

FORMAL AND INFORMAL MENTORSHIPS: A COMPARISON ON MENTORING FUNCTIONS AND CONTRAST WITH NONMENTORED COUNTERPARTS

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Research on mentorships has suffered from fragmentation of key issues; specifically, type of mentoring relationship, functions served by the mentor, and outcomes of the mentoring relationship. A field study was conducted comparing 212 protégés who were involved in informally developed mentorships, 53 protégés involved in formal mentorship programs, and 284 individuals who did not have mentors. Individuals in informal and formal mentorships were compared along two mentoring dimensions: psychosocial and career-related functions. All groups were compared on three outcome measures: organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and salary. Results indicated protégés in informal mentorships reported more career-related support from their mentors and higher salaries than protégés in formal mentorships. For all outcome variables, protégés in informal mentorships also reported more favorable outcomes than nonmentored individuals. However, outcomes from protégés in formal mentorships were generally not significant from the other two groups. Implications for mentorship practices and research are discussed.

Although the description of mentorships can be traced back to ancient Greek history, most of the empirical research on mentorships has been conducted only within the past decade. The current literature has explored mentorships in several directions including the phases of mentorship (Kram, 1983), the role served by a mentor (Noe 1988; Orth, Wilkinson & Benfari, 1987; Tack & Tack, 1986; Schockett & Haring-Hidore, 1985) and outcomes from mentorships (Dreher & Ash, 1990;

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Fagenson, 1988, 1989; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Riley & Wrench, 1985; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991).

At the practical level, organizations have recognized the value of mentorships and have tried to formalize these relationships as part of the planned career development of junior managers and professionals (Noe, 1988; Wilson & Elman, 1990; Zey, 1991). The basic distinction between formal and informal mentorships lies in the formation of the relationship. Informal mentorships are not managed, structured, nor formally recognized by the organization. Traditionally, they are spontaneous relationships that occur without external involvement from the organization. In contrast, formal mentorships are programs that are managed and sanctioned by the organization.

Despite the increase in mentorship research and practice, two important issues have yet to receive adequate attention: (a) relationships between functions served by mentors and individual job outcomes and (b) comparisons of the outcomes among nonmentored, formally mentored, and informally mentored individuals. The purpose of this study was to conduct a theoretical and empirical exploration of these two issues. In the interests of brevity, in this article people in informal mentoring programs will be referred to as informal mentors and informal protégés, whereas people in formal mentorships will be referred to as formal mentors and formal protégés.

Literature Review

Most of the literature on mentorship describes how mentors help their protégés. Kram (1983) identified two mentor functions from in-depth interviews with 15 managers: career-related and psychosocial functions. Career-related functions included providing sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments—activities which directly relate to the protégé's career advancement. Psychosocial functions included providing role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship—activities that influence the protégé's self-image and competence. Kram focused her examination on the link between these functions and phases of mentorship. She concluded that career-related functions emerged first and psychosocial functions became more important in later phases. Additional support for the mentor functions was found by Noe (1988) and Schockett and Haring-Hidore (1985).

The link between career-related and psychosocial mentorship functions and the phases of mentorship may be dependent upon the type of mentorship. Differences between formal and informal mentorships are

likely to be most salient in the initiation phase. This phase is characterized by the match between prospective mentors and protégés. Informal mentorships grow out of informal relationships and interactions between senior and junior organizational members. The relationships may be based on work or nonwork issues. From these interactions, protégés may prove themselves to be worthy of the extra attention that a mentorship would demand. Mentors often select protégés with whom they can identify and with whom they are willing to develop and devote attention. In contrast, formal mentorships are typically not based on initial informal relationships or interactions between two organizational members. The match between mentor and protégé may range from random assignment to committee assignment to mentor selection based on protégé files. Compared with informal mentors, formal mentors may not view the protégé as particularly worthy of special attention and support. Furthermore, a longer adjustment period may be required for formal mentors and protégés to get to know one another.

In addition to the matching of mentors and protégés, formal and informal mentorships may differ in degree of motivation for both participants. Informal mentorships arise because of a desire on the part of the mentor to help the protégé and a willingness on the part of the protégé to be open to advice and assistance from the mentor. Formal mentorships, on the other hand, entail a degree of pressure; the mentor and the protégé may be required to participate in the mentorship program as a function of their positions. This pressure could decrease a mentor's motivation to help the protégé and decrease the protégé's willingness to be open to assistance from the mentor.

Given these differences in the initiation stage, variance in the functions served by the mentor are expected between formal and informal mentorships. The differences in degree of match and motivation may translate into differences in the activities which influence a protégé's self-image, competence, and career advancement. The direction which the mentorship takes during formation or initiation may affect the psychosocial and career-related support.

Hypothesis 1: Protégés in informal mentorships will perceive that their mentors provide more psychosocial and career-related functions than protégés in formal mentorships.

In addition to the research on mentorship functions, several empirical studies have focused on organizational outcomes of mentorships. Riley and Wrench (1985) classified women lawyers into groups of truly mentored protégés and those whose relationships did not conform to a strict definition of mentorship. They found the truly mentored group reported significantly higher levels of career success and satisfaction than

the group that was not mentored. Fagenson's (1988) study of power found protégés reported having more power than people without mentors. In addition, Fagenson (1989) found people who were mentored reported higher levels of satisfaction, career mobility, and a higher rate of promotion compared with people who were not mentored. A survey by Dreher and Ash (1990) found business school graduates with extensive mentorship relationships reported more promotions, higher incomes, and higher pay satisfaction and benefits satisfaction than their counterparts with less extensive experiences with mentors. Finally, Whitely, Dougherty, and Dreher (1991) found career mentoring practices to be significantly related to compensation and number of promotions.

Hunt and Michael (1983) suggest there is a wide array of outcomes to be expected from mentorships. The present study emphasizes three outcomes: organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and salary, designed to cover three significant domains: learning, affective, and objective outcomes, respectively. Organizational socialization describes how protégés assimilate information necessary to perform their jobs and become functioning members of the organization. Riley and Wrench (1985) describe one of the mentor's tasks as teaching protégés "the ropes" of their profession. Thus, a mentor could be expected to facilitate the socialization process of the protégé. During the process of providing career-related and psychosocial functions, the mentor guides and protects the protégé's interests, and is thus likely to convey the necessary knowledge and information concerning the organizational history, goals, language, politics, people and performance. This knowledge embodies the protégé's organizational socialization (Chao, O'Leary, Walz, Klein, & Gardner, 1989). Since nonmentored individuals do not receive this type of mentoring support, individuals with mentors would be expected to be better socialized; further, since informal protégés are expected to have higher support from their mentors than formal protégés, it follows that informal protégés would be better socialized in the organization than formal protégés.

Hypothesis 2a: Informal protégés will report higher levels of organizational socialization than formal protégés who will, in turn, report higher organizational socialization than nonmentored individuals.

Mentorship type and presence may also affect job satisfaction. With greater knowledge, visibility, and mentor protection, which flow from the psychosocial and career-related support, the informal protégés would be expected to have greater job satisfaction than formal protégés. More specifically, informal protégés would report higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction because a mentor's greatest influence would be on intangible aspects of the job. With regard to extrinsic job satisfaction, mentors

may not be able to enhance external working conditions and/or company policies; however, mentors may be able to influence other extrinsic characteristics such as pay or supervision. Thus, it is difficult to make a prediction concerning the influence of mentorship type on the dimension of extrinsic job satisfaction. Similarly, since nonmentored individuals do not receive a mentor's psychosocial and career-related support, formal protégés would be expected to have greater knowledge, visibility, and the feeling that their mentor is protecting their interests, and hence higher degrees of intrinsic job satisfaction than nonmentored individuals.

Hypothesis 2b: Informal protégés will report higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction than formal protégés who will, in turn, report higher intrinsic job satisfaction than nonmentored individuals.

Type, and presence, of mentorship might also be expected to influence salary. As argued above, informal protégés are expected to receive more career-related support than formal protégés. One tangible outcome of this type of support may be faster promotion rates and more overall promotions for informal protégés than for formal protégés, and thus, higher salaries for the informal protégés. This logic can be extended to compare mentored and nonmentored individuals. Nonmentored individuals do not receive a mentor's career-related support; therefore, they would be expected to have fewer promotion opportunities and lower salaries than mentored individuals.

Hypothesis 2c: Informal protégés will have higher salaries than formal protégés who will, in turn, have higher salaries than nonmentored individuals.

Given the differences in functions and in outcomes anticipated between types of mentorships, it might also be expected that functions of mentorships would be related to the outcomes. For both types of mentorships, it is expected that protégés who receive greater psychosocial and career-related support would report higher organizational socialization, job satisfaction and salary. Regardless of whether a mentorship is formal or informal, the extent to which the mentor helps the protégé will be the primary factor affecting job outcomes. Thus, in contrast with the previous hypotheses, this hypothesis is concerned not with how the mentorship was formed, but with what the mentor provides the protégé and how these experiences may affect the protégé's job outcomes.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between mentorship functions (psychosocial and career related) and job outcomes (organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and salary) for both formal and informal protégés.

An empirical examination of the relationship between mentorship functions and job outcomes will help identify which function may be more closely tied to job outcomes and which outcomes are most influenced by mentorship functions. Results can help advance theory in mentorship and improve the management of formal mentorship programs.

Overall, the aim of this study was to explore the links among types of mentorship participation, functions served by mentors, and outcomes of mentorships. Previous research has tended to fragment these issues and this article represents a preliminary integration of these questions.

Method

Sample

The data used in this study were collected as part of a longitudinal study examining the career development of alumni from a large Midwestern university and a small private institute. Alumni were randomly selected from nine graduating classes from each institution to obtain data from a cross-section of individuals who graduated between the years 1956 and 1986. For graduation years prior to 1980, classes were sampled at 5-year intervals. For graduation years after 1980, classes were sampled at 2-year intervals. As a result, surveys were mailed to 764 individuals. A total of 576 surveys were returned for a response rate of 75.9% ($n = 373$ from the Midwestern university and $n = 203$ from the private institute).

Respondents were provided with the following definition of mentorship:

Mentorship is defined as an intense work relationship between senior (mentor) and junior (protégé) organizational members. The mentor has experience and power in the organization and personally advises, counsels, coaches, and promotes the career development of the protégé. Promotion of the protégé's career may occur directly through actual promotions or indirectly through the mentor's influence and power over other organizational members.

Based on survey responses concerning mentorship experiences and the type of mentorship, the sample was divided into three groups: (a) individuals in traditional, informal mentorships ($n = 212$); (b) individuals in formal mentorship programs ($n = 53$); and (c) nonmentored individuals ($n = 284$). Respondents who answered "0" to the question, "How many mentors have helped you?" were classified as nonmentored individuals. Protégés who reported more than one mentor were instructed to focus on their current or most recent mentorship. Informal and formal protégé group identification was based on responses to five questions.

Responses to the question, "Is/was the mentorship part of a formal organizational program?" classified most protégés into formal and informal mentorships. Protégés who did not answer this question were classified by comments from two open-ended questions about how the protégé met his/her mentor and what factors led the mentor to choose the respondent as a protégé. Comments representative of formal mentorships were: "A pool of potential protégés submitted resumes for review by a 'match-maker committee.' A reduced number of resumes were then forwarded for review by potential mentors, and the final selection determined." Comments representative of informal mentorships were: "We became friends and shared similar goals—both professionally and personally." Lastly, two questions were used to ensure mentorships were organizational relationships between senior-level and junior-level employees. All protégés reported at least one organizational level difference between their mentors and themselves. Respondents were excluded from data analyses if they did not work in the same organization as their mentors. Finally, respondents with significant missing data on their surveys were also excluded. The hypotheses were tested on a sample of 552 complete questionnaires.

The respondents held managerial and professional positions and were employed in a variety of organizations and industries. The sample consisted of 443 males and 109 females, with an average age of 36.

Comparisons among formal protégés, informal protégés and non-mentored groups showed no significant differences in age, gender, organizational tenure, job tenure, organization size (Fortune 500 or smaller) or type of position (managerial or professional). Formal and informal protégés were also compared in terms of hours spent with the mentor and length of the mentorship. There was no significant difference in terms of hours spent with the mentor; however, informal protégés reported a mean length of 5.22 years ($SD = 5.39$) and formal protégés reported a mean length of 2.54 years ($SD = 2.76$) in the mentorship. Because length of mentorship may be related to functions and outcomes, it was used as a covariate in the data analyses comparing formal and informal protégés.

Recency of mentorship was also examined by subgrouping the sample into two groups: (a) individuals in mentorships that were in progress or had ended in the two years prior to the survey ($n = 171$) and (b) individuals in mentorships that had ended more than two years prior to the survey ($n = 88$). All data analyses were performed with the first subgroup, as well as with the entire sample. There were no significant differences in the results of the data analyses. Kram (1985) reported the benefits of mentorships likely extend beyond the duration of the relationship because lessons learned from mentors could be applied to

future career actions. Therefore, the results for the total sample are reported.

Measures

Mentor functions. Protégés' perceptions of functions provided by their mentors were measured using the scales developed by Noe (1988). Respondents indicated on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which the statement described the relationship with their mentor. The psychosocial functions subscale consisted of 14 items about the coaching, acceptance, confirmation, role modeling, and counseling provided by the mentor. The career-related functions subscale was composed of 7 items on the protection, exposure, visibility, and opportunity for challenging assignments provided by the mentor. Reliabilities for the psychosocial and career-related scales as measured by coefficient alpha were .84 and .79, respectively.

Job satisfaction. General job satisfaction was measured by the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Using a 5-point Likert-type scale with 20 items, respondents indicated the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction with their present jobs. Reliabilities for the intrinsic and extrinsic scales as measured by coefficient alpha were .84 and .78, respectively.

Organizational socialization. The extent to which the individual felt he or she had learned the information necessary to adjust to his or her role in the organization was measured using the scale developed by Chao et al. (1989). Using a 5-point Likert-type scale with 34 items, respondents indicated their level of accumulated socialization on six dimensions: (a) performance proficiency: the extent to which the individual has learned the tasks involved on the job (e.g., "I have mastered the required tasks of my job."); (b) people: the extent to which the individual has established successful and satisfying work relationships with organizational members (e.g., "Within my work group, I would be easily identified as 'one of the gang.'"); (c) politics: the individual's success in gaining information regarding formal and informal work relationships and power structures within the organization (e.g., "I know who the most influential people are in my organization."); (d) language: the individual's knowledge of the profession's technical language as well as knowledge of the acronyms, slang, and jargon that are unique to the organization (e.g., "I have not mastered this organization's slang and special jargon."); (e) organizational goals and values: the individual's understanding of the rules or principles which relate to the maintenance of the integrity of the organization and knowledge of unwritten or informal goals and values (e.g., "The goals of my organization are also my goals."); and (f) history:

TABLE 1
Protégé Means of Mentorship Functions^a

Mentoring function	Informal protégés (n = 200)		Formal protégés (n=44)		ANCOVA F
	M	SD	M	SD	
Psychosocial	3.69	.56	3.69	.51	.00
Career related	3.41	.73	3.11	.84	7.36**

^a Means were adjusted for length of mentorship

***p* < .01

the individual’s knowledge of the traditions, customs, myths, and rituals that are used to perpetuate a particular type of organizational member (e.g., “I know the organization’s long-held traditions.”). Reliabilities as measured by coefficient alpha were above .80 for all six scales.

Salary. Salary was measured by one item with nine salary ranges. These ranges were in \$10,000 increments beginning with “below \$20,000” to “over \$90,001.”

Results

The first hypothesis predicted that informal protégés would report receiving more career-related and psychosocial functions than formal protégés. The mean scores for protégé reports of functions provided by their mentors are provided in Table 1. A MANCOVA examining both functions by type of mentorship was conducted with length of mentorship as a covariate. The multivariate test for the covariate was significant ($F_{(2,240)} = 4.36, p < .05$) and the follow-up tests showed that longer mentorships were associated with higher scores on mentorship functions. In addition, the multivariate test for the type of mentorship was significant ($F_{(2,240)} = 3.86, p < .05$). The results from a follow-up ANCOVA showed protégés in informal mentorships reported significantly greater career-related support than did protégés in formal mentorships ($F_{(1,244)} = 7.36, p < .01$). The means for the two groups were identical for the psychosocial support function.

The second hypothesis predicted differences among informal protégés, formal protégés, and nonmentored individuals on organizational socialization (Hypothesis 2a), intrinsic job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2b), and salary (Hypothesis 2c). The group means and standard deviations for these outcome measures are shown in Table 2. The pattern of means is fairly consistent across all outcomes. In most cases, informal protégés reported slightly higher levels of organizational socialization, satisfaction, and salaries than formal protégés. The exceptions to this trend are found in the Politics and People socialization scales where the informal

TABLE 2
Scale Means and Standard Deviations by Mentorship

	Informal protégés (<i>n</i> =205)		Formal protégés (<i>n</i> =47)		Nonmentored (<i>n</i> =282)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Socialization						
Goals/values	3.82 ^x	.60	3.75 ^x	.47	3.55 ^y	.55
Politics	3.93 ^x	.60	3.94 ^x	.47	3.70 ^y	.56
People	3.83 ^x	.57	3.88 ^x	.57	3.69 ^y	.56
Language	4.36 ^x	.58	4.18 ^{x,y}	.72	4.20 ^y	.57
History	4.13 ^x	.59	3.97 ^{x,y}	.68	3.89 ^y	.63
Performance proficiency	4.08 ^x	.62	4.05 ^{x,y}	.60	3.94 ^y	.57
Satisfaction						
Intrinsic	4.03 ^x	.51	3.92 ^{x,y}	.42	3.83 ^y	.49
Extrinsic	3.34 ^x	.77	3.27 ^{x,y}	.74	3.05 ^y	.70
Salary	5.42 ^x	1.98	4.49 ^y	2.02	4.83 ^y	1.58

Note: Values with the same superscript (*x* or *y*) are not significantly different at $p \leq .05$ level.

and formal protégé scores are nearly identical. In addition, both mentored groups showed higher means than the nonmentored group with the exception that nonmentored individuals reported higher salary levels and a marginally higher mean on the Language socialization scale, than formal protégés.

In order to test the significance of the observed differences in the group means, three multivariate analyses were conducted. Since the length of the mentorship was significantly different between formal and informal protégés, this variable was an important covariate when comparing these two groups. However, because the length of a mentorship is an irrelevant construct for nonmentored people; it was not possible to conduct a MANCOVA comparing all three groups. Thus, one MANCOVA was conducted to compare the informal and formal protégés on the nine outcome measures. In addition, two independent MANOVAs were conducted to compare each mentored group with the nonmentored group on the outcomes.

The MANCOVA, with length of mentorship as the covariate, showed a significant covariate effect ($F_{(9,241)} = 4.68, p < .01$) indicating longer mentorships were associated with higher levels of outcomes. However, the multivariate test for the main effect was not significant ($F_{(9,241)} = 1.05, p > .05$) indicating no differences between formal and informal protégés on the outcome measures. Separate MANOVAs showed significant differences between informal protégés and nonmentored individuals ($F_{(9,480)} = 5.04, p < .01$) and between formal protégés and nonmentored individuals ($F_{(9,323)} = 2.22, p < .05$). Univariate follow-up tests showed informal protégés were significantly higher than nonmentored

TABLE 3
Correlations Among Mentorship Functions and Length; Socialization; Satisfaction; and Salary^a

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Psychosocial	(.84)											
2. Career related	.48	(.79)										
3. Mentorship length	-.01	.19	(--)									
4. Goals/values	.12	.28	.19	(.84)								
5. Politics	.16	.27	.20	.48	(.80)							
6. People	.12	.07	.02	.34	.32	(.81)						
7. Language	.06	.15	.21	.30	.44	.21	(.86)					
8. History	.10	.24	.30	.49	.62	.29	.58	(.84)				
9. Performance proficiency	.08	.21	.18	.40	.56	.32	.57	.55	(.82)			
10. Intrinsic satisfaction	.10	.28	.22	.61	.40	.27	.23	.35	.32	(.84)		
11. Extrinsic satisfaction	.19	.23	-.03	.49	.24	.22	.08	.16	.14	.59	(.78)	
12. Salary	-.05	.18	.28	.28	.26	.02	.23	.31	.22	.25	.15	(-)

Note: Decimals points have been omitted. Reliabilities measured by coefficient alpha are presented in the diagonal.

^a $n = 241$ for the correlations involving psychosocial, career-related variables and length of mentorship due to the exclusion of nonmentored individuals; r 's $\geq .12$ are significant ($p \leq .05$). $n = 546$ for all other correlations; r 's $\geq .09$ are significant ($p \leq .05$).

people on all nine outcome measures. Similar follow-up tests showed formal protégés were significantly higher than nonmentored people on three socialization scales: Politics, People, and Goals. These results are indicated by the superscripts in Table 2. Thus, for all outcome measures, the hypothesized difference between informal protégés and nonmentored individuals was supported; however, the hypothesized difference between formal protégés and nonmentored individuals was found for only three socialization factors. Further, the hypothesized difference between formal and informal protégés was not found for any of the outcome measures.

Hypothesis 3 focused on the function-outcome link and predicted a positive relationship between the two mentorship functions and job outcomes defined by organizational socialization, job satisfaction, and salary. Canonical correlation was used to examine the relationship between the two mentorship functions and the set of outcomes. Variables within sets were related. Correlations among the job outcomes ranged from .02 to .62 with a median correlation of .32 ($p < .05$); the correlation between the psychosocial and career-related mentorship functions was .48 ($p < .05$). The correlation matrix of all variables is presented in Table 3.

Results from the canonical analysis yielded one significant R_c of .38 ($F_{(18, 472)} = 2.96, p < .001$) indicating that the set of two mentorship functions had a statistically significant relationship with the set of

TABLE 4
Canonical Structure Coefficients of Mentorship Functions and Outcomes

Canonical structure coefficients	
Dependent variables:	
Intrinsic satisfaction	.81
Goals	.75
Politics	.70
History	.67
Salary	.58
Extrinsic satisfaction	.58
Performance proficiency	.56
Language	.42
People	.14
Independent variables:	
Career-related function	.98
Psychosocial function	.33

^a The first canonical correlation was .38 with an $R^2 = .15$. The second canonical correlation was not significant ($p > .05$).

outcome variables. Results from the redundancy analyses showed the canonical variate from the mentorship functions to explain 53.7% of the variance in those measures and 7.9% of the variance in the outcomes. Similarly, the canonical variate from the outcomes explained 37.2% of the variance in those measures and 5.4% of the variance in the mentorship functions. To discern the contribution of each variable to the canonical variates, the canonical structure coefficients were examined (Borgen & Selig, 1978). Table 4 shows that the intrinsic satisfaction scale and three socialization scales: goals, politics, and history, have the strongest relationships with the dependent canonical variate. Similarly, the structural coefficients show the career-related function to be more strongly associated with the independent canonical variate than the psychosocial function. Thus, the career-related function has a principal effect on intrinsic satisfaction and socialization goals, politics, and history; with a somewhat smaller impact on salary, extrinsic satisfaction, and performance proficiency. The contribution of the psychosocial function to the independent canonical variate was minimal.

Discussion

The data provide some support for the differences proposed by the first two hypotheses among formal protégés, informal protégés, and non-mentored individuals. Protégés in informal mentorships reported receiving slightly more career-related support from their mentors than protégés in formal mentorships. One explanation for this result comes

from the stage model of mentorships (Kram, 1983). Formal and informal mentorships are formed in very different manners. Qualitative data from open-response questions indicate that informal protégés more often cited similarity of goals and interests as the factors involved in their mentor's choice of protégé. In contrast, most of the formal protégés indicated that the mentor had no choice or they did not know what factors were involved in their mentor's choice of protégé. Differences in the critical initiation stage of the mentorship are likely to affect later stages and the functions mentors provide to their protégés.

Lack of significant differences between the two mentored groups in terms of the psychosocial function may indicate a need for further examination of this function as a central part of mentoring. Perhaps the psychosocial functions are easier to provide to protégés than the career-related functions. If so, it would be easier for formal mentors to provide psychosocial support than career-related support. Items from Noe's (1988) career-related scale tap behaviors that go beyond interactions with just the protégé. Examples such as the mentor assigning the protégé responsibilities that could enhance career advancement, or helping the protégé meet new colleagues, require work changes or interactions with others. With these behaviors, the mentor is proactive and motivated to help advance the protégé's career. These actions can take place outside the mentorship and may put the mentor at risk if the protégé does not meet the mentor's expectations. In contrast, items from the psychosocial scale tap behaviors that center only on interactions between the mentor and protégé. Examples such as the mentor sharing his or her career history with the protégé, or conveying empathy for the protégé's concerns and feelings do not require actions with others or major changes in work.

In addition, there are many individuals in the organization, including coworkers, supervisors, or friends, who could perform the same counseling, confirmation, and acceptance roles associated with the psychosocial mentoring function. This is quite different from the career-related roles of coaching, visibility, exposure, and sponsorship provided by a mentor. These latter roles are not as easily performed by a coworker or supervisor. Therefore, psychosocial functions may not be as unique to mentoring relationships as are the career-related functions.

These differences can also be interpreted with regard to Noe's (1988) data from formal mentorships. Noe examined the relationship between protégé ratings on the two mentorship functions and mentor ratings of how well the protégé effectively utilized the mentor as a developmental resource. He found a significant relationship between the mentor's rating and psychosocial functions, but not for career-related functions. The data in the present study found formal mentors to provide psychosocial

support to the same extent as informal mentors; however, formal mentors did not provide as much career-related support. Perhaps Noe's data did not reveal any relationship between mentor utilization and career-related functions because formal mentors do not provide many career-related functions. This interpretation is supported by Noe's data showing a relatively high mean for the psychosocial function and a relatively low mean for the career-related function.

A nonsignificant multivariate test comparing formal and informal protégés on the outcome measures suggests formal mentoring programs may achieve comparable results in mentorships. Although the informal protégés typically were higher than formal protégés on most outcomes, the nonsignificant differences may reflect the same levels of psychosocial support both groups receive. However, the slightly higher outcome means for the informal protégés may reflect the higher level of career-related support for this group.

Clear differences in outcomes were found between mentored and nonmentored individuals. Significant differences were found between informal protégés and nonmentored individuals for all subscales of organizational socialization, satisfaction, and salary. These differences may reflect the greater information, support and benefits that informally mentored individuals received compared to nonmentored individuals. However, significant differences between formal protégés and nonmentored individuals were found on only three socialization scales. The formal protégés' scores often fell between those of informal protégés and nonmentored individuals. This hypothesized rank order was observed for four of the six socialization scales and both of the satisfaction scales, but the multivariate tests supported significant differences only between the informal protégés and nonmentored individuals.

Finally, results from the canonical analysis supported a modest relationship between the mentorship functions and the job outcomes. Although mentorship functions were positively related to job outcomes, they do not account for a very large percentage of outcome variance. The dependent variables most closely associated with the canonical variate were intrinsic satisfaction and three socialization factors: goals, politics, and history. Of the set of dependent variables, these seem to tap intangible aspects of job outcomes that a mentor may be instrumental in providing. Dependent variables that were moderately associated with the canonical variate were extrinsic satisfaction, salary, and socialization with performance proficiency. These variables appear to tap more objective and tangible aspects of job outcomes.

The canonical analysis also showed the career-related function to be more closely related to the job outcomes than the psychosocial function. This finding, along with the results showing informal protégés to

receive more career-related support than formal protégés, suggests the two groups are not the same. Yet, the MANCOVA failed to show significant differences between these protégé groups on the outcome measures. Since job outcomes are affected by a number of factors apart from mentoring, the results from this study may be limited by the effects of unmeasured variables such as job performance and organizational climate. It is possible that informal mentors select high performers to mentor, or that mentorships are more likely to occur in positive climates. Our results are unable to separate performance and mentoring effects. Thus, if informal protégés are the best performers, nonmentored individuals are the worst performers, and formal protégés are somewhere in between, outcome differences among these groups could also be attributed to performance. Future research is proposed in the next section to address this current limitation.

In addition to the performance issue, there are other limitations to this study. Data were collected on samples of college graduates who were in managerial or professional careers. How these results may generalize to other career fields or to other populations of employees is unknown. The relatively small sample size of formal protégés limited the power of the data analyses to detect significant group differences. Since all of the data were collected from the same source, the extent to which the covariation among the variables is due to common method variance is unknown. This could inflate the relationships between mentorship functions and outcomes. Finally, the research design and correlational procedures do not allow us to determine causality direction between mentorship and outcomes.

Practical Applications

Results from the research provide some suggestions for organizations interested in promoting mentorships. Perhaps, if formal mentorships were more like informal mentorships, their outcomes would be more positive than those from nonmentored counterparts. Motivation to participate in a mentorship would be a primary concern for formal programs. Kram (1986) acknowledges that some people actively seek out opportunities to work with a mentor whereas other people may prefer to work alone or with peers. Likewise, some senior employees may be motivated to take on the role of a mentor whereas others may not embrace such a role. Management of a formal mentoring program should instill a climate of mutual interest and participation without obligating or intimidating participation. This may be accomplished by carefully outlining mentoring relationships and not promising specific benefits from participation or disadvantages from not participating. Once

an organization has identified people interested in a formal mentorship, care must be exercised in the matching of protégés and mentors. Comments from the open-ended questions showed informal mentorships were based on interpersonal factors whereas formal mentorships were often assigned with no explanation. A current practice of random assignment of protégés to mentors is analogous to blind dates; there would be a small probability that the match would be successful, but more attention to the selection phase would raise this probability above chance levels. Research examining how mentors and protégés are attracted to each other (e.g., Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988) could be applied to identify critical matching factors in formal mentorship programs.

Conclusions and Future Research

Results from the study provide some suggestions for future research. Since the differences between informal and formal protégés were not very large, further comparisons with large samples of both types of mentorship are needed. Most protégés perceive that mentors provide some career-related and psychosocial functions leading to beneficial outcomes. However, the process of initiating the relationship may constrain potential benefits of a mentorship. Noe (1988) and others have suggested critical aspects of formal mentoring programs to enhance the likelihood of procuring positive benefits; but it is clear that some differences between the types of mentorship exist and more research is needed to compare formal and informal mentorship characteristics to examine the source of these dissimilarities.

One aspect which should be investigated is the performance level of individuals before and after they become protégés in a mentorship. Perhaps informal mentors accurately identify the better performers in an organization and recruit these individuals as protégés. Formal mentoring programs are more likely to involve individuals representing a wider range of performance. Although performance differences may not have a great impact on affective outcomes, they could be instrumental in salary/merit or career advancement decisions. Ideally, future research should track performance differences of people before they enter mentorships and control for these differences when evaluating the impact of mentorship outcomes.

Longitudinal research is needed to examine the impact of time on formal and informal mentorships. In addition, longitudinal research could separate the impact of protégé performance from mentorship. It may be that mentors accelerate the learning curve for their protégés and, regardless of previous performance levels, protégés benefit from

the mentor's personal coaching. Or, it may be that the greatest gains from a mentorship are realized by relatively low performers and high performers are able to quickly advance their careers without the aid of a mentor.

Finally, future research should examine mentorships within a larger context of interpersonal support offered in an organizational setting. Individuals other than mentors, may be able to provide some of the functions previously labeled "mentorship functions." It may be useful to understand the functions others can provide and the context in which this is most successful. Comparisons among individuals with formal mentorship support, informal mentorship support, and individuals with other types of support would be an important tool for evaluating the usefulness of mentorship programs.

Results from this study generally rank orders formal protégés between informal protégés and nonmentored individuals on a variety of job outcomes. Future research which focuses on the initiation stage may further clarify these outcome differences. Our understanding of formal mentorship programs as a human resource intervention begins with this initial comparison.

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