2005; cited in Opengart and Bierema, 2015) has also found that friendship and the emotions that co-exist alongside it, are in fact key components to mentorship.

Simonton (1988; cited in Hooker *et al.*, 2014) stated that role models play an irreplaceable role in the development of most individuals. An example of role modelling is within alternative mentoring where the relationship is never static, as both mentor and mentee look to continuously reinvent themselves (Mullen, 2005); this behaviour has to stem from the mentor. A study undertaken by Lunar and Cullen (1998) found that role modelling is a key

aspect of mentoring, however they also discovered that time, access, and high expectations of mentors were common difficulties within mentor relationships in the field of academia. By looking at what a mentee would expect and require of a mentor in order to be effective, these problems could essentially be eliminated.

### **2.5.2 Ineffective Mentoring**

Currently, there is limited research into the negative experiences of mentoring (Hamlin and Sage, 2011). It can be said however that a great challenge of the mentor relationship arises when the mentor and mentee do not know each other prior to the relationship (Wanberg *et al.*, 2007). Mentors can often disappoint their protégés in their style of mentorship or even not meeting the requirements of the mentee (Hamlin and Sage, 2011). This negative outcome is described as marginal mentoring by Ragins *et al.* (2000), and can often come about through a lack of understanding on a personal level between mentor and mentee.

Mentorship can be ineffective, sometimes even becoming damaging and dysfunctional, resulting in negative effects on attitudes and performance; this is normally down to the interpersonal difficulties between the mentor and mentee, not their intentions (Eby and McManus, 2004). This coincides with the work of Ragins and Kram (2007) who found that personality is the foundation to which effective mentoring is built upon.

Hamlin and Sage (2011) listed seven examples of negative mentoring that essentially are the opposite of the characteristics that make an effective mentor. These include: a lack of forethought to meetings, insufficient priority and failing to maintain appropriate contact, all show a lack of commitment to the relationship; failing to provide a focus or structure to the relationship is a display of minimal commitment as well as a lack of individuality to the relationship (Hamlin and Sage, 2011). One other finding of Hamlin and Sage (2011) is mentors who exhibit a negative mind-set during conversation hinder development of the mentee, which essentially relates to Cho, Ramanan and Feldman's (2011) second ideal of supporting each individual.

This chapter has looked at previous research into mentoring, outlining its benefits, proving its importance, discussing the relationship and the factors that make an effective mentor and mentor relationship. After this in depth analysis of previous studies it is clear that there is a lack of depth on mentorship within sport, and more specifically elite sport. This study will address the characteristics of an effective mentor given by Cho, Ramanan and Feldman (2011), and will be focused on from the perception of the mentee and their view on what they believe would and would not suit them when it comes to a mentor. This study will be

undertaken within an elite cricketing environment with this review of literature being the justification and rationale for this research angle.

# **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will outline the research process that took place in this study. It explores and justifies the chosen research design, giving an overview of the participants, equipment, procedures and process of analysis undertaken, rationalising each area of research method.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

There are two approaches to research, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative studies investigate a problem through the generation of numerical data; whilst qualitative studies are primarily exploratory, and used to gain an understanding of a problem, through opinions, and motivations (Bernard, 2011). This study was qualitative in nature because of its allowance to acquire in depth understanding of the participants' personal conceptions and experiences (Jones, 2002).

Qualitative research allows for various methods of data collection such as focus groups, observation and interviews. Focus groups are effective in exploring participants' knowledge and experiences, however they can also be inhibiting because they lack privacy (Kitzinger, 1995); therefore, focus groups were not chosen as a fitting research method. Observation can also be an effective way of collecting rich data, however it is time consuming (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994) and was not appropriate to producing the results for this particular research question.

The methodology of data collection used was interviews. Interviews have previously been used to study mentoring, an example being Bloom *et al.* (1998) who worked with Canadian Olympic coaches when looking at coach mentoring within sport. This particular research involved a sample group of six participants. Gratton and Jones (2010) suggest that interviews are helpful when carrying out qualitative research, especially with smaller sample groups because they provide the researcher with rich data. Myers (2009) also points out that interviews are a primary source of data, which provides credibility to qualitative research. Exploratory research can benefit from interviews because they identify detailed information that can develop and refine future research (Veal, 2011). Interviews can be held face to face, over the telephone or via internet technologies. Over the telephone can increase a participant's perceptions of anonymity, therefore helping when covering personal topics (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). However, telephone based interviews are only seen as appropriate for short, structured interviews (Harvey, 1988; cited in Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004; Fontana and Frey, 1994). It is also suggested that telephone interviews can lose the

subtleties associated with physical interaction (Holt, 2010). Using internet technologies such as Skype eliminates the interaction issues faced with telephone interviews, through the medium of synchronised video (Bertrand and Bourdeau, 2010). However technical issues often arise with the internet, which can cause interviews to be suspended, prolonging the process (Hanna, 2012). A benefit of face to face interviews, which includes this research method, is that the body language and general tone of the interviewee can be observed, and can often be helpful (Graziano and Raulin, 2013).

### **3.3 Instruments**

The interviews were semi structured with an interview guide (see Appendix A) that was not seen by participants in order to eradicate bias (Hill et al., 2005). The semi structured approach to the interviews was required to delve deep into the subject's thought patterns and understand the answers given by participants (Creswell, 2008). This also allowed for flexibility during the interviews, but still making sure the results required to answer the research question were collected (Rabionet, 2011). The interview guide consisted of mostly open ended, probing questions so that respondents were able to choose their own terms when answering, as suggested by McNamara (2009; cited in Turner, 2010). These questions progressed smoothly through the interview so that the participant did not feel the situation was too formal, allowing for more accurate results (Turner, 2010). Questions were guided by a review of previous published research on the concepts of mentoring, in order to build on what has been done before (Hill *et al.*, 2005).

All Interviews were recorded using a high quality voice recorder to allow for accurate transcriptions (Flick, 2014; Holloway and Wheeler, 2002). Voice recorders improve the accuracy of data collection and allow the interviewer to be more observant of the interviewee during the interview (Patton, 1990).

Unexpected data can emerge from interviews, as they are generally more insightful than other research methods (Gratton and Jones, 2010). Although interviews can be insightful and produce rich data, there is the danger of bias from the interviewee who may only say what they believe the interviewer wants to hear (Gratton and Jones, 2010). In an attempt to minimise the bias, the questions were made as neutral as possible as suggested by McNamara (2009; cited in Turner, 2010). A conscious effort not to over-guide the interviewee was also made in order to avoid bias (Keats, 2000); which was especially critical in this study as the researcher knew subjects before the research took place. Another danger includes the interview going off course, and not producing results needed to answer

the research question (Picardi and Masick, 2014; Turner, 2010). To avoid the interview moving off course a pilot interview was undertaken so the researcher could practice their interviewing skills (Turner, 2010).

### **3.4 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was carried out prior to other interviews taking place in order to assess whether the interview questions would produce the results needed to answer the research question (Thomas, Silverman and Nelson, 2015; Kvale, 2007). The pilot interview gave the researcher experience in working with participants, and understanding the dynamic relationship that develops throughout an interview (Keats, 2000) allowing for more accurate results. It is suggested by Turner (2010) that pilot interviews should be carried out with participants that are similar to that of the study, therefore a member of the MCCU was used for the pilot. The pilot interview was successful in producing rich, relevant data and hence used during the data analysis process.

### **3.5 Participants**

According to Patton (2002) there are several strategies of purposeful sampling, ranging from extreme or deviant case sampling to maximum variation sampling. Intensity sampling was used to select a group of participants for this study, as it allows for rich cases that provide in depth information (Suri, 2011). The sample of participants used for the study were selected from one Marylebone Cricket Club University (MCCU) squad, which includes students from the ages of 18-24 years. MCCUs play at a first class level against professional county opponents, as well as competing in the British University College Sport (BUCS) national league; therefore, they can be classed as elite according to the definition given earlier by Swann *et al.* (2015) which states that elite sport can be associated with regional performance sport and above. As students, the participants are at a transitional stage of their lives as they are trying to pursue a career in cricket, whilst studying for a degree. This particular pool of participants was selected for this study because a mentor is most needed, and most effective when the mentee is at a transitional stage of their lives (Cassidy *et al.*, 2010). It has also been recommended in previous research that mentoring should be further investigated among athletes (Perna *et al.*, 1996; cited in Bloom *et al.*, 1998).

The number of participants was reduced from the twenty-eight squad members of the MCCU because interviews are best suited to smaller sample groups (Gratton and Jones, 2010). The study used purposive sampling to condense the sample size down from the twenty-eight squad members to six interviewees. Participants were hand-picked on their relevance

and appropriateness to the specific purpose of the research as suggested by Denscombe (2001). This method of purposive sampling is effective because the participants meet the criteria of being elite cricketers and at a period of transition allowing them to be information rich according to Patton (2002). The researcher knew the participants on a personal level prior to research taking place which allowed for more reliable and truer results (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008).

### **3.6 Procedure**

Before participants could be approached and any form of research could be undertaken, the research needed to be approved by the Cardiff Metropolitan University ethics committee. Once approved, squad members the MCCU were asked to partake in the research, with the topic of research explained through participant information forms (see appendix B). At the beginning of each interview, an informed consent form (see appendix C) was given to the participants which they were required to sign, along with the information sheet which detailed what the research was about. Participants were given pseudonyms, which was a condition of the research set by the ethics committee. Data was collected 22<sup>nd</sup> January-8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This period of time was selected as it is a reflective period for cricketers with it being a time of transition into pre-season (Woolmer and Noakes, 2008). Four interviews took place at the participants' homes where the interviewee felt comfortable and safe (Hanna, 2012). The other two interviews took place in a private room secluded from external environments, provided by Cardiff Metropolitan University, to avoid distraction and interruption, allowing for more accurate transcription (Easton *et al.*, 2000). All interviews lasted approximately fifteen minutes.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

After each interview, the voice recordings were transcribed by the researcher. Transcription usually occurred before the following interview, meaning data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously (Lieher and Marcus 1994; cited in Gray, 2000). Transcripts were sent to participants for verification of correctness as suggested by Smith and Cushion (2006). Gratton and Jones' (2010) three step procedure was then used to analyse the data. Firstly, the interview transcripts were streamlined and organised in line with the wider literature so the irrelevant data could be discarded. As suggested by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), the data was then thematically analysed for commonalities arising between participants, and put into a table of factors (see Appendix D). A constant comparative method was used where the various findings were compared to the existing

literature and concluded as recurring or new emerging themes (Ragin, 2014). Comparisons were made with Cho, Ramanan and Feldman (2011) who listed five characteristics of an effective mentor, and Nora (2007) who stated four common domains of a mentor relationship. As this study focused on participant's perceptions of effective mentorship, based on their values, behaviours and beliefs, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was used, due to the suggestions made by Smith (2015). IPA looks at how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a phenomenon. IPA is an effective way of analysing qualitative data when used in conjunction with thematic analysis and grounded theory (Smith, 2015). The findings of this paper focus on the qualities of an effective mentor from the perspective of the mentee within a young, elite cricketing environment.

# **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## **4.0 Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The primary aim of this study was to undertake a qualitative investigation to identify factors associated with effective mentorship within a young, elite cricketing environment.

The research aim will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Investigate whether mentoring taking place within the current elite cricketing environment and if it is effective;
2. Correlate the views of the participants on what makes a successful mentor;
3. Correlate the views of the participants on what makes an unsuccessful mentor;
4. Compare the correlated views of the participants with the wider literature.

These objectives will be referred to when appropriate as an ongoing process of discussion.

Mentoring success is dependent on the relationship between mentor and mentee, therefore much of the findings were factors based around the relationship that lead to effective mentoring, rather than factors related specifically to the characteristics of the mentors themselves. After conducting 6 interviews with participants from one identified MCCU, the data was analysed and broken down. Five factors emerged that are crucial to effective mentorship within a young, elite cricketing environment, and in line with the literature reviewed: Informal origin of the relationship; commitment; understanding; psychological support; and the position held by the mentor. These factors have themes within, and are interconnected in their influence on the relationship effectiveness.

### **4.2 Informal Origin of the Relationship**

The origin of the relationship was seen to be an important factor in its effectiveness. When talking about the mentor relationship four out of six interviewees agreed that a mentor would be most effective if they were not forced upon them. Participant 2 stated: *"I don't think it should be forced, it should be something that happens naturally."* This finding agrees with the literature which suggests mentorship is most effective when the relationship is developed informally and organically, based around a mutual understanding and trust (Gibson, 2004; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002; Marshall, 2001; Pyke, 2001; Nemanick, 2000). The reason for participants favouring an informally developed mentor relationship is because it generally leads to a better understanding between them and their mentor. This deeper understanding is often established via a relationship between the mentor and mentee prior to mentorship

taking place, as explained in the following statements made by participants 4 and 6 respectively:

*“But if a mentor was assigned to me I think I would have to get on with them, but I don't think the relationship would be as strong, and I don't think I'd have the same belief in achieving personal goals.”*

*“If it happened organically it would help... Because you would have a deeper relationship with the person.”*

These views were expressed by two thirds of participants, and support Bluckert (2005) who stated that the most important aspects involved in mentorship are the relationship factors such as trust and understanding. These factors are more evident within informal relationships. There were however two out of six participants who believed formal mentoring would be more effective because they are impartial to the situation and offer a view from the outside environment. Participant 5 held this view:

*“I think if somebody's assigned to you, it's somebody who is completely impartial.”*

Wanberg *et al.* (2007) states that a great challenge of the mentor relationship arises when the mentor and mentee do not know each other prior to the relationship. This is because mentors can often disappoint their protégés in their style of mentorship by not meeting the requirements of the mentee (Hamlin and Sage, 2011). This idea was acknowledged by participant 1 who believes a formal mentor would be most effective as long as there was an understanding once mentor and mentee get to know each other.

Participant 1 explained that although cricket is a team sport it is a very individual game, therefore the mentor process must be tailored towards the needs of the mentee. Participants reported that support from the mentor would be more tailored to the individual if the relationship was developed through informal origins. This supports Underhill (2006) and Nemanick (2000) who found that informal mentoring produces more significant effects on the mentee's career than formal mentoring.

Throughout the research it was clear that no mentoring programme is in place within elite cricket. This may explain the participants' strength in opinion towards informal mentor relationships being most effective.

### 4.3 Understanding

All participants reported that there has to be an understanding between themselves and their mentor. It was found that in order for the relationship to be effective in helping the mentee develop, both mentor and mentee have to understand each other, as participant 1 stated: *“They won’t be able to help you if you don’t understand each other.”* This understanding can develop in different ways. For example participants (3, 5 & 6) mentioned that understanding comes from similar experiences within cricket, like participant 3 who’s mentor *“went through the same sort of university cricket centre, or MCCU”* as them. In his opinion this allowed him to relate to his mentor and trust his advice, which supports Bluckert (2005) who stated that trust is a necessity within mentorship. This is also backed up by participant 6, who after being asked about their ideal mentor is quoted saying:

*“Somebody who has been in the positions that I’ve been in before, faced specific bowlers, or dealing with specific challenges that you can face on the field.”*

This experiential understanding supports the definition adopted for this study: “Mentoring is when a trusting, developmental relationship forms between a more experienced athlete and an athlete of less experience.” (Cassidy *et al.*, 2010; Fletcher, 2000; Allen and Poteet, 1999; Hardy, 1994; Alleman *et al.*, 1984). Collins *et al.* (2011) suggested that an effective mentor does not necessarily have to be somebody with more experience. Although experience is preferred by participants, a mentor without cricket specific experience can be beneficial, which was recognised by participant 6:

*“If I were to have a mentor, a batting mentor, it would be very beneficial if it was sort of a batsman and they’ve gone through similar experiences. But if it was a coach who’s never played cricket before, it could be beneficial in that sense because he could have an outside perspective and be able to give different views and opinions that I might not think about as a player.”*

Various participants made reference to the benefits of a mentor’s experience in the elite cricketing environment; this supports Nora (2007) who states specific knowledge and support within the subject is important to the relationship’s effectiveness. Participants preferred a mentor who has had similar cricketing experiences to themselves which supports the Mitchell *et al.* (2015) whose findings suggest that mentor-mentee similarities lead to a more effective relationship. Participants did however acknowledge that a mentor with no cricketing experience could also have its benefits as participant 6 stated earlier.

Every participant held the opinion that a deeper more personal level of understanding is most important. Participant 1 states: *“The mentor has to understand you as a person.”* Personal understanding between the mentee and mentor can be beneficial both on and off the field due to the fact that cricket performance can be affected by things happening off the field as participant 5 explains:

*“In cricket you could be experiencing difficulties on the field, as a result of something that is happening off the field, that has got nothing to do with cricket.”*

This deeper understanding is a must for a mentor within a young, elite cricketing environment. These findings coincide with previous research into emotional sharing within mentoring, and support the idea that emotional intelligence is fundamental to an effective mentor (Opengart and Bierema, 2015; Lui *et al.*, 2011); especially in elite cricket where even the most successful performers suffer from emotional fatigue (Woolmer and Noakes, 2008). This understanding is essential in order to avoid negative outcomes of mentoring (Ragins *et al.*, 2000).

To summarise this factor of effective mentorship, a successful mentor is someone who understands their mentee professionally, but most importantly personally; whilst an unsuccessful mentor is generally somebody who lacks understanding of their mentee on a personal level.

#### **4.4 Commitment**

Commitment is seen as an essential part of the mentor relationship (Cho, Ramanan and Feldman, 2011) and was a factor that emerged from this particular research. Commitment is a fairly new concept within the mentoring literature (Poteat *et al.*, 2009), however Gibson (2005) has suggested that commitment is demonstrated by the mentor prioritising the needs of the mentee above anything else. This is supported by five out of six participants who suggested that they expect a mentor to be accessible whenever they as mentees require them. A statement by participant 3 represents the consensus:

*“If you need to talk to them every day that’s fair enough. But I imagine it will be more of a once or twice a week... If you’ve got issues and you need to talk every day or every other day it’s you know, then they’re there.”*

In particular for this research into elite level mentoring participant 5 explains:

*“In an elite environment I would like to think that a mentor would be very committed to myself... In an elite cricket environment it is a very high pressured situation. So you would need a mentor that would have to be all in.”*

A mentor is expected to be committed to the relationship and make themselves available to their mentee whenever needed. This supports the current literature that states mentor commitment is associated with positive outcomes of the relationship (Poteat *et al.*, 2009; Ortiz-Walters and Gilson, 2005; Sipe, 2002). Participants were also recorded stating that the relationship has to be driven by the mentee. For example participant 2 stated: *“It shouldn’t be them chasing you it should be you chasing them.”* This supports the previous views of Clutterbuck and Abbott (2003) who state that mentoring is most effective when it is driven by the mentee. A metaphor used by participant 2 captures this idea: *“I’m the gears, accelerator, break and the clutch, and he is the steering wheel.”* Essentially this metaphor describes the relationship where the mentee has to be the driving force behind everything that happens, and the mentor is there to offer guidance and advice in order to 'steer' the mentee in the right direction. This corresponds with the wider literature which suggests that effective mentorship should derive from the mentee (Grima *et al.*, 2014; Raisbeck, 2012; Robinson, 2010; Pitney and Ehlers, 2004; Mead *et al.*, 1999).

In order to be effective, participant 2 mentioned that they need to be seeing their mentor consistently over long periods:

*“Every time I have done it for long spells; like consistent long spells where I see him consistently, yes, I think he has helped me a lot. But when I’ve had sort of brief, vague chats now and again I just haven’t found it as effective.”*

This adds to the opinion of what makes for effective and ineffective mentorship. From this study, it is evident that for a mentee to truly benefit from the mentor relationship, and a mentor to be successful, there has to be a constant commitment from the mentor to the mentee, with regular contact. On the other hand, ineffective mentoring can be linked to a vague relationship and insufficient contact.

## 1.5 Psychological Support

It is understood that elite cricketers need outside support and assistance to deal with the stressors of cricket on top of strong mental skill and toughness (Woolmer and Noakes, 2008). Four of the six participants agreed that a mentor is there to offer psychological support to their mentee. Participants 1 and 3 stated respectively:

*“In terms of the psychological side of things, you definitely do need a mentor to prepare you for certain situations.”*

*“They’re there to help you so that you’re mentally prepared.”*

Mental preparation is an integral part of performing within elite cricket (Davis and Collins, 2012), and the majority of participants reported that a mentor’s role is to provide psychological support to them. According to participant 4, this psychological support can enhance ones performance through improvement of concentration:

*“For instance you’re able to bat for long periods of time; your mental concentration is much better; and the same applies to bowling and fielding.”*

The emphasis on psychological support from participants supports Nora (2007) who states that emotional and psychological support is essential to mentorship. Psychological support should be positive and optimistic in order to build confidence in the mentee because low confidence can be detrimental to performance within cricket (Davies and Collins, 2012). This positive, confidence based approach towards the mentor relationship is in agreement with Young (2012) who suggests even though challenging the mentee is important to their development, it is essential not to undermine their confidence. Half of participants interviewed agreed that their ideal mentor should be optimistic in their approach because as participant 2 explains, the variables within cricket make confidence a tough quality to attain:

*“I just think that in the sport we play, in cricket I think it would be hard to have a negative mentor for a young player... Because of the variables in cricket.”*

A positive outlook on cricket and failed performance are characteristics of an effective mentor in a young, elite cricketing environment. Whilst undermining a mentees confidence is detrimental to their development and progression in the sport, and makes for ineffective mentoring. In addition, it appears that due to the emotional and psychological stress that the sport involves, psychological support is essential to effective mentorship within elite cricket.

## 1.6 Position held by the Mentor

One factor found in the results of the study revolves around what position the mentor holds in relation to the mentee and their team environment. In general, participants suggested that their ideal mentor would hold an impartial position, by not being associated with the team the mentee is involved with. Participant 2 explains:

*“If they’re not involved in it. I think it would be better because you’ve got a different perspective.”*

The position held by a mentor within elite cricket has not been highlighted in previous literature. A fresh opinion outside of the team and coaching environment could be beneficial to developing individuals, as participant 2 suggested, and could be transferable to other elite team sports. This ideal was explained further by participants who reported that their ideal mentor would in fact be a coach, but not a coach that they played under as participant 5 tried explaining:

*“So say in cricket, probably not a coach, well not your head coach. Maybe a batting coach or somebody pretty specific.”*

This hybrid role of mentor and coach requires the mentor to have cricketing knowledge, supporting the wider literature which suggests that specific subject knowledge is required of the mentor (Mullen, 2005; Bloom *et al.*, 1998; Hardy, 1994; Alleman *et al.*, 1984;). This is recognised by participant 5 and 6 respectively:

*“In cricket mentoring of course you need someone who has an idea, and is someone you trust as a cricketer.”*

*“If I were to have a mentor, a batting mentor, it would be very beneficial if it was sort of a batsman and they’ve gone through similar experiences.”*

Participant agreement that mentoring is more beneficial if the mentor has specific cricket knowledge, relates back to professional understanding between the mentor and mentee. Although a mentor with cricket experience is preferred by participants, it was also acknowledged that a mentor with no cricketing experience could also be beneficial to a young elite cricketer. Participant 6 explains:

*“If it was a coach who’s never played cricket before, it could be beneficial in that sense because he could have an outside perspective, and be able to give different views and opinions that I might not think about as a player.”*

The position held by the mentor seems to be a key component in effectiveness of the relationship. Participants 2 and 4 both have, or have had an effective mentor who is a coach impartial to their team environment. Both participants also mentioned that they regard their mentors as role models, with participant 2 suggesting: *“A mentor is someone you look at, and you look at them for a reason because you admire them.”* Role models play a vital role in mentorship (Simonton, 1988; cited in Hooker *et al.*, 2014) and is listed as one of their five key qualities of a mentor by Cho, Ramanan and Feldman (2011). The views of participants 2 and 4 can be correlated to link cricket specific experience with the view that a mentor is a role model. This agrees with Mitchel *et al.* (2015) who found that there was an association between mentor-mentee similarity and the mentor providing role modelling functions.

In summary of this discussion it is clear that informal mentors are preferred due to a deeper personal understanding, which is essential to the effectiveness of the relationship. A mentor who understands their mentee will also be able to offer more effective support psychologically, which is another factor that is important within elite cricket due to the stresses involved in the sport. A coach impartial to the team environment was most desired by participants because of their professional knowledge. Another factor of effective mentoring within elite cricket was full commitment from the mentor, but with the mentee driving the relationship.

# **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was an investigation into the factors that make for effective mentorship within a young, elite cricketing environment. Research into mentoring is plenty (Darwin, 2000), however it is limited within the environment of elite sport. Conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with young, elite cricketers involved in an MCCU allowed for rich, personal insights from participants on their perception of an effective mentor relationship (Flick, 2007).

The research findings have added to the current literature on the topic of mentoring within sport which is limited at present (Potrac *et al.*, 2013; Pitney and Ehlers, 2004). All participants agreed that a mentor would be beneficial to their development and progression as a young elite cricketer. The process of analysis concluded five themes that were perceived as important factors contributing to effective mentorship for young elite cricketers: Informal origin of the relationship; understanding; commitment; psychological support; and position held by the mentor.

Opengart and Bierema (2015) and Lui *et al.* (2011) suggest that emotional sharing is a necessity in a mentor relationship. In line with this, all participants emphasised the need for an understanding between mentor and mentee on a personal level. In order for this understanding to be strong enough, participants reported that the relationship would need to happen organically, with somebody that they know prior to the mentor relationship. This idea of an informal beginning to the relationship is strongly supported by the wider literature on mentoring (Gibson, 2004; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002; Marshall, 2001; Pyke, 2001; Nemanick, 2000). Commitment towards the relationship was another key factor in effective mentorship highlighted by participants. It was expected that mentors should be readily available whenever the mentees required them for advice and guidance. With little research into the specifics of mentor commitment, the findings of this study have added to the theory of current literature and can be practically applied to mentor relationships within elite cricket. The relationship should be driven by the mentee; however mentors within elite cricket should be available whenever the mentee requires, because of the high pressured nature of the sport (Woolmer and Noakes, 2008). Research findings also suggest that a mentor within elite cricket should emphasise their role of offering psychological support in order to be effective in aiding the development of young performers. This is supported by Woolmer and Noakes (2008) who explain the psychological stress involved in playing elite level cricket. Finally it was found that participant's general consensus was that the ideal mentor would be

a coach who is impartial to the situation of the team environment, and preferably a coach who has experienced elite level cricket. The idea of impartiality is supported by Collins *et al.* (2011) who suggested that if relationships overlap, one side will indefinitely suffer. The concept of experience was agreed by participants as more effective but not essential to the relationship success; however, experience will most certainly assist in providing the right support to the mentee's situation (Mullen, 2005).

## **5.1 Limitations**

A limitation of the study is that not all participants had experienced a mentor relationship before, either inside or outside of the cricketing environment. This could mean that participants have misconstrued the relationship dynamics of mentoring due to their lack of familiarity, producing not totally reliable results.

A further limiting factor of the study is that the researcher knew the participants prior to the study taking place. This prior relationship between interviewer and interviewee can cause bias (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). However, the researcher made efforts to minimise bias when conducting an interview guide in preparation of the interviews in order to minimise bias as suggested by Boyce and Neale (2006).

An additional limitation of the study was the inexperience of the interviewer. The interviewer improved and evolved throughout the period of data collection as expected (Olson and Peytchev, 2007) but did lack prior experience. Although the early interviews, including the pilot, were still beneficial to the study, the interviewer originally lacked the skill in getting the rich data that was drawn from the later interviews.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Much of the research findings support the wider literature on the subject of mentoring. For example, the idea of informal mentoring, and an organic relationship forming between mentor and mentee was perceived as being most effective, which is in agreement with the literature (Gibson, 2004; Klasen and Clutterbuck, 2002; Marshall, 2001; Pyke, 2001; Nemanick, 2000). The research has offered new insight into mentee perceptions within elite cricket, such as the expectation of 100% commitment from the mentor. Therefore, a recommendation for future research would be to replicate the study to investigate mentor perceptions. Previous literature lacks the specific details of what constitutes as commitment, therefore this finding has added to the literature. For that reason, it must be viewed as

specific to mentoring within elite sport, creating an additional recommendation to look into the commitment levels of mentors within other sports at the elite level.

Interviews were found to be a resourceful and a valid process of data collection for mentoring therefore it is suggested further research undertaken on this topic should follow a similar avenue. That said, a limitation of this research was that not all participants had experienced mentoring before, so another suggestion for further research would be to interview participants who are involved, or have been involved in a mentor relationship.

A final recommendation is to delve deeper into the specific roles of a mentor within elite cricket. It was found that providing psychological support was a key aspect to the effectiveness of a mentor to young cricketers, however this topic was only touched upon. Psychology is a very intricate subject (Taylor and Wilson, 2005), and is one that requires deeper research within the realms of elite cricket mentorship.

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# **APPENDICES**

# **APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

## **Appendix A: Interview guide**

### Introduction

Before we start the interview, I would just like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this research.

The aim of this interview is to explore what barriers and challenges you have faced as a mentor, and to identify the factors that have enabled you to develop a quality mentoring process.

Finally, I would just like to remind you that you do not have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with, just say “no comment” and I will move on. You can also stop or leave the interview at any point, and lastly this interview will be recorded. If you are comfortable with these terms and conditions and feel ready, we will start the interview.

#### 1. Definitions

##### 1.1 **In your own words define what you believe a mentor to be?**

#### 2. Benefits

##### 2.1 **As a young cricketer, do you feel a mentor would be helpful to you?**

Probe: In cricketing terms and life outside of cricket?

Probe: What are those perceived benefits?

#### 3. Relationship

##### 3.1 **Would it matter if the mentor was formally assigned to you as oppose to the relationship happening organically?**

Probe: Why?

##### 3.2 **Who do you think would be best suited to mentoring?**

Probe: E.g. coach? Experienced team mate? Someone not involved in cricket?  
Someone involved in cricket but not your environment?

##### 3.3 **Do you have or have you had a mentor figure in your life?**

Probe: What position did they hold?

Probe: Were they successful? Why?

##### 3.4 **What do you think a mentor relationship entails? Can a mentor have more than one mentee?**

Probe: Emotional and psychological support

Probe: Setting goals and career pathways

Probe: Specific knowledge support within the subject

Probe: The presence of a role model

4. Effective

4.1 **How would you describe your personality in your approach to cricket?**

Probe: Optimistic? Pessimistic?

4.2 **What traits would you look for in a mentor if you were to have a choice?**

Probe: A personality similar to yourself?

Probe: Any differences would you like to see in your mentor?

4.3 **How committed would you expect them to be?**

Probe: How often would you expect to see them?

4.4 **What would you expect the ration to be between personal and cricketing support?**

Thank you for the interview.

**APPENDIX B:  
PARTICIPATION  
INFORMATION SHEET**

## **Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet**

**Project reference number: 15/5/195U**

### **Title of Project: What makes an effective mentor from the perspective mentee in a young elite cricketing environment?**

This project is driven by the lack of research within the sporting environment in the field of mentoring. I want to find, from the mentee (your) perspective, what makes an effective mentor within an elite cricketing environment. The results will then be compared to research into mentoring within other fields of study. Other aspects of the study include:

- This is an invitation to you to join the study, and to let you know what this would involve. The study is being organised by myself as the sole researcher of this project under the supervision of a lecturer at this university.
- The project will be used as my Level 6 dissertation when completed.
- If you want to find out more about the study, or you need more information to help you make a decision about taking part, please contact myself by either telephone or email, both of which are supplied at the bottom of this sheet.

### **Your Participation in the Research Project**

#### **Why you have been asked**

I am asking people who are members of a Marylebone Cricket Club University (MCCU) squad.

If we have made a mistake and you are not a member of the Cardiff MCCU squad, then we would not be able to include you in our study. Please accept our apologies for contacting you.

It is entirely voluntary – there is absolutely no obligation of any kind to join the study.

#### **What happens if you want to change your mind?**

If you decide to join the study you can change your mind and stop at any time. I will completely respect your decision. If you want to stop it would help me if you could let me know by either telephone or email (supplied below).

#### **What would happen if you join the study?**

If you agree to join the study, then I will need to interview you regarding your thoughts on mentoring, yourself and potential others. The interview will be a one off and should not take more than 45 minutes.

The person interviewing you will be myself, and it will be recorded for transcription later in the study. Possible questions include: What benefits would you foresee a mentor having on you? How would you describe your personality? and would you prefer somebody who has a compatible personality to yours as a mentor?

## **Are there any risks?**

I do not think there are any significant risks due to the study, however some questions may be personal and as we already have a standing relationship this has the potential to be effected. The personal opinion regarding other players and/or members of management may be communicated also. I have undertaken a pilot interview and the feedback given was that it was straightforward, and not stressful. If you did feel that there was any stress involved you can stop at any time. Just tell myself, the interviewer that you want to stop.

## **Your rights.**

Joining the study does not mean you have to give up any legal rights. In the very unlikely event of something going wrong, participants are covered by the University of Cardiff Metropolitan's insurance.

## **What happens to the questionnaire and interview results?**

I will be responsible for putting all the information from the study (except names and addresses, and personal identification information) into word documents. I will then look to see the answers given by the multiple participants have any correlation with each other as well existing literature. I should be able to see if there are any common characteristics of an effective mentor within the elite cricket environment and see if those characteristics match up with other fields such as business and medicine.

## **Are there any benefits from taking part?**

There are no direct benefits to you for taking part; however this study may help you look at your development as a cricketer from a different angle, and make you consider the idea of pursuing a mentor. When the study is complete and I have submitted my dissertation I will let you know what I have found.

## **How we protect your privacy:**

All the information I get from you is strictly confidential and your privacy will be respected. I have taken very steps to make sure you can't be identified from any forms with confidential information that are keep about you.

The university keep your name, address, and personal details completely separate from the other forms.

When I have finished the study and analysed the information, all the forms used to gather data will be completely destroyed. The university will keep the form with your name and address and a copy of the attached consent form for 10 years, because the university are required to do so.

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS SHEET TO KEEP, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM**

## Contact Details:

Telephone: 07712709179

Email: @cardiffmet.ac.uk

**APPENDIX C:  
PARTICIPATION CONSENT  
FORM**

**Appendix C: Participation Consent Form**

Cardiff Metropolitan Ethics Reference Number: **15/5/195U**

Participant name or Student ID:

Title of Project: **What makes an effective mentor from the perspective of the mentee in a young elite cricketing environment?**

Name of Researcher: **Gregory Holmes**

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**Participant to complete this section. Please tick each box.**

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- 3. I agree to take part in the above study.
- 4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded
- 5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

Name of Participant..... Date.....

Signature of Participant.....

Name of person taking consent.....Date.....

Signature of person taking consent.....

# **APPENDIX D: TABLE OF FACTORS**

## Appendix D: Table of Factors

Factors of Effectiveness
<p><u>Informal Origin of the Relationship</u></p> <p>“I don’t think it should be forced. I think it should be something that happens naturally.” (Participant 2)</p> <p>“I think it’s more important for it to happen organically. But if someone to be forced upon you, I think it would take time.” (Participant 3)</p> <p>“I’d prefer if I knew my mentor... But if a mentor was assigned to me I think I would have to get on with them, but I don't think the relationship would be as strong, and I don't think I'd have the same belief in achieving personal goals as I would with my sort of, dad or a coach.” (Participant 4)</p> <p>“I think if somebody's assigned to you, it's somebody who is completely impartial.” (Participant 5)</p> <p>“I think it would be more beneficial if it were to happen organically, but I don't think it would be too detrimental if it was formally assigned to you... I think the best results would be if it was to happen organically.”</p> <p>“If it happened organically it would help... Because you would have a deeper relationship with the person so they would be able to help you with aspects like that.” (Participant 6)</p>
<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <p>“They won’t be able to help you if you don’t understand each other.”</p> <p>“They understand where you want to go, what you want to achieve... The mentor has to understand you as a person.” (Participant 1)</p> <p>“A mentor can tell you what you're doing right or wrong but you have a more deeper connection with them.” (Participant 2)</p> <p>“He went through the same sort of university cricket centre, or MCCU” (Participant 3)</p> <p>“I’d like it if a mentor knew me and I had a good relationship with them.” (Participant 4)</p>

“In cricket you could be experiencing difficulties on the field, as a result of something that is happening off the field, that has got nothing to do with cricket.” (Participant 5)

“Somebody who has been in the positions that I've been in before, faced specific bowlers, or dealing with specific challenges that you can face on the field.” (Participant 6)

### Commitment

“Every time I have done it for long spells; like consistent long spells where I see him consistently ye, I think he has helped me a lot. But when I've had sort of brief, vague chats now and again I just haven't found it as effective.”

“If you want to see them, if you want access to them. However it shouldn't be them chasing you it should be you chasing them.”

“I'm the gears, accelerator, break and the clutch, and he is the steering wheel.” (Participant 2)

“If you need to talk to them every day that's fair enough. But I imagine it will be more of a once or twice a week... If you've got issues and you need to talk every day or every other day it's you know, then they're there.”

“It's up to the individual in terms of setting those goals, or achieving those goals and if it's realistic or not.” (Participant 3)

“It's important to see your mentor as much as you can. Whether that be once, twice a week, or even more... If you have a problem then you need to contact them and arrange a session where you can go over things... In terms of cricket, I feel like most sessions if they're there, you have someone by the side, someone there to support you, keep pushing you through the session.” (Participant 4)

“I think a mentor is somebody who is always there and is helping you through every step.”

“In an elite environment I would like to think that a mentor would be very committed to myself... In an elite cricket environment it is a very high pressured situation. So you would need a mentor that would have to be all in.” (Participant 5)

“I would expect the relationship to be two fold. So the mentor is available and willing to give advice and guidance. But then that would also require me to use that advice and guidance and take it on board.”

“I'd like them to be available, and, there for me if I needed them.”

“It would have to be driven from me in that sense. So um... It would be nice to have the mentor popping in and maybe having first contact but for him to be a mentor for me, I would need to drive it and show him that I need him.” (Participant 6)

## Psychological Support

“In terms of the psychological side of things, you definitely do need a mentor to prepare you for certain situations.” (Participant 1)

“I think a mentor has to be optimistic.”

“I just think that in the sport we play, in cricket I think it would be hard to have a negative mentor for a young player... Because of the variables in cricket”

“Sometimes maybe I think I do lack a bit of confidence now and again, a bit of optimism.” (Participant 2)

“They’re there to help you so that you’re mentally prepared.”

“A mentor is supposed to sort of be always optimistic.” (Participant 3)

“They’ve helped me develop my game mentally... Provided me with psychology with a guy called Mike, which really helped the mental side of things.”

“Ye psychological support has been a great help for me.”

“The psychological side of things because it's becoming a big part of cricket.”

“For instance you’re able to bat for long periods of time; your mental concentration is much better; and the same applies to bowling and fielding.” (Participant 4)

“If I probably had that sport psychologist 2 or 3 years ago, ye I probably would have been a lot more relaxed when I played.”

“I think a mentor should be a very reserved person. You know, they listen more than they do.” (Participant 5)

“I would like to have a mentor who would also be positive. But also have a holistic approach and be able to see the bigger picture.” (Participant 6)

### Position held by the Mentor

“It’s hard in cricket because it’s a team game, but it’s an individual sport really.” (Participant 1)

“If they’re not involved in it. I think it would be better because you’ve got a different perspective.”

“I don’t play for his team.”

“A mentor is someone you look at, and you look at them for a reason because you admire them... Subconsciously I will copy them and won’t even know what I’m doing.” (Participant 2)

“I think it’s just someone you can trust.” (Participant 3)

“Every mentor I had I see as a role model” (Participant 4)

“It’s got to be something completely impartial, so it can’t be a coach. It can be a coach perhaps. But a perfect mentor is somebody I think who isn’t emotionally attached to you.”

“So say in cricket, probably not a coach, well not your head coach. Maybe a batting coach or somebody pretty specific.”

“I would say, somebody who is impartial to the situation.”

“In cricket mentoring of course you need someone who has an idea, and is someone you trust as a cricketer.” (Participant 5)

“If I were to have a mentor, a batting mentor, it would be very beneficial if it was sort of a batsman and they’ve gone through similar experiences. But if it was a coach who’s never played cricket before, it could be beneficial in that sense because he could have an outside perspective and be able to give different views and opinions that I might not think about as a player.”  
(Participant 6)