Mentoring provided: Relation to mentor’s career success, personality, and mentoring received

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Received 25 April 2002

Abstract

The relationship of a mentor’s perceptions of his/her career success, mentoring he/she received, personality, and the amount of mentoring he/she provided was investigated in a sample of 176 administrators. Results indicated that the amount of mentoring respondents reported they had provided was positively associated with their objective and their subjective career success and with the amount of mentoring they reported they had received. Mentoring provided mediated the relationship between mentoring received and subjective career success. Finally, the personality trait of openness was associated with mentoring provided over and above the contribution of human capital and demographics. The results were in line with suggestions in the literature that providing mentoring has positive consequences for the career of the mentor and that an individual who has been mentored is more likely to provide mentoring. However, the findings suggested a limited role for the personality of the mentor in providing mentoring. The implications for career development practices and tactics and for future research were considered, along with the limitations of the study.

Keywords: Mentoring provided; Mentors; Protégés; Personality; Five-Factor model; Career success; Objective; Subjective

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1. Introduction

Mentoring is defined as a developmental relationship that involves organizational members of unequal status or, less frequently, peers (Kram, 1985). The relationship may involve a variety of socio-emotional (e.g., friendship, counseling) and career development (e.g., role modeling, career guidance) functions that the mentor provides for the protégé (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988; Scandura, 1992).

Mentoring has been established as a human resource practice and as an individual strategy for career success (e.g., Atkinson, 2002; Knouse, 2001; O'Reilly, 2001). A respectable body of empirical systematic research has investigated its nature, antecedents, and consequences (e.g., for a short review see Russell & Adams, 1997).

However, up-to-date empirical research has predominantly focused on antecedents and consequences of mentoring from the perspective of protégés (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Ragins, 1997). With few exceptions (Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999), there is a scarcity of systematic empirical investigations of mentoring from the perspective of mentors. The present work adopted the perspective of those who provide mentoring and investigated correlates of mentoring provided by mentors.

The study focused exclusively on informal mentoring relationships (i.e., relationships that are initiated and evolve naturally and without organizational intervention) between organizational members of unequal status. This type of relationship is typically associated with the term “mentoring” (e.g., Eby, 1997; Higgins & Kram, 2001). However, mentoring exists in other forms, including formal mentoring, which refers to mentoring relationships arranged by the organization, lateral mentoring, which involves individuals of equal status, and external mentoring, which refers to developmental relationships between individuals who function within different organizational settings. These forms of mentoring, albeit important (e.g., see Allen, McManus, & Russell, 1999; Eby, 1997; Higgins & Kram, 2001), were excluded from the focus of the present work.

2. Theoretical background and formulation of hypotheses

2.1. Mentoring and career success

A substantial amount of empirical research has investigated the relationship of mentoring with career success of protégés. Career success is conceptualized as real or objective and perceived or subjective achievements in individuals’ work lives (e.g., Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). Objective career success refers to career accomplishments evaluated by means of external or objective criteria, which utilize societal or organizational definitions of success or failure (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Jaskolka, Beyer, & Trice, 1985). Subjective career success refers to individuals’ own internal evaluations of their career accomplishments (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986, 1988; Poole, Langan-Fox, & Omodei, 1993).
Empirical systematic research has demonstrated that mentoring relates to objective career success of protégés, including number of promotions achieved (e.g., Aryee, Wyatt, & Stone, 1996; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992), salary progression (Dreher & Ash, 1990), salary levels (e.g., Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Wallace, 2001), and organizational grade (Koberg, Wayne Boss, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994); and to subjective career success of protégés (e.g., Fagenson, 1989; Koberg et al., 1994; Murphy & Ensher, 2001; Wallace, 2001).

2.2. Mentoring provided and career success

Researchers have argued that providing mentoring entails benefits for the careers of mentors. From an objective career success perspective, mentors may become more effective and efficient by delegating to protégés (Nykodym, Freedman, Simonetti, & Nielsen, 1995). In addition, mentors should be able rely on loyal subordinates for information and support (Kram, 1985; Mullen, 1994) that may form the basis for further advancement in the organization (Dreher & Ash, 1990). Finally, researchers have suggested that mentors may enhance their reputation among organizational decision makers who recognize the mentors’ contributions through the achievements of protégés (Kram, 1985). From a subjective career success perspective, mentors may gain satisfaction, sense of accomplishment, and additional meaning in their work lives by helping less experienced colleagues and by finding an outlet for passing their accumulated knowledge and wisdom (Clawson, 1980; Kram, 1983, 1985; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). However, as authors have noted (Ragins, 1997), despite theorizing the relationship between mentoring provided by mentors and their career success has received little systematic empirical attention.

Hypothesis 1a: The perceived amount of mentoring provided by a mentor will be positively related to the mentor’s objective career success.

Hypothesis 1b: The perceived amount of mentoring provided by a mentor will be positively related to the mentor’s subjective career success.

2.3. Mentoring provided and personality

It has been suggested that the personality of the mentor affects involvement by the mentor in mentoring relationships (e.g., Chao, 1997; Fagenson, 1989; Kram, 1985; Scandura & Ragins, 1993; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). The identification of personality features that relate to mentoring provided by mentors has important practical implications. Ragins, Cotton, and Miller (2000) found that the quality of the mentor plays an important role in protégés’ attitudes towards their jobs, their careers, and the organization, and they suggested that it is important to identify individual characteristics that relate to proneness and ability to become a mentor.

The Five-Factor Model (FFM) or “Big Five” constitutes a promising taxonomy to parsimoniously and comprehensively describe human personality and consists of the following traits: Neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (e.g., Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990). The FFM has been criticized (e.g.,
see Block, 1995; Eysenck, 1992) and there has been debate over its validity (for a review see Merenda, 1999, pp. 920–924). Nevertheless, the FFM has received extensive empirical support (e.g., Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1996; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997; and see Goldberg, 1993). For example, most recent quantitative review research is supportive of its comprehensiveness, a critical property that refers to the extent to which every personality trait is substantially related to one or more of the FFM traits (O’Connor, 2002). Adherence to the FFM taxonomy in organizational research greatly enhances parsimony and provides the desired variable consistency across studies (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1997; Tokar, Fischer, & Mezydlo Subich, 1998).

Characteristics of neuroticism include anxiety, inhibition, negative mood, and a tendency to focus on the self. These features should make individuals who score high on neuroticism less likely to approach subordinates to provide mentoring functions for them. Furthermore, neuroticism is associated with hostility, impatience, and low confidence. These characteristics should make the individual less attractive as a mentor.

Extraversion is associated with spontaneity, activity, and intimacy in social interactions. Hence, extraverts will be more likely to approach potential protégés and interact with them beyond formal work activities. Furthermore, the characteristics of extraversion are related to inter-personal competence, and experimental work indicates that protégés show a preference for imaginary mentors who demonstrate high levels of interpersonal competence (Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988).

Openness encompasses cognitive and emotional flexibility and receptivity to new experiences and ideas. Hence, those who score high on openness should be more likely to develop interest in the views of subordinates, accept their idiosyncrasies, and find interest in the relationship. Furthermore, those with broad interests and tolerance to diverse views and ideas should be more attractive as potential mentors.

Agreeableness encompasses care and concern for others as well as trust and modesty. Therefore, agreeable individuals should be more inclined towards providing advice, help, and support for less experienced and less powerful organizational members. Furthermore, agreeable individuals will be less likely to feel threatened to share their knowledge and expertise with others, hence, more likely to become mentors.

Conscientiousness encompasses sense of duty and adherence to moral principles. Hence, conscientious individuals should be prone to provide advice and developmental support for less senior colleagues. Furthermore, the achievement striving facet of conscientiousness reflects a tendency to develop aspirations. This should lead to identification with the work efforts of subordinates and should increase the likelihood to mentor them (Allen et al., 1997). Finally, the qualities of industriousness and reliability that characterize conscientious individuals should increase the likelihood to be approached by protégés for mentoring.

The empirical literature includes a limited number of well-conducted investigations of the association between personality traits and precursors of mentoring provided, such as motivation (Aryee, Chay, & Chew, 1996), willingness (Allen et al., 1997) and perceived competence to provide mentoring (Rice & Brown, 1990). Motivation and willingness reflect intentions, while perceived competence reflects
self-efficacy beliefs to provide mentoring. Intentions and efficacy beliefs are only imperfect predictors of actual or self-reported behavior (e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 2001). Therefore, the relationship between mentoring provided by mentors and their personality traits needs to be investigated.

Hypothesis 2a. Neuroticism will be negatively related to mentoring provided.
Hypothesis 2b. Extraversion will be positively related to mentoring provided.
Hypothesis 2c: Openness will be positively related to mentoring provided.
Hypothesis 2d: Agreeableness will be positively related to mentoring provided.
Hypothesis 2e: Conscientiousness will be positively related to mentoring provided.

2.4. Mentoring provided and mentoring received

Authors have suggested that mentoring cultures, that is cultures that promote and foster developmental relationships between organizational members, are initiated and sustained when more senior employees provide mentoring for less experienced organizational members who in turn become mentors when the opportunity arises (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Role modeling, a pivotal mentoring function (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993), provides an explanation for this process. Those who have been mentored are more likely to model the fact that senior colleagues have provided mentoring functions for them; and in turn they may exercise this behavior later in their careers and become mentors for their junior colleagues. Furthermore, those who have received mentoring tend to anticipate more rewards from becoming mentors than those who have not received mentoring (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Hence, having received mentoring may increase the likelihood to provide mentoring.

Studies have reported associations between having received mentoring and intentions to provide mentoring in the future among executives (Ragins & Scandura, 1999), professionals (Ragins & Cotton, 1993) and first-line supervisors (Allen et al., 1997). Therefore, empirical research must proceed to investigate whether amount of mentoring that individuals report they have received in their organizational career history is associated with the amount of mentoring they report they have provided.

Hypothesis 3: The amount of mentoring an individual reports he/she has received in the past will be positively related to the amount of mentoring he/she reports he/she has provided.

It is reasonable to assume that most individuals start their careers at lower organizational grades, mostly as subordinates. Hence, for most individuals the opportunity to receive mentoring precedes the opportunity to provide mentoring. Therefore, considering the relationship between mentoring received and mentoring provided from a temporal point of view, it is logical to assume that it is mentoring received that acts as the causal variable in the relationship.

Empirical research that was reviewed earlier indicates that mentoring received by protégés is associated with their career success, and we hypothesized in the present study that the amount of mentoring provided by individuals would be associated with the amount of mentoring they received in the past, and with their career success. If those hypotheses are proved correct, it is then logical to further hypothesize that the amount of mentoring provided by individuals partially mediates the relationship
between the amount of mentoring they received and their career success; taking into account that mentoring received must temporally precede mentoring provided.

**Hypothesis 4a**: The amount of mentoring provided by mentors will partially mediate the relationship between the amount of mentoring they received and their objective career success.

**Hypothesis 4b**: The amount of mentoring provided by mentors will partially mediate the relationship between the amount of mentoring they received and their subjective career success.

Not only have authors called for empirical investigations of the mentors’ perspectives, but they have also noted that such investigations must not be limited to upper organizational echelons (Allen et al., 1997; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Every hierarchical level that entails managerial responsibility is linked with the opportunity to provide mentoring. Furthermore, the flattened organizational structures of the present era attach increased responsibilities for the development of employees, which is an activity inherent in mentoring, to middle and lower managerial ranks (e.g., see Allen et al., 1997). Hence, the present study utilized a sample of individuals from every rank, lowest to the highest, that was associated with the opportunity to provide mentoring for other organizational members.

### 2.5. Control for human capital, demographics, and structural factors

Structural, human capital, and demographic factors were controlled for. Empirical evidence suggests that objective and subjective career success (e.g., Aryee et al., 1996; Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001; Melamed, 1996a) as well as the development of mentoring relationships (Aryee, Lo, & Kang, 1999; Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993) are related to human capital, such as education and organizational tenure, and demographic characteristics, such as gender and marital status. Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that career success (e.g., Judge et al., 1995; Melamed, 1995, 1996a) and the development of mentoring relationships (Aryee et al., 1996; Aryee et al., 1999) are also affected by structural factors that include organizational features and environmental characteristics, such as industry type and the geographic region.

The study was conducted within a uniform organizational environment. This type of environment, which may consist of a single organization or of highly similar organizations, provides the most appropriate setting to control for the effects of structural factors (Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Human capital and demographic variables were statistically controlled for.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Setting

White-collar workers who were administrators in three universities in the northwest of England were targeted. The three institutions were located in the same geographic region, had the same organizational structure, utilized a common
promotion procedure and employed very similar numbers of white-collar personnel. None of the institutions had at the time of the investigation, or at any time in the past, a formal mentoring scheme in place.

The organizational hierarchy for white-collar personnel consisted of 11 grades with no formal distinction between clerical and administrative grades. Taking into account range and scope of responsibilities, latitude of work behavior, and the accountability inherent in each grade (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988) employees in grade four and above were classified as administrators. Those were the individuals who had managerial responsibilities and the opportunity to provide mentoring for subordinates within this particular organizational setting. Although, it was not assumed, or required, that all of them had actual experience in providing mentoring for subordinates.

### 3.2. Procedure

Envelopes that included the questionnaires, a letter asking for participation in a study on "attitudes towards work," and a self-addressed postage-paid envelope for the return of completed questionnaires were sent via the internal mail to all listed grade four and above non-academic and non-technical employees in the institutions. The option of feedback on personality profiles was offered to the respondents. Of the 198 questionnaires that were returned (response rate 31.2%), 188 were usable. This response rate was satisfactory, considering that each questionnaire demanded responses to about 250 items contained in 14 pages, and is near the response rate that should be anticipated when questionnaires are distributed to working individuals through the mail (see Baruch, 1999). Of the respondents who returned usable questionnaires, 176 indicated at least two years of tenure and they were included in the analysis. Two years represent an adequate time interval for a mentoring relationship to unfold (e.g., see Chao, 1997; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997) and for effects of personality traits on interpersonal or career outcomes to become evident (Helmreich, Sawin, & Garsrud, 1986). In all analyses the ratios of respondents to variables were well above the recommended lower limits (e.g., Berry & Feldman, 1985; Comrey, 1973).

Taking into account the moderate response rate, two methods were employed to conclude on the extent to which non-response bias could have been introduced into the data (De Vaus, 1996). First, testing was conducted for differences in age and tenure between respondents who provided usable responses and the total white-collar workforce in grade four and above in the institutions. The $t$ tests showed no significant differences. Second, testing was conducted for mean differences between the respondents and the British general population of non-manual occupations (Smith, 1994, p. 16) in raw scores on the primary factors of the Cattell 16PF5 (Cattell, Cattell, & Cattell, 1993). A series of one-sample $t$ tests showed no significant differences

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1 Scores on Cattell 16PF5’s (Cattell et al., 1993) global factors, which were utilized in the study, can be derived only in sten (i.e., standardized ten scores) form. This is because scores on the global factors are estimated on the basis of sten scores on 15 primary personality factors (the 16th factor is mental ability), which are derived by applying the appropriate formulae on the raw scores on these factors (see Russell & Karol, 1994).
in 12 out of the 15 comparisons. These results suggested that non-response was not very likely to have introduced bias into the data.

3.3. Sample

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. Of the respondents, 119 (66.4%) were women and 57 (33.6%) were men. This ratio was representative of the women-to-men ratio in the organizational grades included in the study. Of the respondents, 75 (42.6%) were single and 101 (57.4%) were married. The sample was considerably educated as 78.4% of respondents held at least post-secondary school qualifications, 44.3% held undergraduate degrees, and 21% held graduate degrees. Finally, a series of one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) showed no differences between respondents from the three organizations in scores on mentoring provided, $F(2, 173) = 0.80$, $ns$, mentoring received, $F(2, 173) = 0.04$, $ns$, and subjective career success, $F(2, 173) = 0.79$, $ns$; and an Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA), with tenure and starting grade as co-variates, showed no difference in number of promotions received, $F(2, 171) = 1.71$, $ns$. This provided further evidence on the uniformity of the setting.

3.4. Measures

**Five-factor model traits.** These were assessed with the global factors of the UK edition of the Cattell 16PF52 (Cattell et al., 1993; Russell & Karol, 1994). Sten (standardized ten scores), using the norms for the British general population for non-manual occupations (Smith, 1994, p. 29), were utilized. Empirical evidence (Byravan & Ramanaiah, 1995; Conn & Rieke, 1994; Russell & Karol, 1994) demonstrates the correspondence between the global factors of the 16PF5 and other personality inventories that aim at tapping the FFM, including the NEO PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and Goldberg’s Marker Scales (Goldberg, 1992). The correspondence of 16PF5’s global factors tough-mindedness and independence with openness and agreeableness, respectively, is negative; hence, the signs of the respective coefficients between scores on these traits and scores on the rest of the variables was reversed in the results. The inventory also yields scores on an independent factor, impression management, which assesses social desirability (Russell & Karol, 1994), and was utilized in order to test whether responses to the mentoring provided scale were affected by social desirability.

**Objective career success.** This was operationalized as number of promotions since joining the organization, calculated as the difference between current and starting grade, after imposing statistical control for starting grade and tenure. Indices of objective career success that are functions of the hierarchical position are preferable.

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Table 1
Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations ($N = 176$)

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<td>1. Mentoring provided</td>
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<td>2. Mentoring received</td>
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<td>3. Subjective career success</td>
<td>3.23</td>
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<td>4. Number of promotions</td>
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<td>5. Tenure</td>
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<td>6. Grade</td>
<td>5.85</td>
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<td>7. Starting grade*</td>
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<td>8. Age</td>
<td>38.35</td>
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<td>9. Educational attainment</td>
<td>3.41</td>
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<td>10. Socio-economic origin</td>
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<td>11. Neuroticism</td>
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<td>12. Extraversion</td>
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<td>13. Openness</td>
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<td>14. Agreeableness</td>
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<td>15. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>5.03</td>
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Note. Correlations > 0.14, 0.19, 0.22 are significant at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$, respectively.

*Correlations for starting grade are based on natural logarithmic values.
when single or identically structured organizations are studied (e.g., see Cox & Harquail, 1991). This single criterion of objective career success was utilized in order to preserve parsimony: Promotion rate (i.e., number of promotions controlling for starting grade and tenure) is a function of current grade, starting grade and tenure. In addition, it reflects the process of attaining career outcomes instead of providing the isolated snapshot that current grade provides. Furthermore, in these organizations salary grades were strictly tied-up to organizational grades. Therefore, utilization of an index of objective career success that is a function of salary, in addition to an index that is a function of grade, would be redundant.

**Subjective career success.** This was measured with seven items on a 5-point response format (1: completely disagree, 5: completely agree) from Gattiker and Larwood (1986). The items assess subjective evaluations of success in the following domains: Job success (e.g., “I am in a position to do mostly work which I really like”); hierarchical success (e.g., “I am pleased with the promotions I have received so far”); financial success (e.g., “I receive a high income compared to my colleagues”); and interpersonal success (“I am respected by my colleagues”). Cronbach $\alpha$ for the present sample was .70.

**Mentoring received.** This was assessed with seven items on a 5-point response format (1: not at all, 5: to a great extent) from Dreher and Ash (1990). Respondents considered their career history since they started working in the organizations and indicated the extent to which “a higher-ranking individual (this need not be limited to one person) who had advanced experience and knowledge” had provided a variety of mentoring functions for them. Items covered career-related functions (e.g., “… given or recommended you for challenging assignments that presented opportunities to learn new skills?”) and socio-emotional functions (e.g., “… shared personal experiences as an alternative perspective to your problems?”) including role modeling (e.g., “… served as a role model”). Cronbach $\alpha$ for the present sample was .88.

**Mentoring provided.** This was assessed with six items on a 5-point response format (1: not at all, 5: to a great extent). Item development was based on qualitative literature on mentoring (e.g., Kram, 1983, 1985) and on scales that assess mentoring received (e.g., Dreher & Ash, 1990; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). The aim was to develop a short, yet reliable, and valid, general scale of the amount of mentoring that an employee has provided over one’s career history within a particular organization. Respondents indicated the extent to which “in my career history in this institution there has been at least one subordinate:” “to whom I have consistently given challenging assignments;” “whom I have introduced to higher level individuals;” “whom I have consistently provided emotional support;” “to whom I have given advice concerning his or her career;” “I was personally interested in his or her professional development;” and “I was personally interested in his or her career.” Cronbach $\alpha$ was .87.

This operationalization, in terms of a scale, was utilized in order to capture the variability in experience in providing mentoring among respondents. Mentoring is

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3 Utilization of current grade instead of number of promotions in relevant analyses produced highly similar results.
not an all-or-none phenomenon. Authors have concluded that in the majority of mentoring relationships only a fraction of the career-related and socio-emotional functions that have been associated with mentoring are provided (Kram, 1985; Phillips-Jones, 1982; Zey, 1984). Ragins et al. (2000, p. 1177) noted that by treating “all mentoring relationships created equal” (in essence, treating mentoring as an all-or-none experience) and utilizing binary measures to operationalize mentoring experience we probably fail to take into account important variation in the breadth and quality of mentoring relationships (Ragins et al., 2000). Therefore, a scale that taps the extent to which the individual has provided a variety of mentoring functions, for one or more subordinates, should be apt at capturing individual variability in experience in providing mentoring. Furthermore, such a measure also accounts for cases of individuals with no experience in providing mentoring. As noted, respondents were targeted as individuals who had the opportunity to provide mentoring, but there was no certainty or requirement that all of them had provided mentoring for subordinates. Respondents who recalled no experience in providing mentoring, and naturally there were such individuals in the sample (n = 22), scored the lowest possible score (i.e., one) on the scale.

Controls. Educational attainment was assessed with a single item in which respondents indicated all educational qualifications they had achieved. Responses were coded as follows: (1) CSE and/or O’levels/GCSE; (2) A-levels; (3) Postsecondary Diploma (e.g., B.Tech.); (4) Bachelor degree; and (5) Graduate degree. The highest qualification was used as index of educational attainment. Socio-economic origin was assessed with a single item in which respondents indicated the socio-economic level of their family when they were “at the age of 15” on a five-choice format: Upper class (coded 5); upper-middle class (coded 4); middle class (coded 3); working-middle class (coded 2); and working class (coded 1). Marital status (coded 1 for married, and 2 for non-married), gender (coded 1 for male, and 2 for female), and age were assessed with single items.

4. Results

4.1. Preliminary analysis

4.1.1. Mentoring provided: Construct uniformity and social desirability

To test for construct uniformity of the mentoring provided scale, principal components analysis followed by varimax rotation was executed. The eigenvalues greater than one criterion indicated a single factor that accounted for 72.87% of the total variance. Item loadings spread over a range 0.73–0.94 with median loading 0.86. This suggested that items in the scale tapped the same construct.

Furthermore, there was no association (r = .03, ns) between scores on mentoring provided and scores on impression management. This suggested that responses to the items in the scale were unaffected by social desirability. This constitutes a critical attribute for a self-report instrument aiming at assessing mentoring provided (see Ragins & Cotton, 1993).
4.2. Percept–percept bias

To assess the degree to which percept–percept bias, which refers to artificial inflation of measures of co-variation when self-report data are utilized, was a potential problem in the associations between the scale measures for mentoring provided, mentoring received and subjective career success, the three scales were subjected to principal components analysis forcing a three-factor solution that was followed by varimax rotation. Each scale formed a distinct factor and loadings ranges were 0.72–0.93, 0.64–0.83, and 0.36–0.72 for mentoring provided, mentoring received, and subjective career success, respectively, with median loadings 0.84, 0.73, and 0.56, respectively. The maximum cross-loading was 0.28. This suggested that percept–percept bias was not a problem in the associations between the three scales and that the scales tapped different constructs.

4.3. Hypotheses testing

Probability levels were based on non-directional significance testing. Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 1. Natural logarithmic values instead of raw values were utilized for starting grade because presumably number of promotions is inversely related to starting grade. This was confirmed by a visual inspection of the plot of starting grade against number of promotions. Hence, a logarithmic function provided a more appropriate description of relationships and, furthermore, enabled the regression models to fulfill the linearity assumption (e.g., Berry & Feldman, 1985).

Hypothesis 1 postulated significant positive associations of scores on mentoring provided with scores on objective, Hypothesis 1a, and subjective, Hypothesis 1b, career success, respectively. These hypotheses were tested with two hierarchical regressions that utilized objective and subjective career success as criteria. Step 1 included the control variables: Gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, socioeconomic origin, starting grade, tenure, and the five personality traits. The regression for subjective career success also included the number of promotions in this step, because subjective career evaluations are partly influenced by objective career accomplishments (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Poole et al., 1993). Step 2 included mentoring provided and utilized the stepwise procedure for variable selection with entry and removal points set equal at 0.05 (Draper & Smith, 1981).

The regression models are presented in Table 2. Mentoring provided significantly added to the total amount of variance accounted for in objective career success ($\beta = .14, t = 2.57, p < .05$) and in subjective career success ($\beta = .18, t = 2.35, p < .05$) above the significant contributions of the control blocks. Therefore, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were both supported. The $\beta$ coefficients of mentoring provided

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4 Although ethnic origin can impact career progression (e.g., Judge et al., 1995) and involvement in mentoring relationships (e.g., Feldman, Folks, & Turnley, 1999), it was not included in the control variables because 96% of the workforce in the institutions consisted of white origin individuals.
### Table 2
Hierarchical regression models testing for the association of mentoring provided with objective and subjective career success (N = 176)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Objective career success</th>
<th>Subjective career success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Forcible entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>3.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic origin</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting grade*</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>-8.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>3.49**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-2.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-2.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of promotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Stepwise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring provided</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>2.57*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F(13, 162) = 17.13^{**}$  
$F(14, 161) = 4.10^{***}$

*Notes: Adjusted $R^2$ values are presented. $β$ Coefficients in the overall model are presented.  
Calculations are based on natural logarithmic values.  
$p < .05$.  
$p < .01$.  
$p < .001$. 
in the two regression models were compared with the use of Williams’ formula for non-independent variables (Steiger, 1980; Williams, 1959). The three required $\beta$ coefficients that represented the relationships between mentoring provided, objective, and subjective career success were calculated by constructing three hierarchical regression models with control variables identical to those in the regression model that tested Hypothesis 1a. The sample size was set equal to 164, which represented the size of the sample (i.e., 176) minus the number of control variables (i.e., 12). The value of the $T$ statistic, $T(161) = -1.27, ns$, indicated that the contribution of mentoring provided to objective career success was not significantly different from its contribution to subjective career success.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 postulated significant associations of scores on mentoring provided with scores on the five personality traits and mentoring received, respectively. These hypotheses were also tested by means of hierarchical regression analysis. Step 1 included the control variables: Gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, socio-economic origin, starting grade, tenure, and grade. Step 2 included the personality traits, and step 3 included mentoring received. The stepwise criterion was utilized in steps 2 and 3.

The total model is presented in Table 3. Openness was the only personality trait to survive the stepwise procedure ($\beta = .16, t = 2.18, p < .05$) and mentoring received further added to the amount of total variance accounted for ($\beta = .20, t = 2.71,$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$ Value</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$F_\Delta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Forcible entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational attainment</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic origin</td>
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<td>-1.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting grade$^a$</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2.31$^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>3.20$^{**}$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>3.99$^{***}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Stepwise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>2.18$^*$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>7.34$^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Stepwise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring received</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>2.71$^{**}$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F(10, 165) = 4.89^{***}$

Notes. Adjusted $R^2$ values are presented. $\beta$ Coefficients in the overall model are presented.

$^a$ Calculations are based on natural logarithmic values.

$^* p < .05.$

$^{**} p < .01.$

$^{***} p < .001.$
Therefore, Hypotheses 2c and 3 were supported, whilst Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2d, and 2e were not supported.

Hypothesis 4 postulated that mentoring provided would mediate the relationship between mentoring received and career success. This was tested with the procedure suggested by Kenny and colleagues (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Judd & Kenny, 1981). Before proceeding with the execution of the procedure preliminary analysis was conducted. The substantial association between mentoring received and subjective career success \((r = .45, p < .001)\) directed towards the presence of mediators (Baron & Kenny, 1986). However, the non-significant association between mentoring received and objective career success (partial correlation \(r = .13, \text{ns}\); tenure and starting grade as co-variates) did not allow testing for mediators. Hence, the procedure was executed only for subjective career success, restricting testing to Hypothesis 4b only.

The procedure consists of three stages, each involving the formation of a hierarchical regression model. The human capital and demographic factors, and the personality traits were used as co-variates in all three models and were forcibly entered in the first step. In stage (i) the mediator (mentoring provided) was regressed on the predictor (mentoring received). The contribution of mentoring received was significant, \(\beta = .22, t = 2.84, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .036; F(14, 161) = 3.76, p < .001, R^2 = .181\). This satisfied the condition for progress to the second stage. In stage (ii) the criterion (subjective career success) was regressed on the predictor (mentoring received). The contribution of mentoring received was significant, \(\beta = .39, t = 5.54, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .130; F(14, 161) = 6.12, p < .001, R^2 = .291\); and this justified progress to stage (iii) in which the criterion (subjective career success) was hierarchically regressed on both the mediator (mentoring provided), in step 2, and the predictor (mentoring received), in step 3. Mentoring provided significantly improved the amount of total variance accounted for \((\beta = .17, t = 2.24, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .020)\); and mentoring received significantly added to that variance \((\beta = .37, t = 5.15, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .112)\) in the total model, \(F(15, 160) = 5.83, p < .001, R^2 = .293.\) To conclude a mediating effect, the total variance contribution of the predictor (mentoring received) in stage (iii) must be lower than its contribution in stage (ii) (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The contribution of mentoring received to the total variance accounted for in stage (iii) was 1.8% below its contribution in stage (ii), hence, the criterion of a minimum one per cent difference (Melamed, 1996b) was fulfilled. The contribution of mentoring received in stage (iii) was still significant, which suggested partial mediation. Therefore, Hypothesis 4b was supported.

5. Discussion

The study adopted the perspective of mentors and addressed hypotheses over the extent to which amount of mentoring they provided was related to their career success, to amount of mentoring they received, and to their personality. In general, the results were in line with hypotheses and indicated that those who reported that they had provided more mentoring were more likely to be successful in their careers and to report that they had received more mentoring. Furthermore, the results revealed a
link between mentoring provided and personality, albeit not extensive. It should be
kept in mind that the identified associations accounted for relatively low amounts of
variance. Nevertheless, these relationships were held over and above the contribu-
tions of an array of human capital and demographic variables within a structurally
uniform setting.

All organizational grades that were practically associated with managerial respon-
sibilities and the opportunity to provide mentoring for subordinates were included
in the study. This satisfied calls for investigations of mentoring from the mentors’
perspective in every managerial level, and the conclusions are applicable to every or-
ganizational level that is related to opportunities to provide mentoring for subordi-
nates. It will be positive for managers at all ranks to know that their careers can be
enhanced by providing mentoring and developing their less senior colleagues.
Knowledge of this fact can act as a motivating factor for managers to become men-
tors, counterbalancing the effects of increased work demands and low job certainty
that are imposed by the modern economy, which may deter them from providing
mentoring functions for subordinates.

The findings confirmed the hypothesized association between the amount of men-
toring mentors had provided and the amount of mentoring they had received in their
organizational careers. This association had been implicit in the literature and had
been empirically tested up to the level of intentions to provide mentoring. This sup-
ports the suggestion that providing mentoring for less senior organizational mem-
bers contributes to the preparation of the next wave of mentors in the
organization (Ragins & Scandura, 1999), which leads to the initiation of a “mentoring
cycle” and the establishment of a mentoring culture. Therefore, it is to the inter-
est of organizations to provide incentives to their managers to become mentors.
Organizations have at their disposal a major such incentive, as the results suggest
that mentoring is an activity that relates to tangible extrinsic, along with intrinsic,
career benefits for mentors. Therefore, career counseling and career development
programs, in addition to stressing the importance of obtaining mentors for career de-
development, must also focus on the benefits that accrue from becoming a mentor.

Mentoring provided partially mediated the relationship between mentoring re-
ceived and subjective career success. This suggests that receiving mentoring and
providing mentoring contribute to mentors’ subjective career evaluations in a
complementary manner. Receiving mentoring is important for positive evaluations
of own careers even when individuals have reached the stage at which they can be
mentors. On the other hand, mentoring provided did not mediate the relationship
between mentoring received and objective career success, because that relationship
was proved non-significant. This finding makes the important implication that pro-
viding mentoring for subordinates may be more important than receiving mentoring
for objective career achievement of managers. However, it would be premature to
accept this conclusion until this finding is replicated in future research, which must
systematically investigate the relative contributions of mentoring provided and men-
toring received by mentors on their career success.

The association of openness with mentoring provided confirmed the expectation
that individuals with broad interests and receptivity to new experiences and ideas
are more likely to provide mentoring functions for subordinates. The practical implication of this finding is that openness can be included amongst the criteria for mentor selection in formal mentoring schemes; taking into account the importance of the quality of mentors for the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Ragins et al., 2000).

5.1. Limitations

The study adopted a cross-sectional design. Therefore, causality assumptions must be made with great caution. In the present study there can be reasonable certainty regarding the causal direction of certain relationships. For example, a major criterion for assigning causality in relationships between variables is the stability of variables over time (Davis, 1985). The FFM traits demonstrate remarkable temporal stability (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999) and this permits the assumption that openness influences mentoring provided and not vice versa. However, this criterion cannot be utilized with the remaining relationships, whose causality direction cannot be asserted with confidence. It is sensible to suggest, for example, that individuals who are successful in their careers are more likely to be approached by subordinates for mentoring because mentoring relationships with successful organizational members must be perceived as more beneficial. Therefore, only longitudinal designs can resolve the issue of causality with absolute certainty.

Data were collected with self-report measures, which raises the issue of percept–percept inflation and the issue of response validity to the mentoring provided scale. Regarding the former issue, the critical associations in the study were those of mentoring provided with career success, mentoring received, and personality. Considering the relationship between mentoring provided and the measures of career success, if percept–percept inflation were present then relationships between scale measures would be stronger than corresponding relationships between scale measures and measures based on personal information items; because meta-analytic evidence indicates that percept–percept inflation is not present in the latter types of associations (Crampton & Wagner, 1994). This, however, was not the case. The analysis showed that mentoring provided made similar contributions to variance in both objective career success, which was operationalized by means of personal information items, and subjective career success, which was assessed by means of a scale. Regarding the association between the two measures of mentoring, the analysis suggested that the scales for mentoring provided and mentoring received tapped different constructs. Finally, Crampton and Wagner (1994, p. 70 & p. 72) concluded that there is no percept–percept inflation in correlations between self-report scale measures of personality and self-report scale measures of career-related activities, including mentoring. Therefore, percept–percept inflation may not be a serious problem in the present study. Nevertheless, utilization of multi-source measurements should be encouraged in future research.

Regarding the second issue, utilization of managers’ self-reports to assess amount of mentoring they had provided generates questions pertaining to the validity of those reports. The fact that responses to the scale were not affected by social desirability is important, but it does not fully resolve the issue. Responses represented
managers’ own perceptions of the amount of mentoring they had provided and these perceptions, albeit not influenced by social desirability, may still not adequately reflect reality. Therefore, future studies should include data from subordinates or third parties that will enable cross-validation with managers’ own reports.

The investigation was conducted in organizations from a particular domain of the public sector. The majority of the findings were congruent with hypotheses that were built on theory, logic, and past empirical research. Furthermore, those findings that did not support the hypotheses did not contradict them either. Therefore, the study appears to possess reasonable internal validity. However, career progression and mentoring experiences are also affected by structural characteristics and, therefore, caution should be exercised in the generalization of the results in different contexts. Studies must be conducted in other domains of the public sector (e.g., civil services and the federal government) and, especially, in the private sector. For example, the flat structures and results-oriented cultures of flexible commercial organizations may impose fewer structural obstacles on the development of mentoring relationships. In such cultures individual difference factors, such as the personality of the manager, may play a more potent role in the amount of mentoring that subordinates receive.

The investigation was conducted in organizations with no formal mentoring schemes in place. Empirical evidence suggests that formal and informal mentoring differ in the extent of provision of mentoring functions for protégés and in their effects on protégés’ careers (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Viator, 2001); with formal mentoring programs being generally inferior (though see also Ragins et al., 2000). Whether these differences also hold for mentors in formal and informal mentoring schemes is an issue that merits investigation. In addition, the present study concentrated on mentoring in its traditional form. As noted, alternative forms of mentoring relationships exist, including lateral and external mentoring. These forms of mentoring relationships acquire particular importance in the conditions (e.g., flattened organizational hierarchies, frequent career moves) that are associated with the modern economy (Eby, 1997). Research in these types of mentoring relationships is limited not only from the perspective of the mentor, but also from the perspective of the protégé (Eby, 1997). Future research ought to investigate antecedents of involvement in non-traditional mentoring relationships, and consequences for mentors and for protégés who are involved in such relationships.

5.2. Directions

The study suggested a limited role for the personality of the mentor in the amount of mentoring provided by the mentor. It is possible, however, that personality influences more strongly intentions or motivation to provide mentoring than it influences actual mentoring provided by mentors; as the amount of mentoring provided by mentors may be influenced more strongly by structural factors (e.g., the organizational communication system, job design, and formal power structures) than by intentions or motivation, which intuitively are more directly under the influence of personality. Although relevant empirical reports are not available for mentoring provided by mentors, the above suggestion concurs with empirical research on mentoring received by
protégés. Aryee et al. (1999) found that personality traits contributed more strongly than situational and structural variables to protégés’ attempts to initiate relationships with mentors, but structural and situational variables contributed more strongly than personality traits to self-reported amount of mentoring received by protégés. Future studies must, therefore, investigate the relative effects of personality and structural factors on mentoring provided by mentors and on its precursors.

The cognitions that mediate the identified relationship between mentoring received and mentoring provided by mentors need to be modeled. Empirical literature suggests that these cognitions should include realization of the benefits of mentoring relationships and perceptions of barriers in providing mentoring (Allen et al., 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Additional mediating cognitions to consider include self-efficacy enhancement by receiving mentoring and social modeling (i.e., protégés’ modeling mentors’ behavior in providing mentoring). Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), which can accommodate estimations of benefits and barriers to mentor, and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which can accommodate self-efficacy, role modeling and intentions to mentor, can serve as initial frameworks.

Another important undertaking for future studies, which was outside the scope of the present study, is to establish the ways in which providing mentoring benefits the career of the mentor. As presented in the introductory part of the study, various mechanisms have been proposed, which include improvements in the performance of the mentor due to the assistance of protégés, ability to rely on a pool of loyal subordinates for information and support, and enhanced reputation among organizational decision makers. These suggestions must be empirically tested in future investigations.

Empirical evidence suggests that, apart from greater career success, protégés also report higher loyalty to the organization and favorable perceptions of organizational justice (Scandura, 1997; Viator, 2001). These outcomes are highly valued by organizations and authors have suggested that mentoring is related to the demonstration of positive attitudes towards the organization by mentors as well (Kram, 1985; Ragins, 1997). Future studies must test these suggestions.

Finally, the literature has recently directed attention into negative aspects of mentoring relationships (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000) and on mentoring relationships that are dysfunctional (Scandura, 1998) or only marginally adequate (Ragins et al., 2000). Such mentoring relationships are unsuccessful in the sense that they do not provide the benefits that are traditionally associated with inclusion in a mentoring dyad. This is an important area for future work because it is sensible to expect that experience of unsuccessful mentoring relationships influences future engagement in mentoring relationships (Scandura, 1998). The present study showed that amount of experience in receiving mentoring was associated with amount of experience in providing mentoring. A fruitful line of research will be to determine the way in which negative or marginal experiences of individuals as protégés relate to the amount of mentoring they have provided or their intentions to provide mentoring in the future.

The present study responded to calls in the literature for investigations that adopt the perspective of mentors and include all organizational ranks that are associated
with the opportunity to become a mentor. The results showed that the amount of mentoring individuals reported they had provided was associated with the amount of mentoring they reported they had received in their organizational past, their career success, and their scores on the personality trait of openness. Although the study contributed to and extended the literature it had methodological as well as inevitable scope limitations. Future studies should seek to overcome these limitations and proceed along the directions set by the study; so they can enable definite conclusions and further expand the literature on antecedents and correlates of mentoring provided by mentors.

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