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Mentoring Relationships From the Perspective of the Mentor

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In his classic study of the career development of men, mentoring others was cited by Levinson (1978) as a key developmental task for individuals in midcareer. Other career development researchers recognized that mentoring relationships were beneficial to both the mentor and to the protégé (Clawson, 1980; Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Hunt & Michael, 1983). Kram's (1985) groundbreaking research concerning developmental mentoring relationships at work emphasized the mutuality and reciprocity of mentoring relationships. As such, it is surprising that historically, the majority of empirical research has focused on the protégé, with much less attention concentrated on the mentor. However, during the past decade, this oversight has started to be addressed as research from the mentor's perspective has begun to flourish.

Research dedicated to understanding mentorship dynamics from the focal point of the mentor is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. A mentoring relationship is an inherently dyadic and complex process, with the mentor and the protégé each enacting different roles and responsibilities in the relationship. The success of any mentorship is contingent on the behaviors of both the mentor and the protégé. Accordingly, neglect of the issues unique to the role of the mentor leaves a critical gap in our understanding of the overall mentorship process and hampers theoretical development of the field. From a practice perspective, mentors play a key role in organizations as they ensure the transfer and continuation of knowledge and help prepare junior colleagues for further organizational responsibility (Kram & Hall, 1996). Moreover, high-quality and committed mentors are

crucial to the success of formal mentoring programs within organizations (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006b; Allen & Poteet, 1999; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000).

The purpose of the present chapter is to summarize existing research that has focused on the mentor. The review is organized around specific topics that dominate in this area, including the factors that underlie the willingness and motivation to be a mentor to others, factors that mentors consider in their selection of protégés, provision of mentoring, relationship satisfaction, and the benefits of mentoring others. The model depicted in Figure 5.1 provides a guide for viewing the process of mentoring others from the mentor's perspective. The review roughly follows the order of the proposed model. Unless specifically noted, the research reviewed is based on informal mentoring relationships or samples that consist of both formal and informal relationships. The chapter concludes with an agenda for future research.

Review of the Existing Literature

Willingness to Mentor Others and Mentor Experience

The willingness to be a mentor to others is one issue that has captured the attention of researchers interested in the mentor. Most research has focused on future mentoring intentions (e.g., "I would be willing to be a mentor in the future"), and the associated construct is typically labeled as *willingness to mentor others*. However, there is also some research examining actual experience as a mentor. These studies often compare mentors with nonmentors. Presumed predictors of willingness to mentor that have been examined include demographic factors such as gender and age, previous mentoring experience, dispositional and motivational variables, situational factors, and expected costs and benefits.

Demographic Variables

Much of the early research on mentoring was inspired by the notion that inadequate access to informal networks and mentors helped explain differences in the career advancement of men and women (Noe, 1988b; Ragins, 1989). Lack of female role models was viewed as a particular concern, as it was also theorized that women might be reluctant to assume responsibility for the mentorship of others because of perceived barriers such as time constraints, token status, and lack of self-confidence (Kram, 1985; Ragins, 1989). However, the empirical research has generally found that women have no fewer intentions to mentor others than do men (Noe, 1988b; Ragins, 1989). The research regarding perceived barriers to mentoring others is mixed. While Ragins and Cotton (1993) found that women perceived greater barriers to mentoring others than did men, Allen, Poteet, Russell, and Dobbins (1997) found no gender differences. There is some indication that organizational level may make a difference in willingness to mentor others, as well as gender. Ragins and Cotton (1993) found gender differences in willingness to mentor others and experience as a mentor among lower- and midlevel managers and employees, but Ragins and Scandura (1994) found
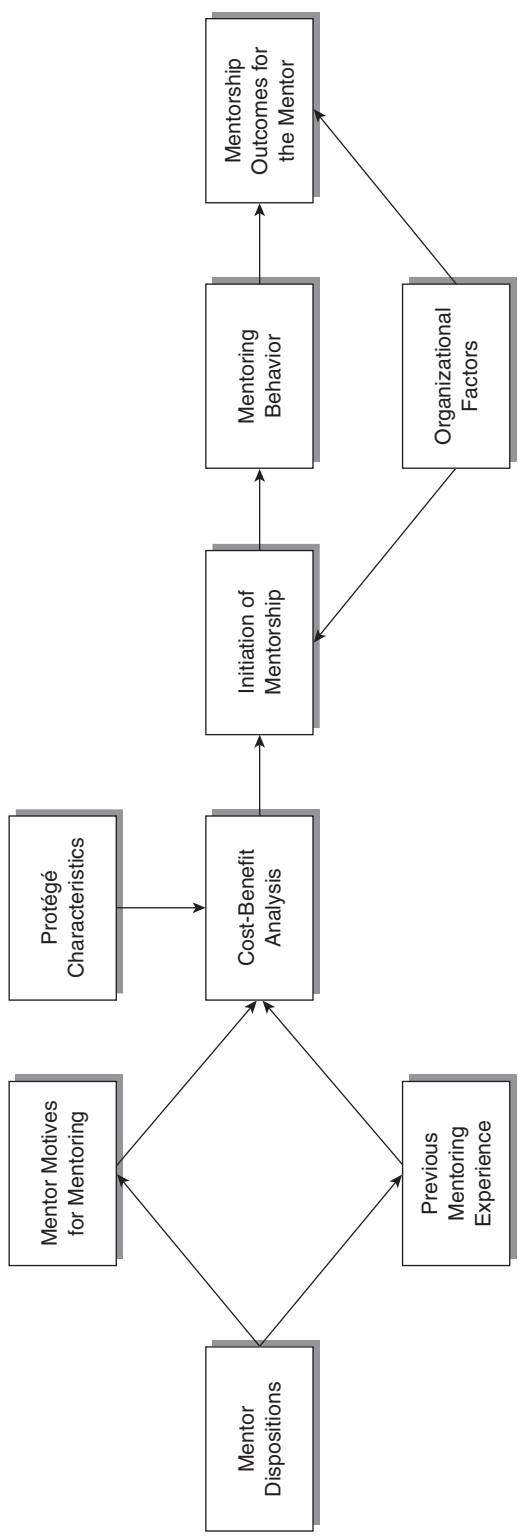
Figure 5.1   Mentoring Process Model for Mentors

no differences between executive-level men and women. Ragins and Scandura concluded that gender differences in willingness to mentor others may be a function of gender differences in rank, position, and resources.

Several studies have examined the relationship between age and mentoring others. Age and career stage models suggest that willingness to mentor others should be strongest at midcareer (Dalton et al., 1977; Levinson, 1978). However, the few studies that have examined this supposition have not been supportive. Ragins and Cotton (1993) found no support for the hypothesis that willingness to mentor others would be curvilinearly related to age. In addition, Allen, Poteet, Russell, et al. (1997) found a negative relationship between age and intention to mentor others, such that older supervisors reported fewer intentions to mentor others than did younger supervisors. However, it is important to underscore that both of these studies were based on age rather than career stage. In today's career environment, age and career stage are not as tightly entwined, in that individuals are more likely to have multiple careers across the life span (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan, 1999). Hence, although age may not relate to willingness to mentor, it remains to be tested whether or not career stage does.

Previous Mentoring Experience

The most tested and consistent finding in the literature regarding intentions to mentor others concerns previous mentoring experience. Previous experience as a mentor and previous experience as a protégé both positively relate to future willingness to mentor others (Allen, 2003; Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Allen, Poteet, Russell et al., 1997; Bozionelos, 2004; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Several factors likely explain this finding. Kram (1985) noted that individuals with previous mentoring experiences likely appreciate the benefits of mentoring due to their firsthand knowledge. This finding is also consistent with the model of behavioral consistency that suggests past behavior is a reliable predictor of future behavior (Wernimont & Campbell, 1968). Finally, the impact of previous mentoring experience likely also reflects the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Individuals who have been protégés are motivated to reciprocate the help they have received by being mentors to others (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997).

Dispositional Variables

Several studies have examined dispositional variables thought to relate to intentions to mentor others and to actual experience as a mentor (see Turban & Lee, Chapter 2, this volume, for a review of mentoring and personality). Aryee, Chay, and Chew (1996) reported that positive affectivity, altruism, and organization-based self-esteem were significantly correlated with motivation to mentor others. However, organization-based self-esteem was not significant in a regression equation that included all predictor variables. Allen, Poteet, & Russell et al. (1997) examined locus of control and upward striving. Results indicated that individuals with an internal locus of control were more willing to mentor others than were those with an external locus of control. In addition, mentoring others was positively

associated with greater upward striving. That is, individuals who were interested in elevating their own careers were also more willing to support the careers of others through mentoring than were those less interested in upward career moves.

Allen (2003) suggested viewing mentoring others as a specific form of *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB). Under this lens, she proposed that dispositional variables known to relate to OCB would also be applicable to the propensity to mentor others. Based on social psychological models of helping behavior, Penner and colleagues developed an inventory designed to measure individual differences in prosocial personality tendencies (Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995). Their work identified two factors associated with the prosocial personality: other-oriented empathy and helpfulness. First, with regard to actual experience as a mentor, Allen found that helpfulness related to mentor experience but empathy did not. On the other hand, among the entire sample, other-oriented empathy related to greater future intentions to mentor others, but helpfulness did not. It is further noteworthy that other-oriented empathy and helpfulness explained variance in willingness to mentor others beyond career and life stage variables. The findings suggest that the variables that relate to actual experience as a mentor differ from those that relate to willingness to mentor others in the future. Helpfulness may be a better predictor of actual mentoring behavior because it has been associated with self-confidence and self-efficacy (Penner et al., 1995).

Situational Variables

Only two known studies have investigated situational variables and willingness to mentor others. Aryee et al. (1996) found that rewards for mentoring others and opportunities for interactions on the job both positively related to motivation to mentor others. Allen, Poteet, & Russell, et al. (1997) reported that willingness to mentor others related to having a high-quality relationship with one's own supervisor. In addition, although individuals who reported less job-induced stress perceived fewer barriers to mentoring than did individuals with more job-induced stress, job-induced stress was not significantly related to future intention to mentor.

Expected Costs and Benefits

Another factor that can contribute to an individual's decision to enter into a mentoring relationship involves the expected costs and rewards. Ragins and Scandura (1999) examined the expected costs and benefits associated with being a mentor among a sample of executives. Five categories of benefits were identified: rewarding experience, improved job performance, loyal base of support, recognition by others, and generativity (that is, leaving a legacy to future generations). Expected costs were that mentoring was more trouble than it was worth, the relationship could be dysfunctional, nepotism could occur, poor protégés could reflect badly on the mentor, and energy drain could result. Using total costs and benefits in the analyses, the authors found that intention to mentor was positively related to expected benefits and negatively related to expected costs. Ragins and Scandura also found that mentoring experience moderated the relationship between intention to

mentor and expected costs and benefits. Although individuals lacking mentoring experience anticipated more costs associated with being a mentor than did those with mentoring experience, variations in expected costs did not affect their intention to mentor. On the other hand, among individuals with mentoring experience, lower expected costs were associated with stronger intention to mentor. The opposite effect was observed for expected benefits, in that intention to mentor related positively to expected benefits for inexperienced individuals but not for those with previous mentoring experience.

Mentor-Protégé Selection

The willingness to be a mentor to others is followed by the selection of a particular protégé. Outside of formal mentoring programs, mentors typically have complete discretion over their choice of protégé. Moreover, in most organizations, there are likely to be more individuals that desire a mentor than there are available mentors. This brings to light the important issue of what attracts mentors to their chosen protégés. However, only a limited number of studies have focused on this issue. The research that has been conducted has been driven primarily by two theories: the similarity-attraction paradigm and social exchange theory.

The *similarity-attraction paradigm* suggests that mentors will be attracted to those they perceive to be similar to themselves (Byrne, 1971). Several studies have examined the similarity-attraction hypothesis in terms of gender similarity and protégé selection. The results indicate no *expressed* preference for protégés of the same gender (Allen, 2004; Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000; Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993). However, it is interesting to note that in empirical studies, same-gender mentorships typically greatly outnumber cross-gender mentorships (e.g., Allen & Eby, 2003; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). The least common dyadic combination is female mentors paired with male protégés. Because of small sample problems with the female mentor/male protégé grouping, there is very limited research examining dynamics within specific gender combinations. In interviews with experienced mentors, Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, et al. (1997) found that when mentors were asked what attracted them to their protégés, one factor that emerged was that the protégés reminded the mentors of themselves and that they had a lot in common. Thus, there is some evidence that similarity is likely to play a part in mentor-protégé selection.

Much more research regarding protégé selection has used social exchange as a framework. *Social exchange theory* suggests that individuals enter into relationships in which they believe the rewards will be greater than the costs (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). That is, mentors will be attracted to protégés thought to bring something of value to the relationship. As described in the previous section regarding willingness to mentor, individuals develop perceptions regarding the costs and benefits associated with being a mentor (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). They likely also consider the costs and benefits associated with mentoring a particular protégé. This cost-benefit analysis takes into consideration characteristics of the protégé (Olian et al., 1993).

Research has suggested a number of different protégé characteristics preferred by mentors. Kram's (1985) research indicated that mentors are attracted to high-performing protégés with technical knowledge. Other research shows that when asked to describe the characteristics that attracted them to their protégés, interviewed mentors reported being attracted to protégés who demonstrated personality characteristics such as a "people orientation," motivational factors such as a strong work ethic and initiative, competence, and a learning orientation (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997).

In an experimental study using vignettes, Olian et al. (1993) found that male and female banking managers were more willing to mentor others depicted as high-performing protégés than those depicted as average-performing protégés. Olian et al. also found that managers were more willing to provide career-related mentoring to male protégés if the protégé was married rather than single. The reverse was found for females. Specifically, managers intended to provide more psychosocial mentoring to single rather than married female protégés. The findings suggest that individuals may be concerned about exerting the effort to mentor female protégés who have family responsibilities. This is not surprising considering that work and family research has shown that males receive a career bonus for marriage that women do not (Landau & Arthur, 1992).

Allen et al. (2000) examined two factors that might influence protégé selection: the protégé's ability/potential and the protégé's need for help. As expected, mentors were more likely to report that they picked their protégés on the basis of protégés' ability/potential rather than protégés' need for help. The also found that female mentors were more likely than male mentors to report that they chose their protégés on the basis of ability/potential.

Allen (2004) examined the role in selection of protégé willingness to learn and ability in both a laboratory experiment and a field study. In the lab study, potential protégé profiles were developed in which protégés varied in terms of ability and willingness to learn. Participants were asked to rate their willingness to mentor each protégé in the pool of profiles. As expected, results indicated that participants were more willing to mentor protégés high in ability than low in ability and protégés high in willingness to learn than those low in willingness to learn. However, the results also revealed an interaction between the two suggesting that willingness to learn could help compensate for lower levels of ability. Individuals were agreeable to mentoring high willingness-to-learn protégés regardless of their degree of ability. Allen also found that offering rewards for mentoring others related to the type of protégé chosen. Specifically, the results suggested that when rewards for mentoring were available, mentors were less willing to mentor individuals who were not as talented or motivated. Thus, as indicated in the previous section, offering rewards for mentoring others may increase willingness to be a mentor, but it may also impact the type of protégé selected. Finally, Allen reported that mentors motivated by different factors appear to prefer certain protégé characteristics. Specifically, mentor motivation to mentor for self-enhancement was positively related to selecting a protégé based on ability. Mentors' motivation to mentor for intrinsic satisfaction was positively related to selecting a protégé based on protégé willingness to

learn. Both protégé ability and willingness to learn were positively associated with mentor motivation to benefit others and the organization.

In sum, the existing research from a social exchange perspective regarding protégé selection suggests that mentors look for protégés who possess valued characteristics such as strong performance, high ability, and ample willingness to learn. There is also some evidence that gender dynamics play a role in the selection process. Specifically, male and female mentors may use different criteria for selecting their protégés, and the criteria may vary depending on the gender of the protégé. Moreover, the findings support the point of view that mentors have different motivations for mentoring others. Thus, protégé selection by mentors is likely based on a combination of demographic, motivational, and personality variables.

Provision of Mentoring

Once a mentoring relationship is formed, the career and psychosocial functions that distinguish a mentoring relationship from other forms of work relationships emerge (Kram, 1985). However, there can be a great deal of variation with regard to the extent to which the behaviors associated with mentoring occur within any given relationship. For example, some mentorships are marked by a great deal of career mentoring but little psychosocial mentoring, while others may involve a moderate amount of both. Considerable research attention has focused on identifying factors that predict the degree of career and psychosocial mentoring provided by mentors within a relationship, but it is important to note that most of this research has been based on reports of mentoring provided by protégés. Much less research has examined mentoring behavior as self-reported by the mentor. This distinction is important in that mentors and protégés may have differing perceptions of the relationship. Moreover, there may be behavior that mentors engage in on behalf of their protégés that are outside of the protégés' awareness.

In keeping with the focus of this chapter, only literature based on mentor self-reports of mentoring provided is reviewed in this section. Presumed predictors of mentor reports of mentoring that have been investigated include demographic characteristics such as mentor and protégé gender and race, interaction frequency, whether the relationship was initiated formally or informally, duration, previous mentoring experience, dispositional variables, perceived similarity, and mentor motives for mentoring others.

Demographics

The results regarding gender of the mentor and mentor reports of mentoring provided are mixed. Burke, McKeen, and McKenna (1993) found that female mentors reported providing more psychosocial and career mentoring to protégés than did male mentors. Allen and Eby (2004) found that female mentors reported providing more psychosocial mentoring than did male mentors, while male mentors reported providing more career mentoring than did female mentors. Other studies have found no differences across mentor gender and their reports of mentoring provided (Lankau, Riordan, & Thomas, 2005; Mullen, 1998).

Several studies have gone beyond mentor gender and examined the gender composition of the mentorship. Based on mentor self-reports, Allen and Eby (2004) found no differences in mentoring provided in same-gender versus cross-gender mentoring relationships. However, mentor-protégé gender interaction analyses indicated that male mentors reported providing a similar degree of psychosocial mentoring to male protégés as to female protégés. On the other hand, female mentors reported providing more psychosocial mentoring to female protégés than to male protégés. No interaction effect was found for psychosocial mentoring. Lankau et al. (2005) found that gender similarity related to mentor reports of role-modeling but not to career or psychosocial mentoring.

Only one study has examined mentor race and reports of mentoring provided. In a study limited to participants of a formal mentoring program, Lankau et al. (2005) found no differences across the psychosocial, career, and role-modeling functions with regard to mentor race. However, it should be noted that the sample size of non-White mentors was small ($n = 32$). They also found that race similarity related to mentor reports of role-modeling but not to career or psychosocial mentoring.

Interaction Frequency

It is typically thought that more frequent interaction between mentor and protégé will translate into greater mentoring provided. However, results are inconsistent. In a study of formal mentoring, Lankau et al. (2005) found that interaction time between mentors and protégés in a formal program related to mentor self-reports of providing career support but not to reports of role-modeling or psychosocial mentoring. Likewise, in a study of formal mentoring, Allen, Eby, and Lentz (2006a) found that mentor reports of interaction frequency related to career mentoring but not to psychosocial mentoring. However, in another study of formal mentoring, Ensher and Murphy (1997) found that mentor reports of number of hours of contact related to both career and psychosocial mentoring. Mullen (1998) found no relation between time spent together and mentor reports of mentoring provided.

Informal Versus Formal

Two studies have compared informal and formal mentor reports of mentoring provided. Both found no differences in mentor's self-reports of the career or psychosocial mentoring provided (Allen & Eby, 2004; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997). However, it is important to note that the small samples of formal and informal mentors in the Fagenson-Eland et al. (1997) study limited the power to detect significant differences. Still, these findings are in noticeable contrast to research based on protégé reports of mentoring in which differences were reported, albeit inconsistently, across types of relationships (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura & Williams, 2001). There have been no studies in which paired mentors and protégés in both formal and informal mentorships have been simultaneously investigated.

Relationship Duration

The findings regarding duration of the relationship and mentor reports of mentoring provided are mixed. One study of seemingly informal mentoring found that longer duration related to more psychosocial mentoring but not to career mentoring (Burke et al., 1993). In contrast, two other studies consisting of a mix of formal and informal mentorships found that longer relationships related to more career mentoring but not to more psychosocial mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997).

Previous Experience as a Mentor

Past experience as a mentor has been found to relate to mentoring provided as reported by mentors. Fagenson-Eland et al. (1997) found that more experienced mentors reported providing more career mentoring than did mentors with less experience. No relationship between previous mentoring experience and psychosocial mentoring was found. Allen and Eby (2004) also found that mentors with more previous experience as mentors reported providing more career mentoring than did those with less previous mentoring experience. Previous experience as a mentor may be confounded with rank and power within the organization, which may help explain the relationship with career mentoring.

Dispositional Variables

A few studies have examined an assortment of mentor dispositional variables and their reports of mentoring provided. Two studies have examined mentoring overall. Using a combined measure of career and psychosocial mentoring, Mullen (1998) found that mentors with greater organization-based self-esteem reported providing more mentoring to their protégés. Bozionelos (2004) found that mentor openness to experience positively related to mentor reports of providing general supervisory mentoring. The other four personality variables from the Big Five were tested, but none were significantly associated with mentoring provided. Allen (2003) distinguished between career and psychosocial mentoring. She investigated the relationship between the prosocial personality characteristics, other-oriented empathy and helpfulness, and mentoring behavior. She found that helpfulness related to career mentoring but not to psychosocial mentoring. In contrast, other-oriented empathy related to psychosocial mentoring but not to career mentoring. Allen concluded that helpfulness relates to career mentoring because it reinforces the mentor's feelings of efficacy and competence. The warmth and nurturance that are a part of psychosocial mentoring are more closely tied to other-oriented empathy. Empathetic individuals are able to foster the intimacy and trust that is critical to psychosocial mentoring.

Perceived Similarity

Two studies have examined perceived similarity in terms of factors such as personality, values, and attitudes. In both of these studies, mentors reported providing

more career and psychosocial mentoring to protégés who were perceived as similar to themselves than to protégés perceived to be less similar (Burke et al., 1993; Ensher & Murphy, 1997).

Motives for Mentoring Others

Research conducted by Allen, Poteet, Russell, et al. (1997) suggests multiple reasons for mentors to engage in the act of mentoring others and that these motives relate to mentoring provided. In their qualitative study of interviewed mentors, Allen Poteet, Russell, et al. identified what they referred to as "self-focused motives" and "other-focused motives" for mentoring others. Self-focused motives were those related to improving the welfare of the self, such as the desire to increase personal learning and the gratification of developing others. Other-focused motives were those related to improving the welfare of others and included the desire to help others and to help the organization succeed.

Allen (2003) developed a measure to operationalize these motives. Factor analyses suggested a three-factor structure. Items related to other-focused mentoring loaded onto one factor, labeled *benefiting others.* Items related to self-focused motives loaded onto two independent factors. One of these factors was more extrinsically oriented and focused on *self-enhancement,* and the other factor was more intrinsically oriented and focused on *self-gratification.* Results indicated that motives for mentoring accounted for unique variation in mentors' self-reports of their career and psychosocial mentoring. Motivation to mentor for self-enhancement related positively to career mentoring but not to psychosocial mentoring. Motivation to mentor for intrinsic satisfaction related positively to psychosocial mentoring but not to career mentoring. Motivation to mentor for the purpose of benefiting others related positively to both career and psychosocial mentoring. One implication of these findings is that protégés with certain needs may be best matched with mentors motivated by different factors. For example, protégés desirous of primarily career mentoring may fit best with a mentor motivated to mentor for self-enhancement purposes.

Mentor Relationship Satisfaction

Following the provision of mentoring, the most proximal outcome of the mentorship is the participant's affective reaction or his or her overall satisfaction with the relationship. Although there have been numerous studies examining protégé satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004), only a few studies have examined mentor satisfaction or perceptions of the quality of the mentorship as an outcome. Several of these studies have examined gender and mentor satisfaction. In a study of formal mentorships, Noe (1988a) reported that mentors in cross-gender relationships indicated that they were more effectively utilized by their protégés than did mentors in same-gender relationships. Further examination of the data revealed that male mentors with male protégés reported a lower-quality relationship than did female mentors with female protégés and cross-gender dyads. In contrast, in a sample comprising both formal and informal

mentors, Allen and Eby (2003) found no differences in mentor relationship satisfaction between same-gender and cross-gender mentorships.

Allen and Eby (2003) investigated differences in relationship satisfaction between informal and formal mentors. Although a significant correlation was observed indicating that informal mentors reported greater relationship satisfaction than did formal mentors, this effect was not significant in the regression equation controlling for mentorship duration, interaction frequency, mentor experience, mentor gender, protégé gender, occupation, gender similarity, and perceived similarity. The authors also found a positive relationship between perceived similarity and mentorship quality. That is, mentors who perceived their protégés to be similar to themselves reported the relationships to be of greater quality than did mentors with protégés perceived to be less similar. These findings were qualified by an interaction. Specifically, a stronger relationship was found between perceived similarity and mentorship satisfaction in relationships of shorter rather than longer duration. Hence, perceived similarity appears to be more important earlier in the relationship or for relationships of short duration. As the relationship develops across time, similarity becomes less important as the mentor likely takes other factors, such as complementarity, into consideration.

Young and Perrewe (2000) found that mentors were more satisfied when protégés were open to advisement and coaching and put forth effort in accomplishing work. Most recently, in a study limited to participants of formal mentoring programs, mentors who perceived that they had provided some input into who their protégés would be perceived that their mentorships were of greater quality than did mentors who perceived they had provided less input into who their mentoring partners would be (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006a).

Benefits of Mentoring for the Mentor

Although a considerable amount has been written with regard to the benefits of mentoring for the mentor (e.g., Hunt & Michael, 1983; Newby & Heide, 1992), empirical research on the topic is limited. Qualitative studies examining the benefits of mentoring others suggest that mentors achieve personal satisfaction from passing knowledge and skills on to others, exhilaration from the fresh energy provided by protégés, improved job performance by receiving a new perspective on the organization from protégés, loyalty and support from protégés, and organizational recognition (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Kram, 1985; Levinson, 1978). This review focuses on the more recent quantitative studies investigating the benefits of mentoring for the mentor.

Researchers are only beginning to examine how mentoring others may relate to tangible career benefits to the mentor, such as increased promotion rates and salary. Bozionelos (2004) found that general supervisory mentoring provided related to objective career success, operationalized as number of promotions, and to subjective career success among a sample of university administrators in England. Allen, Lentz, and Day (2006) compared the outcomes of individuals with no mentoring experience with those who had experience as an informal mentor. They found that

experience as a mentor uniquely contributed to the variance associated with current salary, promotion rate, and subjective career success beyond the variance attributed to demographic and human capital factors often associated with career success. Allen et al. suggested that mentors may be rewarded by organizations because they are recognized as good organizational citizens. It is important to recognize that the results of both Bozionelos (2004) and Allen, Lentz, and Day (2006) were based on cross-sectional survey methodology. Thus, although the studies provide some initial evidence that mentoring others relates to career benefits for the mentor, the direction of this relationship is not clear.

Another benefit often attributed to mentoring others is that it can buffer the negative consequences associated with plateauing (e.g., Chao, 1990; Elsass & Ralston, 1989; Kram, 1985; Slocum, Cron, Hansen, & Rawlings, 1985). Although this had been suggested for decades, only recently was this tested. Lentz and Allen (2005) found little support for the notion that mentoring others moderated the relationship between plateauing and typical outcomes associated with plateauing, such as job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intention. However, experience as a mentor and providing greater career and psychosocial mentoring were both associated with lesser job content plateauing than were no experience as a mentor and providing less mentoring. Thus, while mentoring others may not mitigate the effects of plateauing, it may help prevent plateauing from occurring in the first place. The authors also found that those with experience as mentors reported greater job satisfaction, greater affective organizational commitment, and fewer intentions to turnover than did those with no experience as mentors. This suggests that experience as a mentor relates to positive job attitudes.

Other recent research has examined what predicts mentor reports of benefiting from the mentoring relationship. Using a sample of both mentors and protégés, Eby, Durley, Evans, and Shockley (2005) examined three categories of predictors: relational behaviors, motivational variables, and personality variables. The mentor benefits examined were based on Ragins and Scandura's (1999) dimensions of perceived benefits to mentoring others. Eby et al. (2005) found that although all three categories of predictors related to mentor benefits, mentor and protégé personality were the weakest.

Negative Mentoring Experience

It is important to recognize that in addition to benefits associated with mentoring others, there can be problems. In Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs's (1997) qualitative research, mentors identified several negative consequences for mentors. The most frequently mentioned factor by participants was that mentoring could be a major drain on time. Other factors identified were negative fallout from coworkers who felt that protégés were being favored, protégés who abused the relationship, and personal feelings of failure if the mentorship did not work out. Feldman (1999) also noted that mentors can be hurt by destructive mentoring relationships involving "toxic" protégés and become reluctant to continue mentoring others.

Most recently, Eby and McManus (2004) examined the specific types of dysfunctional experiences that mentors report in mentoring relationships. The themes

identified include negative relations involving exploitation and egocentricity, malevolent deceptions, sabotage, harassment, interpersonal difficulty, spoiling, benign deception, submissiveness, performance below expectations, and unwillingness to learn.

Review Summary and Methodological Limitations

Overall, the scholarly study of workplace mentoring is a relatively young area of inquiry, receiving serious empirical attention for only a few decades. The mentor's perspective is in an even more immature stage of development. Indeed, empirical investigation focused on the mentor might be traced only as far back as Ragins and Cotton's (1993) article concerning willingness to mentor. Thus, it should not be surprising that for most of the topics investigated from the perspective of the mentor, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions given the limited amount of research focused on a particular issue. In many cases, only two or three studies exist, and often the results are inconsistent. This literature might also be characterized as fragmented and diffuse, as researchers only begin to scratch the surface of a variety of issues of importance (again see Figure 5.1). This is also indicative of a research area in a neophyte stage of development. Nevertheless, there are a few brief summary observations that can be made on the basis of the extant research:

- With regard to willingness to mentor, it is clear that previous mentoring experience relates to future willingness to mentor.
- Individuals perceived as high potential with a strong willingness to learn are most likely to be selected as protégés.
- The motivational basis for mentoring behavior is likely driven by self-interest as well as concerns for the well-being of others.
- Structural aspects of the relationship such as relationship initiation (i.e., formal versus informal), interaction frequency, and duration of the relationship are weak and inconsistent predictors of mentoring behavior.
- Dispositional variables likely impact various parts of the mentoring process, from willingness initially to be a mentor to the type of protégé selected to the provision of mentoring behavior.
- There is initial empirical evidence that there are extrinsic and intrinsic career rewards in mentoring others.

Before turning attention to areas for future research, it is important to reflect on the methodologies commonly employed to study mentoring, to place the reviewed findings in context. The majority of studies have been based on cross-sectional designs and self-report surveys. This is characteristic of most mentoring research and is not limited just to research that has focused on the mentor. However, it leaves uncertainty regarding the causal direction of many findings (e.g., Does career success predict mentoring behavior, or does mentoring behavior predict career success?). In addition, quantitative studies of this nature are limited in the ability to assess the relational dynamics at the crux of mentoring relationships. Studies also often rely on retrospective reports versus current assessments, which can render the accuracy of responses questionable. Of course, there are limitations associated with

any single research design. This calls to mind the need to employ multiple method-ologies to ensure that findings are not method bound.

Future Research Directions

As the above review attests, an impressive body of research from the focal point of the mentor has begun to accumulate. However, there is considerable work yet to be done. In the following sections, areas worthy of future research that roughly follow the process model depicted in Figure 5.1 are discussed. In addition, Table 5.1 pro-vides a summary of these ideas.

Table 5.1   Mentor Focused Research Agenda Summary

Willingness to Mentor Others

1. Link willingness to mentor others with future actual mentoring behavior.

2. Examine factors that moderate the relationship between intent to mentor others and actual mentoring behavior.

3. Incorporate aspects of diversity other than gender and age in examining willing-ness to mentor others (e.g., race, LGBT).

Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Decision to Mentor Others

1. Determine how the perceived costs and benefits associated with mentoring others relates to future mentoring decisions.

2. Incorporate cognitive decision-making and adult development theories into mentoring research.

Protégé Selection

1. Determine the extent that protégé selection is driven by protégé potential. Determine under what circumstances struggling protégés are mentored.

2. Examine the role of both mentor and protégé gender and the role of mentor and protégé race in the protégé selection process.

3. Examine and integrate both the social-exchange and the similarity processes that play a role in protégé selection.

Characteristics of an Effective Mentor

1. Link attributes thought to be associated with effective mentoring behavior with actual mentoring outcomes.

2. Examine whether mentor characteristics are more or less helpful for formal ver-sus informal mentoring relationships.

3. Examine mentoring styles. For example, what are the various belief systems under which mentors operate and how do these beliefs influence mentor behavior with protégés?

(Continued)

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Role of Organizational Context

1. Investigate how workplace demands (e.g., tight production schedules, long hours) provide a barrier to facilitating an environment supportive of mentoring.

2. Examine how the organizational context influences the quality of mentoring.

3. Develop multilevel (macro, meso, and individual) frameworks for understanding the factors that influence mentoring behavior.

Providing Career and Psychosocial Mentoring Behavior

1. Develop research agendas that simultaneously take into account the needs of the protégé and consider aspects of the situation.
2. Examine the cues that mentors use to try to determine protégé needs and appropriate mentoring behavior.

3. Continue to examine and update dimensions of mentoring behavior and ensure that measures reflect both the viewpoint of the protégé and the mentor.

Outcomes Associated With Mentoring Others

1. Conduct longitudinal research examining the link between mentoring others and both objective and subjective career success outcomes.

2. Focus on learning as an outcome for mentors. What are the skills mentors learn from their mentoring relationships?

3. Examine how mentoring others benefits the psychological and physical health of the mentor.

Willingness to Mentor Others

Although a body of research has begun to develop examining intention to mentor to others (i.e., willingness to mentor) (e.g., Allen, 2003; Allen, Poteet, & Russell et al., 1997; Aryee et al., 1996; Ragins & Cotton, 1993), no studies have examined the extent to which intention to mentor others subsequently relates to actual future mentoring behavior. Although intention has been found to be a valid predictor of future behavior in areas such as turnover (e.g., Williams & Hazer, 1986), it is not clear to what extent the intention-behavior link generalizes to mentoring behavior. For example, it is possible that because of the effort mentoring others requires, the relationship between intention and behavior with regard to mentoring others may not be as strong as that observed with other constructs, such as turnover. Longitudinal research is needed to determine this relationship. A related line of research would be an examination of factors that moderate the relationship between intention and behavior. For example, an individual may want to mentor others but when faced with an actual opportunity to be a mentor may have too many time constraints to do so. Incorporation of measurement of the barriers to mentoring others (Ragins & Cotton, 1993) may be helpful in this regard.

Existing research regarding willingness to mentor others has considered few aspects of diversity other than gender and age. Examining barriers that members of

racial and ethnic minority groups perceive to mentoring others may further our understanding of willingness to mentor. Similar research might be conducted regarding gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals. Moreover, it will be useful to examine a combination of demographic diversity variables. For example, for African American females, the experiences and perceived barriers to mentoring others are likely to be different from those of African American males.

Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Decision to Mentor Others

Research conducted by Ragins and Scandura (1999) demonstrates that individuals perceive both costs and benefits associated with mentoring others and that these perceptions relate to mentoring intentions. As with willingness to mentor, research is needed that determines how these perceptions relate to actual mentoring decisions. That is, under what conditions do the perceived benefits of mentoring outweigh the perceived costs and result in the initiation of a mentoring relationship? Research that incorporates cognitive-decision-making theories (e.g., March, 1994) may improve our understanding of these processes. Another useful lens for viewing perceptions regarding the costs and benefits of mentoring others would be adult development theory (see McGowan, & Stone, & Kegan, Chapter 16, this volume).

Protégé Selection

As demonstrated in the review section, only a handful of studies have examined the issue of protégé selection. Several important areas need investigation. More research is needed that determines the extent to which the initiation of mentoring relationships is driven by protégé potential. The extant research seems to suggest that preferred protégés are those who already possess the characteristics needed to achieve career success. It would be interesting to determine in what circumstances struggling individuals attract the attention of a mentor. For example, only individuals highly confident in their own career stability may be willing to assume the risk and take the time to mentor poor performers. Turbulent work environments in which job security is an issue may also create conditions that make it difficult for struggling employees to attract mentorship.

Another interesting avenue for further research is more in-depth examination of the role of gender in the protégé selection process. Although it appears that women are just as willing as men to mentor others and that women are just as likely as men to be mentored (e.g., see Ragins, 1999, for a review), some gender differences may emerge in terms of selection criteria. For example, male mentors may look for protégés who fit profiles different from those selected by female mentors. Because of their own career struggles and perceived barriers to mentoring others (e.g., Ragins & Cotton, 1993), women may be less willing than men to mentor risky protégés. Or it might be that mentor and protégé gender interact such that a woman may be more willing to mentor a risky protégé if the protégé is another woman than if the protégé is a male. Male mentors may be less attracted to female protégés with

assertive or dominating personalities than to male protégés who possess the same attributes. These are all highly speculative suggestions but bring to light the need for further research regarding gender and protégé selection. Similar issues might be studied in terms of race. For example, under what conditions are mentors more or less likely to select minority protégés? Would a member of a minority group be viewed as more risky or challenging to a mentor belonging to majority group than a protégé with a demographic background similar to the mentor's?

Research that integrates the processes of similarity and social exchange would also provide needed insight into protégé selection. For example, there may be circumstances in which mentors perceive that there would be more rewards in mentoring someone different from themselves than in mentoring someone more similar (e.g., the mentor is disorganized and wants to be complemented by an organized protégé; the mentor wants to broaden his or her cultural competence and therefore selects a culturally dissimilar protégé). Alternatively, there may be situations in which the identification and similarity with a potential protégé renders probable costs that are unimportant to the mentor (e.g., the mentor wants to help someone who shares a disadvantaged background).

Characteristics of an Effective Mentor

Little is known regarding the specific characteristics that an effective mentor possesses. In a qualitative study, Allen and Poteet (1999) interviewed 27 experienced mentors regarding their opinions on the subject. Some of the most common attributes mentioned were listening and communication skills, patience, knowledge of organization and industry, and the ability to read and understand others (see also Cherniss, Chapter 17, this volume). However, there has been no empirical research linking these factors to measured mentoring outcomes. Research that includes individual assessments of mentors at the start of a mentoring relationship and then measures multiple mentorship outcomes based on multiple sources of data (e.g., protégé reports of mentoring behavior, organizational assessments of performance) would go a long way toward addressing this issue.

It is also not clear to what extent the characteristics of an effective mentor may differ for formal versus informal mentoring relationships. For example, there may be unique skills needed to be an effective mentor within a formalized program. Because formal mentorships are typically much shorter in duration than informal mentorships, formal mentors may need to be particularly adept at quickly distilling and communicating information to protégés. Moreover, the formal mentor may need a sharp ability to rapidly diagnose protégé strengths and weaknesses to best ensure that protégé needs in the relationship are met.

In addition, it may be interesting to examine mentor behavior in terms of the identification of "mentoring styles." Mentors are likely to have belief systems that impact the way they approach mentoring others and the expectations they have regarding protégé behavior. For example, some mentors may subscribe to the philosophy that protégés learn best through a "sink-or-swim" strategy. Other mentors may take a parental approach to the relationship, providing considerable advice and instruction that the mentor expects the protégé to obediently follow. The extent to

which any of these styles may be more or less effective likely depends on the needs of the protégé. Research designed to reveal the belief systems under which mentors operate could be helpful in terms of increasing our understanding of mentor behavior.

The Role of Organizational Context

A relatively unexplored topic for future research is the role that the organizational environment plays in the mentoring process (see Allen, 2004; Aryee et al., 1996; Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, in press, for exceptions). Despite Kram's (1985) emphasis that organizational characteristics such as task design, performance management systems, and culture can create obstacles to the initiation and development of mentoring relationships, most research has been conducted as though mentoring relationships in organizations exist in a vacuum. Two qualitative studies based on in-depth interviews with mentors have further underscored the importance of support from the organization in creating conditions that facilitate mentoring others (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Billett, 2003). These studies found that rigid organizational structures, unclear expectations, job pressures, and a competitive environment impede the mentor's ability to mentor others. Investigation is needed of how specific workplace demands, such as tight production schedules, frequent travel, long hours, and excessive deadlines, may create an environment in which individuals feel less able to mentor others. Moreover, these factors may influence the quality of the mentoring relationship. Although individuals may decide to enter a mentoring relationship despite these constraints, the extensiveness of the mentoring they are able to provide may suffer.

Research regarding the role of organizational context could be aided by the development of multilevel frameworks for understanding the factors that can influence mentoring behavior. For example, willingness to mentor others may be influenced by macrolevel factors, such as industry (e.g., more mentoring may occur in knowledge-based industries than in manufacturing environments); mesolevel factors such, as task interdependence (e.g., more mentoring may occur when there is a greater degree of task interdependence); and individual-level factors (e.g., more mentoring is likely to occur among individuals who possess prosocial personality tendencies).

Providing Career and Psychosocial Mentoring Behavior

The leadership literature has long recognized that effective leader behavior is often contingent on the situation (e.g., House, 1996). In the mentoring literature, it seems to be assumed that more psychosocial and career-related mentoring is better. Mentorship research that takes into account the needs of the protégé and aspects of the situation is needed. For example, protégés with strong peer and family social support systems may not benefit from a great degree of psychosocial mentoring. More introverted protégés who have difficulty establishing career networks may be especially needful of career mentoring. In organizations with highly structured and developed career management systems, career mentoring may be less important

than in more fluid organizations without formal career systems (Dreher & Dougherty, 1997). These are just a few examples of how the characteristics of the protégé and the situation could alter the degree and type of mentoring behavior needed. In a related vein, it would be interesting to examine what cues mentors use to try to determine the needs of their protégés and subsequently alter the type of mentoring they provide. For example, inquiry by the mentor regarding the protégé's developmental network (Higgins, Chandler, & Kram, Chapter 14, this volume; Higgins & Kram, 2001) may help the mentor determine the degree of psychosocial mentoring needed. A multimethod approach that blends qualitative and quantitative research will be needed to begin to address these research questions.

Another issue related to the provision of mentoring is that none of the measures commonly used in workplace mentoring research has been tested for equivalence with mentor samples (e.g., Noe, 1988a; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Scandura, 1992). Fowler and Gorman (2005) recently addressed this issue. They conducted interviews with a heterogeneous group of mentors and protégés. On the basis of their interview results, they developed a new measure of mentoring functions that was validated using samples of both mentors and protégés. Eight distinct functions of mentoring were supported using both the mentor and the protégé data. The functions that were identified were personal and emotional guidance, coaching, advocacy, career development facilitation, role-modeling, strategies and systems advice, learning facilitation, and friendship. The authors found that an eight-component model provided a better fit to the data than a two-component model representing career and psychosocial functions. Although there were many similarities between the findings of the Fowler and Gorman study and Kram's (1985) original work, there were also differences. Specifically, learning facilitation is unique from the functions identified by Kram and may reflect a trend toward more mutuality in mentorships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). In addition, the protection function included by Kram did not emerge in this study. It is not clear whether these differences arose because the nature of careers, and thus to some extent mentoring, too, has changed during the past 20 years or whether the dedicated effort to include mentors in the validation process has had some impact on the functions that have emerged. For example, protégés may not always be aware of the behaviors in which their mentors engage on their behalf. Thus, we should not expect complete congruence between mentor and protégé reports. Regardless, it is important for researchers to further examine the dimensions and measures that are used to capture mentoring behavior and to ensure that these measures represent mentoring from both the viewpoint of the protégé and the mentor.

Outcomes Associated With Mentoring Others

The frequent call for longitudinal research is again relevant in terms of investigating the career benefits associated with mentoring others. Although cross-sectional studies have provided initial support for the notion that mentoring others brings tangible as well as psychological benefits to the mentor, the direction of causality is unclear. Individuals who have achieved career success are likely to be

attractive as mentors. Moreover, individuals would seemingly be more likely to engage in mentorships after achieving career success than before. Hence, there is probably a long-term dynamic process at play, such that career success helps increase an individual's attractiveness as a mentor and willingness to be a mentor, which in turn relates to mentoring others, which in turn helps further increase career success.

Much more research attention is also needed that focuses on learning as an outcome of mentoring relationships. In their qualitative study of participants in formal mentoring programs, Eby and Lockwood (2005) found that the most frequently cited benefit of participating in the program by mentors was learning. Learning was also an important outcome identified by mentors in Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs (1997). Mullen (1994) proposed viewing mentoring as a reciprocal exchange of information in which the mentor not only provides information to the protégé but also solicits knowledge from the protégé. Although Allen and Eby (2003) examined learning as an outcome, it was operationalized globally. In sum, while learning has been clearly identified as an important variable in the mentoring process for mentors, very little research has closely examined specific learning dynamics for mentors (see also Lankau & Scandura, Chapter 4, this volume).

Lankau and Scandura (2002) developed a measure that assesses learning for protégés. They identified two types of personal learning that occur in a mentorship. Based on the work of Kram and Hall (1996), one type was referred to as *relational job learning,* which involves an increased understanding regarding the interdependence of one's job with those of others. The second type of learning was labeled as *personal skill development* and was defined as the acquisition of new skills and abilities that facilitate improved working relationships. A parallel line of research is needed that more concretely identifies what it is that mentors learn from their relationships and how those forms of learning can be fostered. For example, protégés may be able to bring mentors up to speed on new trends in technology. In addition, reciprocal-learning dynamics between mentor and protégé at the dyadic level need to be studied.

Another potential benefit that has been virtually unexplored is the extent to which mentoring others can benefit the psychological and physical health of the mentor. Social health research has demonstrated that there are health benefits from both giving and receiving social support (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003; Taylor, Klein, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Fernandes-Taylor, 2003). Moreover, research examining other specific forms of helping relationships, such as adult volunteerism, show benefits such as reduced depression, greater physical health, and increased mortality (e.g., Musick & Wilson, 2003; Oman, Thoresen, & McMahon, 1999; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). There are several reasons why mentoring others may improve health. Giving to others brings a sense of meaning and purpose to life, which increases happiness and decreases depression (e.g., Batson, 1998; Brown et al., 2003). In addition, mentoring others may improve the functioning of the autoimmune system by enhancing control and efficacy (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Thus, the benefits of being a mentor may extend well beyond improved career success and favorable job attitudes (see also Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Heaphy, 2007).

Conclusion

In recent years, the mentor has become a more frequent target of focused research attention. However, there are many potential fruitful avenues for further investigation. This is an exciting area of inquiry, with many questions yet to be answered. A continued research effort from the focal point of the mentor is needed for a complete understanding of the mentoring process. It is hoped that this chapter helps to stimulate such inquiry.

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